Cacophonous Settler Grounded Normativity: Interrelationality with the More-Than-Human World as a Path for Decolonial Transformation

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Abstract

This paper proposes settler grounded normativity as a path for transforming understandings of relationships, so that settlers might become better able to engage in decolonization. The term 'grounded normativity' comes from Coulthard (2014). I define grounded normativity as understanding that: (1) humans are interrelated with the more-than-human world; (2) interrelationality demands that humans develop ethical relationships with others; and (3) these ethical relationships can be learned and enacted through engagement with the more-than-human world. *Settler* grounded normativity puts an additional focus on understanding interrelatedness with settler colonialism and how to transform settler/Indigenous relations in pursuit of ethics and justice. The three chapters of this paper reflect the three tenets of grounded normativity. Chapter One surveys Indigenous accounts of interrelationality, as well as examples of where interrelationality continues to undergird Western understandings. Chapter One also addresses where settlers and Indigenous peoples remain *interrelated* with settler colonialism. Chapter Two is a theoretical analysis of *how* interrelationality demands ethical relations, considering identity, difference, and indistinction frameworks for ethical consideration developed by Calarco (2015). Chapter Two ultimately argues that interrelationality ought to be understood as demanding ethical relations through cacophony—a concept developed by Byrd (2011). Chapter Three argues that settlers ought to pursue active roles in decolonization in order to enact ethical relations against settler colonialism. Chapter Three includes interviews with settlers engaging in decolonial work, in order to explore questions regarding how settlers ought to participate in decolonization ethically and effectively. The paper closes by considering future work that needs to be done to develop settler grounded normativity and preliminarily addresses how ethical relations might be learned and enacted through engagement with the more-than-human world.

Foreword

This major research paper (MRP) comes as a culmination of my MES work and provides direction for the work I am set to continue in my Ph.D. at FES.

My Area of Concentration throughout my MES has been "Transforming Relationships with Indigenous Peoples and Animals." Within that concentration, I have focused on three components: "Indigenous Worldviews and Resurgence for Settler Decolonization," "Transformative Perspectives on Human/Animal Relations," and "Transforming Relationships via Teaching and Learning." This paper reflects this Area of Concentration and addresses all three of these components, proposing understandings for transforming relationships between settlers and Indigenous peoples, and humans and the more-than-human world, in pursuit of ethics and justice. In pursuit of these transformative relationships, this paper considers Indigenous worldviews—particularly Indigenous understandings of interrelationality and the more-than-human world; critical understandings of nonhumans, including nonhuman animals; and how the more-than-human world might serve as a teacher for developing ethical relations.

The ideas that I explore in this paper were developed in a number of courses that I took during my MES work. Ravi de Costa's "Native/Canadian Relations," Martha Stiegman's "Reshaping Research with Aboriginal Peoples," Mona Oikawa's "Settler Colonialism and Settler Subjects," the International Political Economy and Ecology Summer School on "Resurgencies: Settler-Colonialism and Radical Indigenous Politics" led by Glen Coulthard, and an independent directed study (IDS) that I completed with Tim Leduc on "Indigenous Perspectives on Nature," allowed me to examine my settler position within settler colonialism; my relation to Indigenous peoples; and how engaging with Indigenous knowledge may contribute to enacting transformative ways of living on colonized lands, with an eye to decolonization. Mona Oikawa's course, in particular, is where I started exploring grounded normativity and developing *settler* grounded normativity, and is also where I was introduced to Byrd (2011) and her concept of cacophony. In Glen Coulthard's course, I wrote a paper about pursuing 'no settler future,' which could be brought into this paper as another direction for settler involvement in decolonization.

Cate Sandilands' "Culture and Environment" invigorated my thinking about the agency of the more-than-human world, and how we might engage with the more-than-human world in order to enact ethical relations. These thoughts were fruitfully developed in Tim Leduc's "Environmental Education," Leesa Fawcett's field course in British Columbia, and an IDS I completed with Leesa Fawcett on "Human-Animal Studies and Relations." This IDS is where I was introduced to Calarco's (2015) categorization of critical animal studies theories, and also where I started to bring Calarco's conceptualizations into conversation with Byrd's (2011) cacophony. Tim Leduc's "Environmental Education" course inspired me regarding how I might engage in relations with the more-than-human world in pursuit of knowledge; though, unfortunately, I did not make a concerted effort to develop such relations during my MES work.

Chris Cavanagh's "Popular Education for Social Change" courses and Naomi Norquay's "Life History Research Methods and Applications" built my interest in focusing my studies in my own life and life history—which drives this paper and my studies more broadly, although this may not always be evident in the work itself.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In this paper, I am proposing a path for transformation in how settlers understand their relationships with humans and nonhumans, with hope that such transformation may enable settlers to better engage in decolonization.

What I mean by many of these terms (including transformation, settlers, and decolonization) is developed throughout this paper. However, I believe it is important to preliminarily state that I accept Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's (2012) claim that "decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (p. 21), "that is, *all* of the land, and not just symbolically" (p. 7; Tuck & Yang's italics). In *Wasáse*, Taiaiake Alfred (2009) asserts that Indigenous peoples need spiritual transformation, which begins with the self, if they are to effectively engage in decolonization (p. 32). While I agree with Tuck and Yang regarding the ultimate goals of decolonization, I also agree with Alfred that transformation is needed in order to enact decolonization. And I believe that settlers need to engage in our own parallel processes of transformation. Therein, this paper is about settlers transforming ourselves so that we may better engage in decolonization, but this self-transformation must not be misunderstood as the goal of decolonization: self-transformation is, instead, an effort to equip settlers with the tools we need to engage in decolonization.

I am concerned with decolonization across the globe, but living and studying on lands occupied by the Canadian settler state,[1] I mainly engage with writers discussing decolonization in a Canadian context. Moreover, I am predominantly concerned with the decolonization of the

[1] By 'settler state,' I am referring to a structural and political manifestation of settler colonialism. Chapter One provides a definition of settler colonialism, and describes how settler colonialism differs from colonialism. In this paper, I use the terms 'settler colonial structure, 'settler state,' and 'settler society' interchangeably to refer to manifestations of settler colonialism.

Indigenous lands that I have lived most of my life on, namely Baawitigong[2]/Sault Ste. Marie, which I understand to be Nishnaabeg[3] land; Nogojiwanong[4]/Peterborough, which I understand to be Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg land; and Toronto[5], which I understand to be Wendat/Huron land, including the Tahontaenrhat; Haudenosaunee[6] land, primarily the Seneca and Mohawk; and Nishnaabeg land, primarily the Michi Saagiig. Toronto is also covered by a treaty that the Nishnaabeg refer to as "Gdoo-naaganinaa, meaning 'Our Dish'" (L. Simpson, 2008, p. 36) and the Haudenosaunee refer to as the 'Dish with One Spoon,' which "set forth the terms for [the Nishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee] taking care of a shared territory while maintaining separate, independent sovereign nations" (L. Simpson, 2008, p. 36).[7] Other Indigenous nations may also have claims to these lands, but I am not currently aware of them.

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[2] "This is the place most folk now call Sault Ste Marie [*sic*] . . . . But before the French got their way with us [the Ojibwa] we called it Baawitigong which means the place where there are rapids" (Native Art in Canada, n.d.).

[3] According to L. Simpson (2011), "*Nishnaabeg* is translated as 'the people' and refers to Ojibwe, Odawa (Ottawa), Potawatomi, Michi Saagiig (Mississauga), Saulteaux, Chippewa and Omámíwinini (Algonquin) people. Nishnaabeg people are also known as Nishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabek, and Anishinabek, reflecting different spelling systems and differing dialects . . . Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg . . . use our spelling—Nishnaabe or Nishnaabeg (plural)" (p. 25-26; L. Simpson's italics). As I have lived primarily on Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg land, I use the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg spelling of 'Nishnaabeg.' Writers I cite may use these alternative, or similar, spellings; or may refer to particular Nishnaabeg nations. When discussing these writers, I use their spelling.

[4] "*Nogojiwanong* is the Michi Saagiig name for Peterborough, Ontario, and means 'the place at the end of the rapids.' It is commonly used amongst Nishnaabeg people in Peterborough" (L. Simpson, 2011, p. 26; L. Simpson's italics).

[5] "William Woodworth Raweno:kwas offers . . . in his oral tradition the name of the city [Toronto] derives from the Mohawk *Toron:to (dolon-do)*, 'the place where the great tree fell – the damp log' [Woodworth, 2012, p. 229] . . . a great white pine or *onerahtase'ko:wa* that came to mark his Haudenosaunee sense of Toron:to as a 'meeting place' [Woodworth & Leduc, 2012]" (Leduc, 2016, p. 50; Leduc's italics). Suzanne (2012) understands that 'Toronto' comes from the Haudenosaunee word 'Tkaronto', which either refers to "the reflection of the huge trees that grew on the edge of the lake"—I believe referring to Lake Ontario—or "the wooden stakes that the Huron and then the Haudenosaunee drove into the water to create fish weirs." According to Suzanne, "[t]he idea that Toronto means 'meeting place' came from Henry Scadding, a 19th-century English historian who documented the fact that Aboriginal peoples from many nations would meet at the fish weirs to discuss politics and other matters including hunting, trapping, and fishing rights" (2012). The first European use of 'Taronto' was a "French map, which was published in 1688, [and] shows Lac Taronto (Lake Simcoe) . . . [and] a stretch of the passage de taronto (Humber River)" (Leduc, 2016, p. 53). As, in the case of Lake Simcoe, Taronto did not originally refer to land currently occupied by the city of Toronto, I am unsure whether these terms ought to be used as an Indigenous name for the city, and have decided not to use them.

[6] Writers I cite may refer to the Haudenosaunee as the Iroquois or Rotinoshonni, or similar spellings, or may refer to specific Haudenosaunee nations: the Mohawk/Kanienkahagen, the Oneida/Onayotekaono, the Onondaga/Onundagaono, the Cayuga/Guyohkohnyoh, the Seneca/Onondowahgah, and the Tuscarora/Ska-Ruh-Reh (Haudenosaunee Confederacy, n.d.).

[7] See L. Simpson (2008) for more information on this treaty and the sharing of territory.

Particularly, this paper considers how settlers working to understand how, and that, we are interrelated with a more-than-human world[8]—which includes humans, nonhuman beings, and structures such as settler colonialism—might help us to engage in decolonization. The framework for interrelationality with a more-than-human world that I am employing comes from Glen Sean Coulthard's (2014) description of grounded normativity in *Red Skin, White Masks*.[9] Coulthard defines grounded normativity by saying:

> the theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism, is best understood as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around *the question of land*—a struggle not only *for* land in the material sense, but also deeply *informed* by what the land *as system of reciprocal relations and obligations* can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms. (2014, p. 13; Coulthard's italics)

From this definition, *I* have developed a three-part framework where grounded normativity entails understanding that: (1) humans are interrelated with a more-than-human world; (2) interrelationality demands that humans develop ethical relationships with others; and (3) these ethical relationships can be learned and enacted through engagement with the more-than-human world. Coulthard and Leanne Simpson have noted that it matters *what* you are doing with the more-than-human world; certain processes and practices develop grounded normativity (personal communication, May 27, 2016).[10]

As presented by Coulthard (2014), grounded normativity comes out of certain understandings of 'land,' which are addressed in Chapter One. Coulthard uses the word 'land' to

[8] This term comes from Abram, 1997.

[9] In *Red Skin, White Masks*, Coulthard (2014) primarily discusses grounded normativity to address how engaging in land-claim processes has led to "a reorientation of the meaning of self-determination for many (but not all) Indigenous people in the North; a reorientation of Indigenous struggle from one that was deeply *informed* by the land as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations (grounded normativity) . . . to a struggle that is now increasingly *for* land, understood now as material resource to be exploited in the capital accumulation process" (p. 78; Coulthard's italics). This discussion fits into Coulthard's broader critique of Indigenous engagement in politics of recognition, which is discussed in Chapter Three of my paper. Coulthard also understands that "grounded normativity is antithetical to capitalist accumulation" (2014, p. 172), which is significant as Coulthard understands that Indigenous self-determination requires alternatives to capitalism (2014, p. 170-173).

[10] For instance, L. Simpson has been working on harvesting wild rice and maple syrup in an effort to enact grounded normativity for herself, as a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe woman (personal communication, May 27, 2016).

refer to "land (understood here as material), but also people and animals, rocks and trees, lakes and rivers, and so on" (2014, p. 61). To avoid confusion around Western understandings of 'land' as only a material object, I use the term 'more-than-human world' to refer to these beings and entities, instead of 'land.' I use 'nonhumans' to refer to the myriad living and nonliving beings that are not humans: nonhuman animals, plants, waters, rocks, minerals, air, etc. I use the term 'nonhuman animals,' instead of 'animals,' to highlight that humans are animals, and I refer to this specific subset of nonhumans at points throughout this paper.

My focus on addressing the more-than-human world alongside Indigenous peoples and decolonization comes from an understanding that settler colonialism maintains settler domination over nonhumans in a way similar to how it maintains settler domination over Indigenous peoples, creating unequitable, unethical, and unjust relationships that need to be transformed. However, where Coulthard's (2014) presentation of grounded normativity focuses on Indigenous peoples' relations with the more-than-human world, I am proposing that settlers ought to pursue a particular *settler* grounded normativity. Settler grounded normativity ought to include, front and centre, an examination of settler/Indigenous relations and settler interrelatedness with settler colonialism, alongside an examination of settler relations with the more-than-human world. Settlers need to address how we have come to be related with Indigenous peoples, the oppressive forms that these relationships have taken, and how these relationships need to be transformed. We need to come to understand the illegitimacy of settler claims to land and the rightfulness of Indigenous claims to land and sovereignty, and work to return land and (re)affirm Indigenous sovereignty.

In classroom discussions, Coulthard described grounded normativity as a "punchy" term for discussing and describing Indigenous worldviews,[11] especially regarding Indigenous understandings of the more-than-human world and human engagement with that more-than-human world (personal communication, May 16-27, 2016). L. Simpson, in conversation with Coulthard, noted that the underlying understandings of grounded normativity are characteristic of Indigenous understandings; however, the term is too academic, lacking connection to lived values, to be widely used in Indigenous communities or amongst Indigenous elders (personal communication, May 27, 2016). I discuss Indigenous worldviews to develop my tripartite formulation of grounded normativity; however, I believe that settler grounded normativity ought to rest in settler understandings and therefore I veer away from how grounded normativity is tied to deeper Indigenous understandings.[12] Nevertheless, I find that the term 'grounded normativity' is useful for naming my proposal that settlers might be better able to engage in decolonization if we come to understand our interrelatedness with the more-than-human world.

This paper works to develop understandings that I believe will be important for enacting settler grounded normativity; proposes settler grounded normativity as a path for decolonial transformation; and considers where settler grounded normativity needs to be further developed. Chapter One works to present how humans can be understood to be interrelated with the more-than-human world. It provides a survey of Indigenous understandings of interrelationality, as well as examples of where interrelationality continues to undergird Western understandings, although recognition of this interrelationality is largely marginalized. This chapter also describes

[11] I understand that there is not one homogeneous Indigenous worldview; however, I use the term 'Indigenous worldviews' to refer to Indigenous worldviews generally. The same is true when I refer to 'Indigenous understandings' and other similar terms. Wilson (2001) discusses how there are similarities amongst Indigenous understandings that tend to distinguish them from Eurocentric understandings.

[12] By 'settler understandings' I am referring to understandings from settlers' particular cultures, recognizing that these are diverse. In this paper, I use the term 'dominant Western' in relation to worldviews and understandings, to refer to the hegemonic cultural understandings of settler states such as Canada and the United States, and Western Europe. However, I recognize that alternative understandings exist within the Western world.

how settlers and Indigenous peoples remain *interrelated* with settler colonialism, and how settler colonialism impacts the more-than-human world.

Chapter Two is a theoretical analysis of *how* interrelationality demands ethical relations. It considers different theories regarding when ethical relations ought to exist, utilizing Matthew Calarco's (2015) categorization of critical animal studies theories into identity, difference, and indistinction frameworks. However, using Jodi A. Byrd's (2011) concept of cacophony, Chapter Two addresses where Calarco does not consider ethical consideration arising out of a cacophonous disruption of distinctions. It asserts that interrelationality ought to be understood as demanding ethics via cacophony, regarding both the more-than-human world and settler colonialism.

From my formulation of grounded normativity, Chapter Three ought to consider how ethical relations can be enacted through engagement with the more-than-human world. However, I have only started to explore how one might learn through engagement with the more-than-human world. Therefore, Chapter Three instead considers how, cacophonously, to enact ethical relations when working towards decolonization. It begins by examining Indigenous resurgence as a way for Indigenous peoples to engage in decolonization, and then turns to considering what settler roles in decolonization ought to be. I enter into conversation with Victoria Freeman and Martha Stiegman to explore settler roles in decolonization.[13] Freeman and Stiegman are settlers who have been involved in decolonial work with Indigenous peoples, critically engaging with questions of settler involvement in decolonization, for considerable time. My conversations with Freeman and Stiegman address the importance of settlers engaging with Indigenous

[13] Ethics approval for these interviews was received from the Faculty of Environmental Studies Research Ethics Committee, York University. The ethics review involved review of the research proposal and participant informed consent forms. Both Freeman and Stiegman gave permission for their names to be included in this paper.

understandings, building relationships with Indigenous peoples, engaging in processes of self-transformation, and working through emotional difficulties that can arise in decolonial work.

This paper closes by re-examining settler grounded normativity as a proposal for settler engagement in decolonization and considers pitfalls that settler grounded normativity must avoid if it is to be decolonial. The conclusion also shares my preliminary thoughts on how one can engage with the more-than-human world in order to enact ethical relations.

Chapter One
Interrelationality

My formulation of grounded normativity rests on an understanding that humans are interrelated with the more-than-human world.[14] This chapter examines Indigenous understandings of more-than-human interrelationality, considers where interrelationality arises in Western thought, and addresses where interrelationality has been marginalized in Western understandings. This chapter also addresses what settler colonialism is, how settlers and Indigenous peoples remain *interrelated* with settler colonialism as a structure, and how settler colonialism impacts the more-than-human world, in order to assert the importance of dismantling settler colonialism in pursuit of ethical and just relations.

Indigenous Understandings of Interrelationality

The idea that there is some homogeneous Indigenous identity and culture is a colonial understanding. Instead, there are many diverse Indigenous nations.[15] However, understandings that humans are interrelated with the more-than-human world appear common across many Indigenous cultures.

Coulthard (2014) presents interrelationality within his Yellowknives Dene culture as tied to their understanding of the more-than-human world. Coulthard describes that "Indigenous anticolonialism . . . is best understood as a struggle . . . deeply *informed* by what the **land *as system of reciprocal relations and obligations*** can teach us" (2014, p. 13; Coulthard's italics;

[14] I want to remind readers that whereas Coulthard (2014) uses 'land' to refer to myriad living and nonliving beings and entities (p. 61), I am using 'more-than-human world' (from Abram, 1997) to denote these beings and entities.

[15] In discussing use of the term 'Indian' to refer to Indigenous peoples, but also people from India and the Indies, Byrd (2011) says, "[t]he very word signifies a colonial enactment . . . . in the American context[, b]eyond the fact that it derives from a geographically challenged explorer, it suggests a cultural and racial homogeneity that does not exist. There are over five hundred and sixty indigenous nations and/or communities . . . within the lands that constitute the United States alone that would fall under the category 'Indian'" (p. 73). See Byrd for further critique of the term 'Indian' and the homogenization of Indigenous peoples.

my bold);[16] his understanding leads me to understand that interrelationality is significant to grounded normativity. Coulthard later expands on this understanding in saying:

> 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, of experiencing and relating to the world and with others; and sometimes these relational practices and forms of knowledge guide forms of resistance against other rationalizations of the world that threaten to erase or destroy our senses of place . . . In the Weledeh dialect of Dogrib (which is my community's language), for example, "land" (or *dè*) is translated in relational terms as that which encompasses not only the land (understood here as material), but also people and animals, rocks and trees, lakes and rivers, and so on. Seen in this light, we are as much a part of the land as any other element. Furthermore, within this system of relations human beings are not the only constituent believed to embody spirit or agency. Ethically, this meant that humans held certain obligations to the land, animals, plants, and lakes in much the same way that we hold obligations to other people. And if these obligations were met, then the land, animals, plants, and lakes would reciprocate and meet their obligations to humans, thus ensuring the survival and well-being of all over time. (2014, p. 60-61; Coulthard's italics)

Coulthard (2014) goes on to relay a story from the late Sahtu Dene elder, George Blondin, of a raven leading a hunter, Edward, to moose (p. 61).[17] As Coulthard presents this story, the hunter would not have found the moose without the raven, and the raven would not have been able to eat any moose without the hunter killing it. Therein, both the raven and the hunter need each other, creating a reciprocal relationship: "Blondin's narrative . . . depicts the relationship between the hunter and the bird as mutually dependent. The cooperation displayed between Edward and the raven provides a clear example of the ethic of reciprocity and sharing

[16] I use boldface to distinguish my emphasis from the emphasis of writers I am quoting, in this case Coulthard (2014), understanding that using boldface to emphasize is not standard practice in academic writing.

[17] L. Simpson (2011) discusses the importance of multiple truths in Indigenous understandings, and therefore multiple readings of stories. I am wary of how I might inappropriately promote definitive readings of Indigenous stories by presenting them, and certain analyses of them, in writing. I also know that what I understand from Indigenous stories is limited by my being a settler, and not being integrated in Indigenous worldviews. Therefore, I have included this story, in-full, in Appendix A of this paper, so that readers may draw their own understandings from it. I will do the same with subsequent stories, in subsequent appendices. I also encourage readers to see the original accounts of these stories, to gather more complete readings of them. In this case, I encourage readers to see Coulthard (2014, p. 61) and the story's original publication in Blondin (1990, p. 155-156). L. Simpson also notes that there are protocols that ought to be followed to tell certain stories appropriately (2011, p. 35). I do not know these protocols, and have not followed them, and therefore, my engagement with these Indigenous stories might be inappropriate. All of the stories I discuss are taken from written publications; I have not adapted any from ceremonies or oral recitals.

underlying Dene understandings of their relationship with land" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 62). Overall, relationships and reciprocity—together creating interrelationality—are built into how Coulthard understands the more-than-human world. Interrelationality also creates a need for ethical relations, which is the focus of Chapter Two.

Shawn Wilson (2001), in his work to "move beyond an 'Indigenous perspective in research' to 'researching from an Indigenous paradigm'" (p. 175)—that is, to explore how Indigenous peoples can do research according to Indigenous worldviews[18] instead of just doing research on Indigenous issues within the dominant Western worldviews that tend to shape academia—emphasizes relationality throughout Indigenous paradigms. Wilson notes,

> I focused on four aspects that combine in the makeup of different paradigms . . . . One is ontology or a belief in the nature of reality. Your way of being, what you believe is real in the world: that's your ontology. Second is epistemology, which is how you think about that reality. Next, when we talk about research methodology, we are talking about how you are going to use your ways of thinking (your epistemology) to gain more knowledge about your reality. Finally, a paradigm includes axiology, which is a set of morals or a set of ethics. (2001, p. 175)

Although Wilson focuses on research paradigms, I believe his discussion of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies is meant to elucidate Indigenous understandings of how things are: they are not just understandings that Indigenous peoples ought to take on when doing research.

Wilson (2001) stresses relationality in Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. Wilson writes that relationality is focal to understanding *what* things are:

> Who cares about these ontologies? It is not the realities in and of themselves that are important, it is the relationship that I share with reality. It is not necessarily an object that is important, it is my relationship with that object that becomes important . . . You can

[18] Considering what I said about there not being a homogeneous Indigenous culture, Wilson (2001) is trying to develop frameworks for Indigenous peoples, generally, to do research according to Indigenous perspectives. Wilson does not emphasize the need to do research from particular cultural traditions. In *Indigenous Methodologies* Margaret Kovach (2009) does emphasize particular cultural research methodologies and develops a Plains Cree Nêhiýaw methodology, considering her own culture.

> extend this to say that ideas and concepts, like objects, are not as important as my relationship to an idea or concept. This language speaks from an epistemology that is totally foreign to other research paradigms, an epitomology [*sic*] where relationships are more important than reality. (2001, p. 177)

Discussing epistemology, Wilson says:

> An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, not just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge. (2001, p. 176-177)

Joe Sheridan and Roronhiakewen "He Clears the Sky" Dan Longboat (2006) also discuss knowledge itself as relational, particularly within Haudenosaunee understandings. According to Sheridan and Longboat, in Haudenosaunee understandings mental thoughts do not arise in individuals' minds in the spontaneous, disembodied way that they are typically thought to arise in Western understandings, where thoughts can pop into people's heads. Instead, knowledge exists within Creation and can be shared with people, especially in particular places such as traditional Indigenous territories: "Native American intellectual tradition still continues to express the North American landscape in intellectual and spiritual reciprocity, where the more-than-human grants qualities of mind to the human" (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006, p. 368).

In his book *Research is Ceremony*, Wilson (2008) expands on all of the beings that humans are interrelated with, including other people (p. 84-86), the more-than-human world[19] (p. 86-88), and the cosmos (p. 89-91). Related to the common Indigenous practice to introduce oneself by saying where one is from and who one's family members are, Wilson iterates that "[i]dentity for Indigenous peoples is grounded in their relationships with the land, with their ancestors who have returned to the land and with the future generations who will come into being on the land. Rather than viewing ourselves as being *in* relationship with other people or

[19] Wilson (2008) refers to the more-than-human world as the environment/land (p. 86).

things, we *are* the relationships that we hold and are part of" (2008 p. 80). Wilson shares a story from his father—which I have included in Appendix B—which brings to life how interrelation with ancestors is maintained through the more-than-human world, and the constant flow of energy and nutrients therein (2008, p. 95-96). Taking the notion of *being* relationships even further, Wilson notes "[w]e could not *be* without *being in relationship* with everything that surrounds us and is within us. Our reality, our ontology is the relationships" (2008, p. 76; Wilson's italics).[20]

Particularly considering human interrelationality with the more-than-human world, John Mohawk (2010) asserts that "everyone who is sane in the world should agree" (p. 275) that humans have relationships with "Mother Earth . . . grasses, waters, trees, plants, winds, the moon, the stars, the sun, the universe, the whole thing. Everybody in the world ought to be able to agree that we depend on those things. Those things are actually essential to us" (p. 275). Reminders of such interrelationality are incorporated in Haudenosaunee societal practices, including in the "*ga no ya* or opening speech. Some people call it a thanksgiving address" (Mohawk, 2010, p. 275), which is given "every time we gather together to have a meeting" (Mohawk, 2010, p. 275).[21]

In a similar vein, Deborah McGregor (2004) presents that the Anishinaabe Re-Creation story "reinforc[es] principles of harmony and respect" (p. 387). "There are many values and lessons to learn from this story, but one of the most compelling that has stood out in my mind over many years and many tellings is that all of Creation is important; all must be respected" (McGregor, 2004, p. 388). In the story, which I have included in Appendix E, muskrat, "the most

[20] This quote comes from a story that Wilson (2008) shares of a dream/vision he experienced that revealed, to him, the extent of relationality (p. 75-77). I have included this story in Appendix C.

[21] Mohawk's (2010) full description of the Haudenosaunee thanksgiving address is included in Appendix D. See Alfred (2009, p. 13-16) for a written account of the Rotinoshonni (Alfred uses this spelling) thanksgiving address.

humble of the water creatures" (McGregor, 2004, p. 387), manages to retrieve soil from deep underwater, after the other water creatures have all failed. This soil is used to create land, on a turtle's back, which saves Sky-woman from drowning and becomes her home: Turtle Island. As Sky-woman is an ancestor to the Anishinaabe, McGregor states "[i]f we lost or disrespected even the tiniest and most seemingly insignificant being, we would not be here! If the muskrat had failed, where would the Anishinaabe be?" (2004, p. 388).

L. Simpson (2008) writes about how interrelationality with the more-than-human world factors into Nishnaabeg political and social systems. "Animal clans [meaning nonhuman animals themselves] were highly respected and were seen as self-determining, political 'nations' (at least in an Indigenous sense) to whom the Nishnaabeg had negotiated, ritualized, formal relationships that required maintenance through an ongoing relationship. This was reflected in the spiritual and ceremonial life of individual [human] clans" (L. Simpson, 2008, p. 33). Moreover,

> [t]raditional Nishnaabeg political culture was based on our clan system and also reflected our basic ethics and philosophy for living Bimaadiziwin,[22] the good life. Clans connected families to particular animal nations and territories, where relationships with those animal nations were formalized, ritualized, and nurtured. Clan members held and continue to hold specific responsibilities in terms of taking care of a particular part of the territory, and specific clans hold particular responsibilities related to governance. Individual clans had responsibilities to a particular geographic region of the territory, and their relationship with that region was a source of knowledge, spirituality, and sustenance. They also were required to maintain and nurture a special relationship with their clan animal. (L. Simpson, 2008, p. 33)

L. Simpson goes on to present examples of how relationships were maintained between Nishnaabeg peoples and animal nations, including a story from John Borrows (2002) about Nishnaabeg relations with deer, moose, and caribou.[23] Simpson also refers to plants as members of nations but, at least in this article, does not expand on the nature of plant nations.

[22] See L. Simpson (2011) for a larger discussion of this term.
[23] I have included this story in Appendix F.

These accounts provide a preliminary survey of how Indigenous worldviews understand humans to be interrelated with the more-than-human world, and how interrelationality factors into Indigenous social and political life. It is my understanding that there is an empirical reality to this interrelationality, which dominant Western worldviews tend to overlook and negate. That is: interrelationality is not only an Indigenous cultural belief, but a crucial ontological truth.

Western Perspectives of Interrelationality

As described by Maria-Palma Zito (2016), McGregor (2016)—approaching the discipline of planning from an Anishinaabe perspective—describes "that planning involves a series of relationships; relationships between people and the land . . . [and] that planning is a way to manage people, and to determine what happens to the land" (Zito, 2016). With respect for the significance of this perspective, as an interdisciplinary scholar I believe that many disciplines can be understood through a similar relational point of view. Law, economics, political science, and other social sciences are all about either working to understand or trying to manage relations between people, systems, structures, etc., from different angles. In sciences too, different levels of biology are about understanding or managing relations between, for instance, parts of cells, cells themselves, organs and organ systems, organisms (intra- and inter-species), and beings that share environments; chemistry is about the relations among different chemical elements; and physics is about the relations among different physical bodies. McGregor's comments helped reveal to me that even in Western worldviews, we do find ourselves in an interrelated world; however, recognition of interrelationality is marginalized.

The philosophical field of phenomenology seeks to return to immediate lived experience in order to describe the reality of experience (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 2). Phenomenology focuses

on immediate lived experiences, because they undergird all the ways that we come to know the world:

> I cannot think of myself as a part of the world, like the simple object of biology, psychology, and sociology; I cannot endorse myself within the universe of science. Everything that I know about the world, even through science, I know from a perspective that is my own or from an experience of the world without which scientific symbols would be meaningless . . . I am the absolute source. My existence does not come from my antecedents, nor from my physical and social surroundings; it moves out toward them and sustains them. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. lxxii)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012) relays how, in returning to immediate experience, we find ourselves face-to-face with others that we know are not ourselves:[24] "[t]he world is there prior to every analysis I could give of it" (p. lxxiii).

Phenomenological literature largely focuses on phenomenological reduction: setting aside the presumed understandings we have of the world in order to better grasp immediate experience.

> Because we are through and through related to the world, the only way for us to catch sight of ourselves is by suspending this movement, by refusing to be complicit with it . . . or again, to put it out of play. This is not because we renounce the certainties of common sense and of the natural attitude . . . but rather because, precisely, as the presuppositions of every thought, they are 'taken for granted' and they pass by unnoticed. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. lxxvii)

This return to immediate experience is not meant to reveal solipsism, where we can only know ourselves; "[r]ather, it is to recognize consciousness itself as a project of the world, as destined to a world that it neither encompasses nor possesses, but toward which it never ceases to be directed – and to recognize the world as that pre-objective individual whose imperious unity prescribes knowledge its goal" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. lxxxii). According to Merleau-Ponty (2012),

[24] Related to traditional philosophical arguments, Merleau-Ponty (2012) also addresses how we know that these others are not dreams or illusions (p. lxxiv, lxxx).

> Phenomenology's most important accomplishment is, it would seem, to have joined an extreme subjectivism with an extreme objectivism . . . There is rationality – that is, perspectives intersect, perceptions confirm each other, and a sense appears. . . . The phenomenological world is . . . the sense that shines forth at the intersection of my experiences and at the intersection of my experiences with those of others through a sort of gearing into each other. The phenomenological world is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which establish their unity through the taking up . . . of my past experiences into my present experiences, or of the other person's experience into my own. (p. lxxxiv)

Overall, in that we always experience the world in relation with others, and come to know the world through relations, I would suggest that Merleau-Ponty proposes ontological and epistemological interrelationality, similar to what was earlier discussed regarding Indigenous paradigms. Merleau-Ponty states "we are this very knot of relations" (2012, p. lxxxv), echoing Wilson (2008) in the story shared in Appendix C: "[e]very individual thing that you see around you is really just a huge knot—a point where thousands and millions of relationships come together" (p. 76).

Later works by Merleau-Ponty, such as *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968),[25] further develop *inter*relationality. Lawrence Hass[26] (2008) discusses Merleau-Ponty's description of an internalized aspect to sense experience, in which internalized experience does not create a dichotomy between the internal self and the external world:

> We do have vision as an initiation to the world that is other than ourselves. And, for Merleau-Ponty, *this entails that perceptual experience must involve a different kind of difference than opposition*. He writes to show that it involves a subtler difference, more of a separation, where the self is not divorced from the world, but rather is a part of the world that opens to it. (p. 10; Hass' italics)

Hass (2008) describes this continuous interplay of internal and external life as "a folding over" (p. 131) "between me and things, between my vision and my body, between my self and

[25] *The Visible and the Invisible* is "only the first third of a projected book that was interrupted by Merleau-Ponty's sudden death in May 1961" (Hass, 2008, p. 125).

[26] I am using Hass (2008) for this section as I had a difficult time understanding Merleau-Ponty's own work. Hass claims, "it must be said that despite its lucidity the book [*The Visible and the Invisible*] is flat-out challenging to read" (2008, p. 125).

other selves" (2008, p. 131), where we understand that others are similarly experiencing an interplay of internal and external life: "[t]his 'folding over' is also true between oneself and others: we are so different in the flesh . . . and yet our bodies apply themselves to the same tools. They fit themselves together in a handshake or an embrace. Further, I can *see you* seeing *me*" (2008, p. 131; Hass' italics). Using the term 'flesh' to describe the medium whereby our internal world comes into contact with the external world—even in non-physical encounters, such as sight—Merleau-Ponty describes a 'flesh of the world' that living and nonliving beings also share and experience: "[m]y flesh and the things: we are 'of the same stuff.' We share thickness, worldly depth, weight, and surfaces; we come together in cool contact, firm resistance, and mutual influence. We are 'counterparts' or 'cohabitants' of the same world. And what is true of the things is at least doubly so of our relations with other living creatures" (Hass, 2008, p. 138).

In *The Spell of the Sensuous*, David Abram (1997) takes up phenomenology to discuss human interrelatedness with the more-than-human world, considering phenomenology in a similar way to how I have tried to showcase it: where "[o]ur most immediate experience of things, according to Merleau-Ponty, is necessarily an experience of reciprocal encounter" (p. 56). Abram moves beyond how sensory experience is interrelational to discuss how more-than-human interrelationality impacts diverse aspects of our lives, including emotions, "[t]he landscape as I directly experience it . . . is an ambiguous realm that responds to my emotions and calls forth feelings from me in turn" (1997, p. 33); language, "[c]ommunicative meaning . . . remains rooted in the sensual dimension of experience, born of the body's native capacity to resonate with other bodies and with the landscape as a whole" (1997, p. 74-75); space-time, "[i]t is precisely the ground and the horizon that transform abstract space into space-time. And these

characteristics—the ground and the horizon—*are granted to us only by the earth*" (1997, p. 216; Abram's italics); and mind and spirit:

> As the experiential source of both psyche and spirit, it would seem that the air was once felt to be the very matter of awareness, the subtle body of the mind. *And hence that awareness, far from being experienced as a quality that distinguishes humans from the rest of nature, was originally felt as that which invisibly* ***joined*** *human beings to the other animals and to the plants, to the forests and to the mountains.* (1997, p. 238; Abram's italics and bold)

Umeek E. Richard Atleo (2004), writing from a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective and in conversation with Nuu-chah-nulth stories, states: "[t]oday, Raven, Deer, Wren, Wolf, Bear, Eagle, and the host of life forms that make up biodiversity on earth have a common ancestry. The phrase 'all my relations' refers to this common ancestry . . . The apparent differences between life forms are real but not in any essential way" (p. 22). I believe there is evolutionary truth to this quote: via evolution, diverse beings do share common ancestors.[27] That is, evolutionary theory can help demonstrate how humans are interrelated with nonhumans. Atleo rebuffs evolutionary theory, stating "whereas the theory of evolution holds that life evolved from simple to complex, from primitive species to more advanced species, the theory I present in this book holds, in keeping with traditional origin stories, that life did not evolve but began as complexity" (2004, p. xix). Whereas in Nuu-chah-nulth understandings, "*isaak* (respect for all life forms) also becomes a natural and original design of creation" (Atleo, 2004, p. 126; Atleo's italics),

> [i]n contrast, the predominant scientific worldview based in Darwinian theory postulates that . . . survival of the fittest or through a process known as natural selection . . . some life forms cannot be fit to survive and so are selected out while others are selected in. It follows logically then that dominance, strength, superiority, and survival are the natural and original designs of creation. (Atleo, 2004, p. 127)

[27] As a personal note, with some background in phylogeny, I like knowing the taxonomy of different species when I am trying to understand them. By knowing their phylogeny, I feel I can better understand who these species are related to, and therein, better understand who they are, reflecting, I believe, Indigenous practices of introducing oneself via one's relatives.

Although evolution is often presented with these notions of necessary competition and dominance, there are marginalized theories of evolution that focus more on cooperation and mutual benefit. I need to further engage with them, but I feel they provide space for utilizing evolution to promote interrelationality.

I bring up this discussion of evolution because Abram (1997) contributes an additional insight into understanding evolution as interrelational: "[o]ur bodies have formed themselves in delicate reciprocity with the manifold textures, sounds, and shapes of an animate earth—our eyes have evolved in subtle interaction with *other* eyes, as our ears are attuned by their very structure to the howling of wolves and the honking of geese" (p. 22). Abram does not develop this idea of interrelationality in evolution of the physical human body, but this statement makes me think of how survival requires interaction with other beings: eating them, but also cooperating with them, such as where they can lead us to food in the story shared by Coulthard (2014, p. 61; in my Appendix A) and can warn us of predators and dangers. In this way, beings who are better equipped to interact with other beings for survival are better able to pass on their genes. Eventually, through evolution, this process would suggest that our physical bodies are built out of our relations with other beings. Our physicality is made through interrelationality.

Abram's (1997) book closes with a discussion of the current climate crisis, which he understands as arising because humans no longer recognize how we are interrelated with the more-than-human world. Abram states:

> We have forgotten the poise that comes from living in storied relation and reciprocity with the myriad things, the myriad *beings*, that perceptually surround us.
>
> . . . If we do not soon remember ourselves to our sensuous surroundings, if we do not reclaim our solidarity with the other sensibilities that inhabit and constitute those surroundings, then the cost of our human commonality might be our common extinction. (1997, p. 270-271; Abram's italics)

The Marginalization of Interrelationality

The concept that at some point in Western history humans came to see themselves as not only separated from the more-than-human world, but also rightfully dominant over it, is discussed by a number of environmental writers.[28] I mentioned that Abram (1997) understands language to be interrelated with the more-than-human world. This interrelation is especially evident in spoken language and, therefore, maintained in oral cultures: "among oral peoples language functions not simply to dialogue with other humans but also to converse with the more-than-human cosmos, to renew reciprocity with the surrounding powers of earth and sky, to invoke kinship even with those entities which, to the civilized[29] mind, are utterly insentient and inert" (Abram, 1997, p. 70-71). According to Abram, connection to the more-than-human world was retained in early writing systems, particularly in the Hebrew alphabet, where the names and symbols assigned to letters related to parts of the more-than-human world: "[t]he name of the Semitic letter *mem* is also the Hebrew word for 'water'; the letter, which later became our own letter *M*, was drawn as a series of waves . . . . the letters of the early *aleph-beth* are still implicitly tied to the more-than-human field of phenomena" (1997, p. 101; Abram's italics). However, when the Greeks began using Hebrew letters, they did not take on their more-than-human names or symbolism and, subsequently, written language's connection to the more-than-human world became marginalized: "the Greek alphabet had effectively severed all ties between the written letters and the sensible world from which they were derived" (Abram, 1997, p. 112). According to Abram, the subsequent shift to emphasize writing over orality caused a separation between humans and

[28] I find that these conceptions are often Eurocentric and do not note that it was predominantly Western/European humans who 'lost' their connection to the more-than-human world, not everyone. Western separation from the more-than-human world was subsequently spread around the world through colonialism and interrelated processes, but it is not something that all cultures 'naturally' experienced.

[29] I disagree with the suggestion that oral cultures are not civilized, although I expect—or hope—that Abram (1997) also uses the term 'civilized' facetiously.

the more-than-human world: “[t]he capacity to view and even to dialogue with one’s own words after writing them down . . . enables a new sense of autonomy and independence from others, and even from the sensuous surroundings that had earlier been one’s constant interlocutor” (1997, p. 112).

For Raymond Williams (1980), new scientific understandings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shifted away from “the orthodox medieval concept of nature, [where] man was, of course, included” (p. 74). According to Williams, under Christian medieval understandings there was debate about how humans ought to engage with the more-than-human world: “Nature [was] the minister of God. To know Nature was to know God” (1980, p. 71), but “aspiration was ambiguous: either to aspire to know the order of nature, or to know how to intervene in it, become its commander; . . . . to learn one’s important place in the order of nature, or learn how to surpass it” (1980, p. 75). However, humans coming to see themselves as separated from more-than-human world justified “not only [detached] observation but experiment . . . conscious intervention for human purposes. Agricultural improvement and the industrial revolution follow clearly from this emphasis” (Williams, 1980, p. 77).

According to Lynn White, Jr. (1967), it is Christian doctrine that initiated the separation of humanity from the more-than-human world, in the Western tradition, and that urges humanity to dominate the more-than-human world. Therefore, the separation gained authority as Christianity gained prominence in the Western world, long before the Scientific Revolution. According to White, the Christian creation story asserts that “no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man’s purposes” (1967, p. 1205) and “it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” (1967, p. 1205).

From a Haudenosaunee perspective, Mohawk (2010) agrees with White, stating that "Christianity paved the way for the philosophy that there is nothing wrong with taking an axe and a plow to the forest and reducing it to so much charcoal and so many acres of cropland" (p. 100). However, Mohawk believes that the history of Western domination of the more-than-human world stretches even further back, to the beginning of Western civilization in the creation of towns in the Fertile Crescent: "[i]t is in the process of civilization that a region is exploited without regard to its material (ecological) limits" (2010, p. 97).

For Val Plumwood (2002) the separation of humans from the more-than-human world did not occur through one break. Instead, Western beliefs in human/nature dualism and the ascendancy of rationalism have worked not only to repeatedly separate humans from the more-than-human world, but also to position humans as rightfully dominant over the more-than-human world: "[r]ationalism and human/nature dualism are linked through the narrative which maps the supremacy of reason onto human supremacy via the identification of humanity with active mind and reason and of non-humans with passive, tradeable bodies" (2002, p. 4). That is, (some) humans have come to be seen as predominantly rational beings, and rationalism is understood as distinctly separate from, but also better than, other ways of being—such as bodily ways of being—meaning these humans have come to be understood as not only distinctly separate from, but also better than, nonhumans (and many other humans as well). Importantly, "[w]e should not mistake rationalism for reason – rather it is a cult of reason that elevates to extreme supremacy a particular narrow form of reason and correspondingly devalues the contrasted and reduced sphere of nature and embodiment" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 4); that is, the problem is not that humans *are* rational, but that human rationality is understood as ascendant over other ways of being, and nonhuman forms of rationality are denied. According to Plumwood, the ascendancy

of rationalism has also served to create and maintain other forms of domination and oppression, such as the oppression of women and people of colour: "[i]n the historical rationalist imaginary, women and other 'lesser beings' are the Others of reason, which is treated as the province of elite men" (2002, p.19).

Plumwood (2002) sees that human/nature dualism and the ascendancy of rationalism have been tendencies throughout Western history, arising, for instance, in Ancient Greece's Platonic rationalism, where focus on the "pure abstract 'rational' ideal world distant from and uncontaminated by the impure world of sensory or bodily experience" (p. 20) made it so that "[i]mpartial, disengaged reason is not only superior to but basically independent of the bodily, emotional and personal elements of human lives" (p. 20); the Enlightenment, where "[m]ale knowers are seen as wringing empirical knowledge from a nature pictured as a debased and passive female slave tortured to yield up her secrets" (p. 47); and modern technoscience, in which:

> Science is often identified as the ally and saviour of the environment . . . But modern technoscience also has an uglier but less remarked face: technoscience has contributed to producing the environmental crisis at least as much as to curing it . . . In fact to a large extent the environmental crisis *is* ratiogenic damage, the creation of technoscience aimed at increasing production without due regard for effects on larger self-regulating systems containing many unknowns. (p. 38; Plumwood's italics)

Within Plumwood's (2002) account, humans have become separated from the more-than-human world through denial of the complexity of nonhuman life. Humans have come to believe that we cannot be interrelated with nonhumans by coming to understand that nonhumans are *not the kind of beings* with which we can be interrelated. Where humans are rational, and nonhumans are denied rationality, humans and nonhumans cannot be interrelated. Abram (1997) says

> To directly perceive any phenomenon is to enter into relation with it, to feel oneself in a living interaction with another being. To define the phenomenon as an inert object, to deny the ability of a tree to inform and even instruct one's awareness, is to have turned one's senses away from that phenomenon. It is to ponder the tree from outside of its

> world, or, rather, from outside of the world in which both oneself and the tree are active participants. (p. 177)

Moreover, that rationality is understood to be *the* important trait foregoes, for instance, where Coulthard (2014) suggests that humans and nonhumans are interrelated in Yellowknives Dene understandings because "human beings are not the only constituent believed to embody *spirit or agency*" (p. 61; my italics). Although not necessarily presenting nonhuman *rationality*, there are numerous accounts that reveal intentionality and agency in nonhuman animals.[30] Plumwood (2002) also argues for understanding plant intentionality (p. 148-150), and Anna Tsing (2012) writes of how the agency of cereals impacted human history. Jane Bennett (2010) addresses the agency of nonliving matter, and Julie Cruikshank (2005) provides an account of the agency of glaciers.

According to Plumwood (2002), belief in the separation of humans from the more-than-human world "leads to denials of dependency on the Other in the name of a hyperbolised autonomy, and to relationships that cannot be sustained *in real world contexts of radical dependency* on the Other" (p. 4; my italics). We remain interrelated with, and dependent on, the more-than-human world, even though we deny this interrelationality. Plumwood presents how "[o]ur failure to situate dominant forms of human society ecologically is matched by our failure to situate non-humans ethically" (2002, p. 2) creating a host of environmental crises (2002, p. 1-2).

Mick Smith (2013) uses the language of human exemptionalism and exceptionalism to address human/nonhuman separation: "[e]xemptionalism treats ecology and human community as entirely distinct realms, it considers humans as being(s) outside and/or above (exempt from)

[30] These include accounts of chimpanzees (de Waal, 2005, 2007; Hribal, 2010), elephants (Bradshaw, 2004; Hribal, 2010; Rothfels, 2005), mimic octopus (Fawcett, 2012), orca whales (Hribal, 2010), and tigers (Hribal, 2010; Vaillant, 2011).

any ecological considerations. Exceptionalism, whether religious or humanist, regards human communities as distinguished by an ethics and/or politics in which no beings other than humans can possibly participate" (p. 23-24). M. Smith also sees that despite the prevalence of belief in human exemptionalism and exceptionalism, humans remain interrelated with the more-than-human world, and particularly develops this interrelationality through the loss experienced when species go extinct. According to M. Smith "one might say, the realisation of ecological community only begins to make sense through the senseless event of extinction" (2013, p. 29). I do have issues with this claim insofar as it suggests that we may *need* extinction in order to develop better relations with the more-than-human world, and it dismisses cultures who have retained ethical consideration of the more-than-human world without needing to experience extinction. However, I do agree with M. Smith that a loss is experienced via extinction, similar to the loss experienced when someone we know dies, which reveals unexamined layers of our interrelatedness: "as we think about these relations and the roles they occupied we realise that there is actually no way of ever summing up the constitutive roles they played in sustaining and/or transforming the community of which they formed a part" (2013, p. 23).

Humans are interrelated with the more-than-human world in lived experience, through evolution, regarding what we need to live well, and in myriad other ways. Various processes and beliefs arising throughout Western history have worked to marginalize this interrelationality: to make it appear as though it does not exist, or is not important. However, interrelationality continues to impact our lives, and when we do not recognize it, our lives can be negatively affected. I would assert that this is true regarding not only interrelationality with the more-than-human world, but also regarding how humans are interrelated with societal and political systems

and structures. Regarding decolonization, it is important to recognize how settlers and Indigenous peoples are also interrelated with settler colonialism.

Interrelationality and Settler Colonialism

Settler colonialism differs from colonialism. As Lorenzo Veracini (2011) argues, "[c]olonisers and settler colonisers want essentially different things" (p. 1). Colonialism is a metropole—some center of power—controlling a foreign colony, and Indigenous peoples there, often primarily to extract wealth from the colony and return that wealth to the metropole. Jürgen Osterhammel (2005) says that "[*c*]*olonialism* is a relationship of domination between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis" (p. 16-17; Osterhammel's italics). Tuck and Yang (2012) state that "[*e*]*xternal colonialism*[31] . . . denotes the expropriation of fragments of Indigenous worlds, animals, plants and human beings, extracting them in order to transport them to – and build the wealth, the privilege, or feed the appetites of – the colonizers" (p. 4; Tuck & Yang's italics).

"Settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5). Veracini (2011) summarizes the distinction by saying "if I come and say: 'you, work for me', it's not the same as saying 'you, go away'" (p. 1). This 'go away' addresses how, in order for settlers to settle, they must take over Indigenous lands. Patrick Wolfe (2006) conceptualizes that "settler colonialism has both negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively,

[31] Tuck and Yang (2012) address how external colonialism is different than internal colonialism, as well as settler colonialism, but I do not feel that defining internal colonialism is necessary for my purposes in this paper.

it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base—as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event" (2006, p. 388). That is, settler colonialism is not some unjust occurrence that happened in the past; instead it is a system that continues to exist and affect peoples' lives. Jared Sexton (2016) notes how, through creating a settler society on Indigenous lands, "[s]ettler colonialism . . . seeks over time to eliminate the categories of colonizer and colonized through a process by which the former replaces the latter completely, usurping the claim to indigenous residence" (p. 585). Veracini (2010) expands on how settlers come to make themselves appear 'indigenous' to colonized lands. According to Tuck and Yang (2012), in settler colonialism, "[l]and is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence" (p. 5). Coulthard (2014) declares that "Canada is no different from most other settler-colonial powers: in the Canadian context, colonial domination continues to be structurally committed to maintain . . . ongoing state access to the land and resources" (p. 7).

Wolfe (2006) addresses how settler states gain access to Indigenous lands (and resources) through a maintained logic of elimination that continuously removes Indigenous peoples from their lands: "elimination is an organizing principal of settler-colonial society rather than a one-off (and superseded) occurrence" (2006, p. 388). Veracini (2010) addresses forms of elimination through an entire alphabet of 'transfer' (p. 33-52), which includes "when the indigenous communities are militarily liquidated" (p. 35), "when indigenous communities are forcibly deported" (p. 35); and also symbolic and discursive forms of elimination, such as "when indigenous peoples are not considered indigenous to the land" (p. 35), "when indigenous people

are understood as part of the landscape" (p. 37), and "when a 'tide of history' rationale is invoked to deny legitimacy to ongoing indigenous presences and grievances. This transfer focuses on 'fatal impacts', on indigenous discontinuity with the past, and typically expresses regret for the *inevitable* 'vanishing' of indigenous people" (p. 41; Veracini's italics). Wolfe's discussion of settler colonialism's inherent logic of elimination develops into presenting settler colonialism as 'structural genocide' (2006, p. 401). And as this elimination need not occur through killing, Wolfe contends that settler colonialism "is a larger category than genocide" (2006, p. 402). Through its logic of elimination, settler colonialism is foundationally unethical and cannot be 'fixed.' In the context of settler colonialism, ethical relations require an end to the settler state.

Furthermore, it is important to address what settlers are, in relation to settler colonialism. Rachel Flowers (2015) says that settler "is a critical term that denaturalizes and politicizes the presence of non-Indigenous people on Indigenous lands, but also can disrupt the comfort of non-Indigenous people by bringing ongoing colonial power relations into their consciousness" (p. 33). Coulthard (2014) elaborates:

> A settler-colonial relationship is one characterized by a particular form of *domination*; that is, it is a relationship where power—in this case, interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power—has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the *dispossession* of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority. (p. 6-7; Coulthard's italics)

It is settlers who enact this dispossession. Understanding that the removal of Indigenous peoples occurs not only in physical ways but also discursively and symbolically, settler presence on Indigenous lands serves to reposition Indigenous lands as settler lands. That is to say, in living

as a settler on the Haudenosaunee, Nishnaabeg, and Wendat lands where I have lived,[32] I have put forward a position that these lands are settler lands. My life and presence has served to disappear Indigenous presences and histories; and—beyond the political actions that physically move Indigenous peoples off their lands or onto diminished portions of their traditional territories—my possession of Indigenous land, through my presence on it, serves to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands. I do not believe that considering myself as *complicit* in settler colonialism is enough; settlers are settler colonialism manifest.

I find 'settler' to be a politically motivating identity for me to take on as it names my culpability in settler colonialism and reminds me of my accountability to decolonization. However, I do not believe it is my place to define, dictate, or police who else does or does not identify as a settler.[33] Addressing how settlers work to reframe themselves as 'indigenous' to colonized lands, Veracini (2010) purports that there is an apparent "need to pit indigenising settlers against exogenous (often racialized) alterities" (p. 26). There are ongoing debates regarding whether people, primarily Africans, who were forcibly brought to Turtle Island as slaves, and their descendants, who have not gained the benefits of settler colonialism that white settlers have, ought to be considered settlers. And there are similar debates considering people, primarily people of colour, who have migrated to Turtle Island as a result of global imperialism and capitalism, and who often remain marginalized in settler colonial societies, including recent migrants and refugees.[34] I am not interested, here, in engaging in these debates of who is and who is not a settler, although I do want to recognize that diversity exists amongst non-Indigenous

[32] Namely Baawitigong/Sault Ste. Marie, Nogojiwanong/Peterborough, and Toronto. See my Introduction for more information on these lands.
[33] In this paper, I refer to non-Indigenous people who are *not* settlers as arrivants, sharing language used by Byrd (2011). I also refer to 'non-Indigenous people' when I am discussing settlers and arrivants.
[34] For perspectives on these debates see Amadahy & Lawrence (2009), Lawrence & Dua (2005), Sexton (2016), Sharma & Wright (2009), A. Smith, (2010a), and Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel (2014).

people on colonized lands and that diversity exists even amongst settlers. Settler colonialism intersects with other structures of oppression, including heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism.[35] As a middle-class, white, heterosexual, cisgender, currently able-bodied, settler, man, I occupy positions of power across many axes. I do not intend this as a hollow naming of identities, but, similar to 'settler,' I am naming these positions to denaturalize and politicize them (Flowers, 2015, p. 33), and to declare them as positions whose dominance needs to be done away with. Arguing, for instance, that the descendants of slaves ought to consider themselves settlers because they are on colonized lands, regardless of their being forced onto these lands, reproduces my dominant position within white supremacy, claiming that I have a say over Black lives. Instead, I will leave it to different peoples to figure out whether and where they ought to recognize culpability in settler colonialism.

Considering interrelationality, settlers and Indigenous peoples are interrelated with settler colonialism insofar as we continue to live in and against the settler colonial structure; but, moreover, settlers are interrelated with settler colonialism by being the agential manifestations of it. Where the settler colonial structure needs to be done away with in order for ethical relations to arise, so too, the settler position needs to be done away with—although this paper explores where doing away with the settler position may be able to occur through settlers becoming something other than settlers, and not necessarily through their elimination. Seeking the elimination of settlers is especially risky where oppressed groups might be inappropriately lumped into the category of 'settler.'

[35] See Amadahy & Lawrence (2009), Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill (2013), Byrd (2011), Lawrence (2003), Lawrence & Dua (2005), Maracle (1996), Morgensen (2011), Razack (2002), Sexton (2016), Sharma & Wright (2009), A. Simpson (2014), A. Smith (2010a, 2010b), Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel (2014), and Tuck & Yang (2012).

Settler Colonialism and Nonhumans

Nonhumans are also affected by settler colonialism. We have seen where Indigenous understandings of nonhumans differ from dominant Western understandings, particularly where dominant Western understandings deny nonhuman rationality (Plumwood, 2002), whereas Yellowknives Dene understand that nonhumans possess spirit and agency (Coulthard, 2014, p. 61). I believe it is safe to understand that where settler colonialism has acted to marginalize Indigenous understandings, it has also worked to marginalize Indigenous understandings of nonhuman spirit, agency, and rationality. Settler colonialism has served to force nonhumans into colonial relations in which they are dominated by settlers in much the same way that it has forced Indigenous peoples into settler-colonial relationships. Billy-Ray Belcourt (2015) understands that settler colonialism "denies animality its own subjectivity" (p. 5) and

> propose[s] a re-locating of animal ontologies within decolonial thought that engages critically with the ways in which settler colonialism objectivizes animal bodies as one of many intersecting settler colonial *particularities*. That is, I have attempted to demonstrate that settler colonialism is invested in animality and therefore re-makes animal bodies into colonial subjects to normalize settler modes of political life (*i.e.*, territorial acquisition, anthropocentrism, capitalism, white supremacy, and neoliberal pluralism) that further displace and disappear Indigenous bodies and epistemologies. In that sense, decolonization is not possible without centering an animal ethic. (p. 9; Belcourt's italics)

In continuing my proposal for settler grounded normativity, and addressing connected questions of human interrelatedness with the more-than-human world and what types of beings nonhumans are, I think it is valuable to keep in mind where settler colonialism has detrimentally affected understandings of and relationships with the more-than-human world, and also where settler grounded normativity may "engage with a politics of animality that not only recalls 'traditional' and/or 'ceremonial' human-animal relations, but is also accountable to animal subjectivities and

futurities outside settler colonialism *and* within a project of decolonization" (Belcourt, 2015, p. 8).[36]

Summary

Indigenous writers have discussed interrelationality as a characteristic of the more-than-human world, a foundation of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, and an understanding with spiritual, political, and social significance. A host of disciplines, as well as Western theories of phenomenology and evolution, can be understood as ultimately revolving around interrelationality, suggesting that there is an empirical reality to interrelationality that dominant Western worldviews tend to ignore. Various writers have described where a shift occurred in Western history, from humans understanding themselves as being interrelated with the more-than-human world to understanding themselves as being separate from it. Plumwood (2002) addresses a privileging of rationalism in Western traditions and a disavowal of nonhuman rationality; together, these actions reduce nonhumans to a position where they are no longer beings with whom humans understand themselves as capable of being interrelated. However, writers including Abram (1997), Plumwood (2002), and M. Smith (2013) work to re-emphasize human interrelationality with the more-than-human world, and recognize this interrelationality is important for addressing current environmental crises.

Beyond being interrelated with the more-than-human world, settlers and Indigenous peoples are interrelated with settler colonialism as settler colonialism exists as an ongoing structure (Wolfe, 2006), and settlers are the agential manifestation of this structure. Given settler colonialism's genocidal logic of elimination, the settler colonial structure and position need to be

[36] Where Belcourt (2015) focuses on nonhuman animals, I believe it is important to engage with a politics that recalls human/nonhuman relations and is accountable to nonhuman subjectivities and futurities beyond nonhuman animals, i.e., plants, waters, minerals, air, etc.

done away with in order to achieve ethical relations with Indigenous peoples. However, diversity amongst non-Indigenous peoples on colonized lands means that perhaps not all non-Indigenous peoples on colonized lands ought to be considered settlers. How settler colonialism impacts nonhumans also ought to be addressed in decolonization.

Chapter Two
Interrelational Ethical Relations

Considering the relations that need to be rectified from the separation of humans from the more-than-human world, and in the context of settler colonialism, moves toward the second part of my tripartite framework for grounded normativity: interrelationality demands ethical relationships. In his book, *Thinking Through Animals,* continental philosopher Matthew Calarco (2015) categorizes theories in critical animal studies into three tendencies: identity, difference, and indistinction frameworks. Identity frameworks assert that nonhuman animals deserve ethics insofar as they are similar to humans. Difference frameworks assert that nonhuman animals deserve ethics arising out of their differences from humans. Indistinction frameworks assert that the division of human and animals into separate categories is what limits ethical consideration for nonhuman animals and therefore, human/animal distinctions need to be disrupted. These frameworks are useful for considering *how* interrelationality demands ethical relationships. However, I believe that Calarco's conceptualization of indistinction works to disrupt human/animal distinctions through identity, and that Calarco misses where human/animal distinctions can also be disrupted through difference. In *The Transit of Empire*, Byrd (2011) develops a concept of cacophony, which overruns distinctions between who benefits and who suffers from U.S. empire. Cacophony addresses how ethical consideration can arise from multiple locations and, I believe, is better than indistinction for challenging hegemonic centring, upholding accountability, and avoiding 'moves to innocence.'[37] Therefore, I assert that interrelationality ought to be understood as demanding ethical relations via cacophony in terms of both human/nonhuman and settler/Indigenous relations.

[37] 'Moves to innocence' are a concept developed by Mawhinney (1998), and Tuck & Yang (2012), defined and discussed later in this chapter.

Frameworks for Ethical Relations

Identity

As presented by Plumwood (2002), nonhumans have been denied ethical consideration primarily through being understood as lacking rationality. Calarco (2015) addresses rationality as "*logos*, understood here as reason and its associated capacities and faculties (language, consciousness, subjectivity, and so on)" (p. 22).[38] Identity theorists argue that *where* animals *do* possess *logos*, they deserve ethics on the same grounds and in the same forms as humans. Therefore, Peter Singer has argued for animal ethics according to utilitarianism (Calarco, 2015, p. 14-16), Tom Regan according to Kantian rights-based ethics (Calarco, 2015, p. 16-18), and Paola Cavalieri according to human-rights frameworks (Calarco, 2015, p. 18-19). Foregoing discussion of where these ethical theories may themselves be limited or ineffective, I believe that identity frameworks fail to effectively extend ethics to nonhuman animals in two major ways.

First, as Calarco (2015) explains, identity theorists point to how evolution creates continuity between animals, including humans and nonhuman animals, to argue that it is unreasonable to assume that *logos* arose solely in humans and no other animals possess it (p. 12-13). However, even from this argument, there are foreseeable limits to which animals will be understood as possessing *logos* and thereby deserving of ethics—only "great apes, cetaceans, and a handful of mammal and bird species" (2015, p. 43), according to Calarco. If identity frameworks are accepted, then I foresee that animal ethics will become perpetual efforts to demonstrate *logos* in more and more species. However, granting some animals ethical consideration for possessing *logos* provides additional arguments for denying ethics to species

[38] I want to re-assert that denying ethics along these lines has primarily been an issue in dominant Western traditions of thought; it is not a universal phenomenon. In not considering other traditions of thought, I find Calarco's (2015) work is quite Eurocentric; however, I believe it is still useful in understanding dominant Western perspectives, with this limitation in mind.

that cannot be easily demonstrated to possess *logos*. Attempting to extend ethics via *logos* is limited in what animals it benefits and also reinforces that those animals that do not possess *logos*, or cannot be easily demonstrated to possess *logos*, do not deserve ethical consideration.

Second, identity frameworks do not alter the underlying dynamic that concerns Plumwood (2002), where a privileging of human rationalism has denied ethics to 'irrational' beings. Identity theorists only assert that some nonhumans ought to also be understood as possessing *logos* and are thereby deserving of ethics. Ethical consideration is still anthropocentric, as is *logos*: unique forms of nonhuman rationality or subjectivity are not easily accepted as deserving ethical consideration. Therefore, I do not believe that identity frameworks actually alter ethics; they merely move *some* animals onto the human side of the human/animal distinction. Calarco (2015) shares this critique (p. 50).

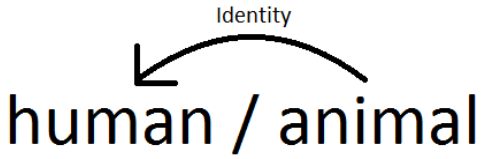

Fig. 1 – showcasing Identity frameworks as moving some animals onto the 'human' side of human/animal distinctions.

Difference

Quite the opposite of identity frameworks, difference frameworks work to extend ethics to nonhuman animals on the very basis that they *are different* from humans. Calarco (2015) presents difference frameworks as arising from two arguments. First, "critique[s] of humanism" (Calarco, 2015, p. 29-31) argue that there is no homogeneous human to compare other animals to because there is no universal human essence: humans are not wholly autonomous but are tied into history, culture, economics, and other structures. Second, Calarco uses Emmanuel Levinas' work to express an "ethics of otherness" (2015, p. 29, 31-33). Levinas claims that we experience *calls* to be ethical in moments when we encounter Others. That or how we respond to these calls is not defined, but, according to Calarco, the key for difference theorists is that "whatever my

response is, it arises precisely *as a response* to the Other, from a source radically different from me that calls into question my typical ways of thinking and living" (2015, p. 32; Calarco's italics). "An ethics of difference starts from the premise that the ultimate origin of ethics resides with the Other, with radical difference, or *heteronomy*" (Calarco, 2015, p. 32; Calarco's italics). In this way, I feel that difference theorists do not truly outline a basis for where ethical consideration arises, and instead present that beings simply make their need for ethical consideration known, through the call.

Critiques of humanism and ethics of otherness do not necessitate considering nonhumans ethically, but they do provide room for it (Calarco, 2015, p. 33-34). Jacques Derrida posits that we can experience calls to be ethical to nonhuman animal Others in the same way as human Others, and describes experiencing calls to be ethical to a cat (Calarco, 2015, p. 40). In a move that I support, Derrida posits that in being ethical to this cat, he needs to consider *this* particular cat's particular ethical needs (Calarco, 2015, p. 39-40). Ethics are not homogeneous for all cats or all animals, nor for all humans or all beings.

However, Calarco (2015) presents that this accounting for difference in ethical consideration often makes difference frameworks ineffective at proposing initiatives for extending ethics to nonhuman animals. Difference theorists often focus on addressing differences—heteronomy—within human and animal positions and, because of the multitude of differences, get stuck there. Difference theorists tend to critique where proposed (predominantly identity) initiatives exclude certain animals and/or humans, but rarely offer alternative ethical initiatives that would account for differences (Calarco, 2015, p. 44-46).

Calarco (2015) also presents that difference theorists, particularly Derrida, believe that despite heteronomy within animals and humans, there is still something that distinguishes

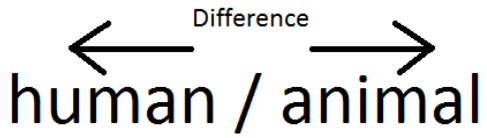

Fig. 2 – showcasing Difference frameworks as expanding the differences on both sides of human/animal distinctions.

humans from other animals, or at least that it is still effective to make use of such a distinction, although this distinction is not understood to be as straightforward as the possession of *logos*. According to Calarco, "Derrida's worry here . . . is that eliminating the human/animal distinction will lead to the flattening out of differences among human beings and animals rather than to their thickening and multiplication" (2015, p. 47). As I understand it, eliminating the human/animal distinction will allow for animal differences to be overlooked, meaning that any ethics extended to them will not address their particular ethical needs. Calarco does not believe that this needs to be the case (2015, p. 47)—nor do I—and therefore moves into indistinction frameworks.

Indistinction

Both identity and difference frameworks maintain human/animal distinction. Identity frameworks offer ethical consideration to some nonhuman animals by moving them onto the human side of the distinction, and difference frameworks offer an ethics of otherness through the distinction. Evident from the name, indistinction frameworks work to challenge human/animal distinction:

> Might it not be more effective to set this distinction aside and also set aside the concern with anthropological difference(s)—at least temporarily—in order to develop alternative lines of thought? What other possibilities might open up when we no longer take distinctions between human beings and animals as the chief point of departure for thought and practice? (Calarco, 2015, p. 51)

Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (2003) differentiate between affirmative and transformative "strategies for redressing for injustice" (p. 74):

> Affirmative strategies for redressing for injustice aim to correct inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying social structures that generate them. Transformative strategies, in contrast, aim to correct unjust outcomes precisely by

> restructuring the underlying generative framework . . . whereas affirmation targets end-state outcomes, transformation addresses root causes. (p. 74)

By being the only one of Calarco's (2015) frameworks to challenge human/animal distinctions, I believe that only indistinction frameworks can be said to be transformative.[39] In this way, identity and difference frameworks do not address root causes, which creates limitations regarding what these frameworks can achieve in terms of ethics. Moreover, understanding indistinction as transformation impacts the ultimate results of indistinction: "[f]ar from simply raising the self-esteem of the misrecognized, [indistinction] would destabilize existing status differentiations and change *everyone's* self-identity" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 75; Fraser & Honneth's italics).

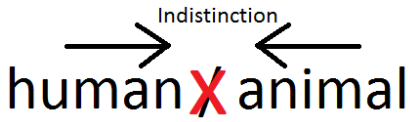

Fig. 3 – showcasing Indistinction frameworks as eliminating human/animal distinctions through some shared identity.

Indistinction frameworks work to challenge human/animal distinction on the basis that humans and nonhuman animals are not distinct. That is, indistinction frameworks "recognize a profound, deep identity with animal life" (Calarco, 2015, p. 61). However, indistinction frameworks differ from identity frameworks because while they do assert that there is something that identifies nonhuman animals with humans, which offers nonhuman animals ethical consideration, this basis for ethical consideration is not centered on humans. Critiquing identity frameworks, Calarco (2015) states, "[w]hen we place human beings at the center of ethical reflection and then direct our attention outward, looking for analogues of the human, we have ultimately done very little to displace the very discourses and practices that gave rise to the problems at hand" (p. 50), i.e., as presented, in identity frameworks ethical consideration remains anthropocentric. Amongst the theorists that Calarco categorizes as

[39] I do not believe that Calarco (2015) uses the terms 'affirmation' and 'transformation' according to Fraser and Honneth's (2003) definitions. For instance, Calarco refers to both affirmation and transformation in regards to difference frameworks (2015, p. 32) in a way that does not fit the definition of transformation that I am describing here.

indistinction theorists, Plumwood identifies humans and nonhumans through both being something 'more'—"more than prey, more than 'mere' meat" (2015, p. 61); Elizabeth Grosz and Brian Massumi identify humans and nonhumans through the creativity of animal life; and Jason Hribal puts an emphasis on animal agency (2015, p. 62). These concepts serve as the grounds for ethical consideration in these different theories, and none can be subsumed to the human in the way that *logos* can.

As presented by Calarco (2015), indistinction frameworks arise because whatever we hold to be the distinguishing feature between humans and nonhuman animals falls apart as we continue to learn more about nonhuman animals. Calarco looks to Giorgio Agamben's conceptualization of an 'anthropological machine' to present that the distinction between humans and nonhuman animals is not some empirical truth of reality, but instead humans are constantly *made distinct* from other animals in Western philosophy: "[t]he separation of human life from animal life . . . cannot just be read off of the natural world, as if human beings arrive into the world already neatly distributed into various categories and attributes . . . It is the machine itself that creates, reproduces, and maintains the distinction between human life and animal life" (2015, p. 53-54). Significantly, Agamben's anthropological machine arises out of defining what aspects of human life are 'animal' and what aspects are "properly political human life" (Calarco, 2015, p. 53), *within* the human.

According to Calarco (2015), "Agamben argues that we should aim to stop this machine and try to think more carefully about the *indistinction* of human and animal life, prior to their separation. What kind of politics might emerge beyond the exclusion of human animality and the biopolitical shaping of 'proper' humanity?" (p. 54; Calarco's italics). For other theorists, the anthropological machine is simply no longer tenable given what we know of nonhuman animals:

> The issue here is not simply that all of the traditional ways of cleanly distinguishing human beings from animals have been compromised—this is obviously very much the case. Rather, what Haraway and related theorists stress is that the distinctions have been undermined so radically that the very prospect of trying to re-establish them along other lines no longer seems plausible. (Calarco, 2015, p. 51)

Calarco asserts that Donna Haraway's work has demonstrated an end to the anthropological machine particularly through biological arguments (2015, p. 51-53). Calarco summarizes that indistinction theorists are working on two projects:

> (1) determining which structures of power are most fundamental in perpetuating violence against animals and how best to resist those structures and (2) exploring alternative, less violent ways of living with and among animals. Translating these questions into the concepts from Agamben we examined earlier, indistinction theorists are seeking to figure out how the anthropological machine functions in order both to stop it and to create other forms of life beyond it. (2015, p. 63)

Difference frameworks were critiqued for getting stuck in exploring heteronomy, and therefore failing to propose actual initiatives to extend ethics to nonhuman animals. I believe that indistinction frameworks also tend to remain unclear about how to enact ethics in real ways, deserving a similar critique. For instance, Calarco (2015) looks to Gilles Deleuze to propose a process of becoming-animal: "a refusal to enact the ideals and subjectivity that the dominant culture associates with being a full human subject and to enter into a relation with the various minor, or nondominant, modes of existence that are commonly viewed as being the 'other' of the human" (p. 57). This project may be valuable; however, I believe that it needs to be further developed if it is to be enacted in real ways—although perhaps this development occurs in Deleuze's own work.

Cacophony

Calarco (2015) presents indistinction—disrupting human/animal distinctions by reference to some shared, non-anthropocentric identity between humans and nonhumans—as the third way that critical animal theorists attempt to extend ethical consideration to nonhumans; I do not feel

that Calarco offers that there might be other ethical frameworks that he has not considered. In doing so, Calarco misses where distinctions can also be overrun through difference. Overrunning distinctions via difference allows for ethical consideration to arise from multiple locations, creating space to extend ethical consideration to more beings.

In *The Transit of Empire*, Byrd (2011) outlines differences in how Turtle Island Indigenous peoples, Africans, Caribbeans, Pacific Islanders (particularly Hawaiians), Asians, etc. have been impacted by U.S. empire and corresponding differences regarding the redress that different peoples need. Byrd purports that U.S. empire continuously makes itself against 'the Indian', and therefore, these different peoples are framed as Americans, Indians, or others, in different cases and at different times, depending on the demands of U.S. empire (2011, p. xvii-xviii).

Complicating matters is that 'the Indian' is defined in different ways at different times, again responding to the needs of U.S. empire. For instance, the 1857 legal case *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, defined Black peoples as not like Indians in order to justify Black slavery along racist lines. Contrary to Black peoples, Indians, "although they were uncivilized, they were yet a free and independent people, associated together in nations or tribes, and governed by their own laws . . . These Indian Governments were regarded and treated as foreign Governments, as much so as if an ocean had separated the red man from the white" (Taney cited in Byrd, 2011, p. 168). Contrarily, arguments against Hawaiian calls for sovereignty have claimed that Hawaiians do not even deserve self-governance on Indian reservation-style lands because Hawaiians are not Indians and therefore do not need the same levels of 'protection.' In these arguments, "Indians have been regarded as aliens. They get their rights, such as they have, by treaties between them and the federal government . . . The Indians were a roving, nomadic race of people. They did not

take to civilization the way the Hawaiians did" (Robertson cited in Byrd, 2011, p. 166). These two definitions of 'Indians' are clearly at odds, yet both were *used* to achieve differing desires of U.S. empire. And yet neither of these definitions contest the understanding that there is some homogeneous *Indian*, instead of a number of different Indigenous nations (Byrd, 2011, p. 73).

Related to the debates mentioned in Chapter One regarding whether descendants of slaves ought to be considered settlers, there are debates around whether slavery or settler colonialism ought to be considered the originary violence of U.S. empire. Interconnected are debates of whether the colonization of Indigenous peoples is ultimately a derivation of anti-Black racism and slavery, or whether slavery is ultimately a derivation of colonization. Making different peoples against 'the Indian' suggests that settler colonialism was an originary violence of U.S. empire (Byrd, 2011, p. xiii, xvii-xviii), and I believe that Byrd does want to highlight that U.S. empire was created on colonized Indigenous lands and therefore, overcoming U.S. empire *needs* to address settler colonialism. However, I do not believe that Byrd intends to describe settler colonialism as *the* originary violence, in the sense that all violent enactments of U.S. empire can be reduced back to settler colonialism alone. Byrd repeatedly iterates that differences should not be collapsed (2011, p. xxvi-xxvii, 12-13, 18, 54), which I believe includes collapse back to settler colonialism. Andrea Smith (2010a) offers a significant conceptualization of white supremacy as "constituted by [three] separate and distinct [that is, irreducible to one another], but still interrelated, logics . . . (1) slaveability/anti-Black racism, which anchors capitalism; (2) genocide, which anchors colonialism; and (3) orientalism, which anchors war" (p. 1).

> In this model, however, we see that we are not only victims of white supremacy, but complicit in it as well. Our survival strategies and resistance to white supremacy are set by the system of white supremacy itself . . . For example, all non-Native peoples are promised the ability to join in the colonial project of settling indigenous lands. All non-black peoples are promised that if they conform [to capitalist wage labour], they will not be at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. And black and native peoples are promised that

> they will advance economically and politically if they join US wars to spread "democracy". (A. Smith, 2010a, p. 2-3)

Byrd (2011) predominantly relays where different peoples surviving against U.S. empire have also been complicit in various violences of U.S. empire, blurring the lines of who perpetrates U.S. empire and who struggles against it. But Byrd also maintains that *all* violences of U.S. empire need to be addressed; different violences ought not to be reduced to one another. Byrd goes so far as to say, "the historical processes that have created our contemporary moment have affected everyone at various points along their transits with and against empire" (2011, p. xxxix). Instead of one voice against U.S. empire, or several—for instance, Indigenous, African, Asian, etc. voices—Byrd proffers cacophony, which denotes, to me, a multitude of discordant voices which need to be addressed in the face of U.S. empire.[40] And this cacophony overruns the *distinction* of who is on the side of U.S. empire and who is against it. Byrd claims that "it is time to imagine indigenous decolonization as a process that restores life and allows settler, arrivant, and native to apprehend and grieve together the violences of U.S. empire" (2011, p. 229).

I believe that a similar overrunning of distinction ought to occur regarding difference within human/animal positions; however, Calarco (2015) does not make this move, leading me to present cacophony as an additional option for considering nonhumans ethically. There is too much discordant heteronomy across and within human and animal positions, so instead of focusing on exploring heteronomy, and getting stuck there, we ought to reach a point where we accept that neither the animal nor the human position can be held, and thereby work to *transform* the underlying divisive structure. In focusing on

Fig. 4 – showcasing Cacophonous differences amongst humans and animals as overrunning human/animal distinctions.

[40] Writers including Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013; Lawrence, 2003; Maracle, 1996; Morgensen, 2011; Razack, 2002; A. Simpson, 2014; and A. Smith, 2010b have examined ways that colonialism affects different sexual and gender identities differently. This discussion is not taken up by Byrd (2011), but adds more layers to cacophony.

transforming underlying structures, cacophony is similar to Calarco's indistinction; however, whereas indistinction seeks to find some identity, cacophony maintains difference.

I mentioned where Calarco (2015) describes Plumwood (2000), in "Being Prey," as finding human/animal identity through some 'more.' However, in *Environmental Culture*, Plumwood (2002) suggests that perhaps there is not one 'more' that enables ethical consideration, but multiple—or, to keep consistency with language, cacophonous—'mores.' Here, Plumwood critiques Singer's explicit Minimalism, which focuses on extending ethics only to nonhumans that possess sentience and consciousness in human-defined ways (2002, p. 148-150). For Plumwood, it is arbitrary to declare consciousness as what is necessary for ethical consideration:

> Minimalism is not able to recognise consciousness as just one among many relevant differences between species, differences which are largely incommensurable as to value rather than hierarchically ordered along the lines of resemblance to the human. Rather Minimalism makes consciousness the basis for an absolute ethical positioning of all species within a hierarchy based on human norms. Minimalism does not really dispel speciesism, it just extends and disguises it. (2002, p. 148)

It is also arbitrary to define consciousness on human terms: "Minimalism continues to see consciousness in singular and cut-off terms, and discounts the great variety of forms of sentience and mind – hence Singer's conviction that trees have no forms of sentient or aware life, (which runs counter both to what is disclosed by any reasonably attentive observation and to scientific evidence)" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 148).

Particularly relevant for Plumwood (2002) is how Singer's Minimalism overlooks ethical consideration for plants, as demonstrated in that quote related to trees. Plumwood asserts that plants could be considered deserving of ethics if ethics were defined via intentionality and not consciousness. Plants are intentional:

> if a tree is a striving (teleological) and adaptive being, it must select some states to strive for (for example continued life, best development) and others to avoid (death). There is

> an important sense therefore in which death does 'matter' or 'make a difference' to a tree, and to any living being; since it clearly does strive to avoid death (for example by persistently sending out shoots around obstacles placed to block off its light) it is not the case that all states are indifferent to it. (Plumwood, 2002, p. 149)

Plumwood (2002) goes on to develop a basis for ethics in intentionality, as opposed to consciousness, but only after Plumwood asserts that "[*a*] *sharp cut-off or boundary for moral consideration is neither necessary nor desirable* . . . Finding respectful and reverential ways to use the earth to meet our life needs is a better way to protect nature than a rigid division between spheres of use and spheres of respect and reverence" (p. 145; my italics). Although I have been examining how different ethical frameworks define ethical consideration, I feel this assertion is significant regarding my project in this paper: if I am serious about developing ethical and just relations, then it seems problematic to define a particular basis for ethical consideration when ethics can be extended further. As Plumwood says, "you don't 'prove' a stance, you choose to adopt it" (2002, p. 184). Instead of trying to prove where ethical consideration arises, we can adopt a stance that different beings deserve ethics, and thereby work to develop ethical relations with them. Nonhuman animals might be ethically considered via their possession of *logos* or agency;[41] plants might be ethically considered for being intentional (Plumwood, 2002, p. 149); and glaciers and non-living materials might be ethically considered for having agency (Cruikshank, 2005; Bennett, 2010). Consideration of cacophonous 'mores' allows us to better address nonhumans beyond nonhuman animals.

Consideration of cacophonous 'mores' also returns us to Levinas' "ethics of otherness" (Calarco, 2015, p. 29, 31-33): there is no defined grounds for ethical consideration, instead beings make their need for ethical consideration known through a *call*, and it is up to us to respond to that call. And even where we might not be immediately faced with a call, we can still

[41] Again, for accounts that reveal nonhuman animal agency, see Bradshaw (2004), de Waal (2005, 2007), Hribal (2010), Fawcett (2012), Rothfels (2005), and Vaillant (2011).

adopt a stance to provide ethical consideration. However, cacophony differs from how Calarco (2015) presents difference frameworks by no longer holding a human/nonhuman distinction and no longer focusing on addressing heteronomy. Instead, cacophony looks to transform underlying structures of division: "[f]ar from simply raising the self-esteem of the misrecognized" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 75) "transformation addresses root causes" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 74).

Similar to indistinction frameworks, cacophony does not come with straightforward paths for being enacted. Byrd (2011) primarily examines works of art and literature to imagine how decolonization might proceed cacophonously. For instance, in relation to Wilson Harris' novel *Jonestown*, Byrd says "[t]here is a promised transformation within Harris's fictions, but it exists in the work that we as scholars and readers do with the tools Harris has given us to dismantle biases and revise rehearsals. He opens the door, and the question that faces those who read after him is where do we go from here" (2011, p. 115)? However, where cacophony focuses on irreducibility, I believe that defining straightforward paths for transformation would be inappropriate. Straightforward paths for transformation would *reduce* everyone to the same position regarding what is needed in transformation. Instead, I believe, beings and relations between beings need their own cacophonous paths of transformation.

Interrelationality as Cacophony

I believe that interrelationality might be understood as demanding ethics via indistinction; however, I assert that interrelationality can and ought to be understood as demanding ethics through cacophony. I believe that cacophony is better than indistinction for challenging hegemonic centring, upholding accountability, and avoiding 'moves to innocence.' Understanding interrelationality as demanding ethics through cacophony directs efforts to enact

ethical relations towards transforming underlying divisions and finding our own paths for such transformation.

In my opinion, from a dominant Western perspective, it does not necessarily follow that we need to have ethical relations with the more-than-human world just because we are interrelated with it. According to dominant Western philosophical argumentation, I believe there ought to be a move from 'we are interrelated' to 'interrelationality demands ethical relationships.' *I* have had a difficult time pinning down this move in Indigenous accounts of interrelationality. I believe that this move might be entrenched in larger Indigenous worldviews, and therefore, at times, Indigenous writers might not outline it clearly because they so deeply understand it and presume that others will understand it. This is not meant as a criticism of Indigenous philosophies, especially where Calarco's (2015) examination reveals that Western theorists are often unspecific about the basis for ethical consideration, either situating it simply in what is human or leaving ethical consideration to make itself known through a 'call.'

The Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Metis People of Alberta[42] (1991) attempts to summarize Indigenous worldviews by saying

> Indian and Metis worldviews can be characterized as cyclical/wholistic [*sic*], generalist, and process oriented . . . The wholistic view leads to an implicit assumption that everything is interrelated. Inter-relatedness leads to an implicit idea of equality among all creation. Equality is brought about by the implicit belief that everything – humans, animals, plants, and inorganic matter – has a spirit. Anthropomorphic factors are not important because metamorphosis readily occurs. The common denominator is the spirit . . . .
>
> . . . The cyclical aspect leads to respect for cycles, phases, and repetition. A circle can be viewed as a whole. It has no beginning or no end, but it can be viewed as going round and round, not unlike the cyclical patterns of the cosmos. Repetitive patterns do not lead to goal orientation as they would in a linear view. Rather, they focus on the process. Implicit is the belief that if the process is followed, a product will happen.
>
> When a circle is viewed as a whole, implicit convictions arise that, in the case of a society, the whole or the group is more important than a part or the individual. Being part of the group is better than being alone. The whole, combined with interrelatedness,

[42] Hereafter cited as "Task Force."

> results in values suggesting harmony and balance. Implicit in cycles and wholeness is generosity and sharing; everyone shares and shares alike. No one should be more important, wealthier, or different from everybody else. (p. 9–3)[43]

This account posits Indigenous worldviews as understanding: (1) that nonhumans have spirit; (2) that individuals are part of larger societies; and (3) that following processes creates certain results. All three of these understandings factor into Coulthard's (2014) discussion of how grounded normativity arises out of certain understandings of the more-than-human world. Regarding spirit, Coulthard states "human beings are not the only constituent believed to embody spirit or agency" (2014, p. 61). Regarding being part of larger societies, Coulthard asserts that "we are as much a part of the land as any other element" (2014, p. 61). And considering process, Coulthard notes, "humans held certain obligations to the land, animals, plants, and lakes in much the same way that we hold obligations to other people. And if these obligations were met, then the land, animals, plants, and lakes would reciprocate and meet their obligations to humans, thus ensuring the survival and well-being of all over time" (2014, p. 61). Coulthard's account of the raven and hunter (2014, p. 61-62), and L. Simpson's (2008) account of Nishnaabeg peoples maintaining relations with deer, moose, and caribou nations (p. 34) can also be read as examples of process in action, demonstrating where process works to enact ethical relations with the more-than-human world.[44] Where dominant Western culture does not understand nonhumans to be the *kind of beings* that humans can be interrelated with (Plumwood, 2002), humans *are interrelated with nonhumans* when nonhumans possess spirit and agency, are mutual members of a larger society, and can be engaged with through process.

[43] This summation of Indigenous worldviews was used to address Indigenous conceptions of justice, in order to explore how they differ from dominant Canadian conceptions of justice ("Task Force," 1991). I was directed to this summation of Indigenous worldviews via Leroy Little Bear's "Foreword" to Alfred (2009, p. 9-12). Little Bear was a member of the "Task Force" ("Task Force," 1991).

[44] These two stories can be found in appendices A and F, respectively.

These three concepts might make interrelationality appear to be an indistinction framework: spirit and agency are the grounds for identity, and mutual membership in larger societies and the possibility to enter into process work to challenge human/nonhuman distinction. However, I do not believe that members of larger societies need to be indistinct, or that beings need to be indistinct to enter into process with each other. And spirit and agency need not be understood homogenously: different beings can possess spirit and agency in different ways and forms, i.e., as cacophonous mores. Therefore, interrelationality can also be understood as cacophony.

Moreover, understanding interrelationality as cacophony will do more to ensure ethical relations are truly pursued. Although Calarco (2015) premises indistinction as finding some non-anthropocentric source of human/animal identity (p. 50), coming to indistinction *from a human position* leaves indistinction vulnerable to continuing to centre humans. Creativity *and agency*, sources of indistinctive identity that Calarco finds in works by Grosz, Massumi, and Hribal (Calarco, 2015, p. 62), are all understood to be human traits; these authors have to develop how nonhumans also possess these traits. Even in Plumwood (2000), it is only after *she* is attacked by a crocodile that Plumwood realizes that she, and other animals, are "more than prey, more than 'mere' meat" (Calarco, 2015, p. 61). However, in *Environmental Culture* Plumwood (2002) critiques deep ecologists who focus on unity (read: identity) with the more-than-human world: "[s]olidarity requires not just the affirmation of difference, but also sensitivity to the difference between positioning oneself *with* the other and positioning oneself *as* the other, and this requires in turn the recognition and rejection of oppressive concepts and projects of unity or merger" (2002, p. 202). According to Plumwood, "assumptions of unity of interest are especially liable to hegemonic interpretations, and . . . in the absence of a critical analysis of power are open to

cooptation by existing dominance orders" (2002, p. 204). Arguments for indistinction risk presenting humans and nonhumans as *indistinct on human terms*.

M. Smith (2013) writes about how some environmental writers understand that humans are not exempt from the more-than-human world, but still understand humans to be exceptional to the more-than-human world:

> Usually this means including other species as members of an ethical (but usually not political) community that is, nonetheless, constituted only be human concerns (insofar as only the human species is deemed to have the potential to be ethical). In other words, it is not just other human beings that matter ethically although *what matters is still what matters ethically* (in terms of appearance, effects, and significance) *to humans*. (p. 24-25; my italics).

If interrelationality demands ethics through identity-based indistinction, then it is easy to claim one's own ethical concerns as what everyone needs ethically. As humans *are radically dependent* on nonhumans (Plumwood, 2002, p. 4),[45] indistinction makes it easy to focus on this dependence, and not how humans also ought to be supporting the needs of nonhumans. Or, as Plumwood (2002) says, "'[i]dentification' has also made it easy for some transpersonal ecologists to import into the concept of solidarity various problematic themes of egoism, self-expansion and self-defence" (p. 202). Within cacophony, where there are cacophonous grounds for ethical consideration, humans and nonhumans cannot be made indistinct on human terms, and cacophonous ethical concerns, similarly, cannot be centred on humans.

The potential for continuing to centre humans is especially problematic where humans *are dominant over* nonhumans. In "Decolonization is not a metaphor," Tuck and Yang (2012) describe a number of 'moves to innocence' regarding settler attempts to engage in decolonization. The term 'moves to innocence' comes from Janet Mawhinney (1998), who wrote about them in anti-racist contexts rather than decolonial ones. In any case, moves to innocence

[45] See also Coulthard (2014, p. 61-62), McGregor (2004, p. 387-388), Mohawk (2010, p. 275).

are strategies used by dominant parties—white people in Mawhinney's work, settlers in Tuck and Yang's work—which attempt "to remove involvement in and culpability for systems of domination" (Mawhinney cited in Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9). Indistinction risks being such a move to innocence: either purporting that humans and nonhumans are indistinct, and therefore there is no domination, and relations do not need to be transformed, or purporting that humans are mutually suffering because of human/nonhuman distinctions, and therefore, we do not need to be accountable to our position of dominance. While M. Smith (2013) addresses the loss that humans feel because of extinction, we also need to be accountable to how humans are now, largely, causing this extinction. And while Byrd (2011) calls for "settler, arrivant, and native to apprehend and grieve together the violences of U.S. empire" (p. 229), settlers need to be accountable to how peoples have been oppressed in order to benefit settlers. Cacophony does disrupt sharp distinction between who is on the side of U.S. empire and who is suffering because of it, and cacophony does disrupt sharp distinction between humans and nonhumans; however, in still recognizing that different beings and positions *are different*, it allows individuals to address their cacophonous level of culpability in systems of domination. Flowers (2015) says that

> The category of settler is both a structural location and a product of social relations that produce privilege. The challenge, therefore, should be the subversion of that standing by refusing what settlers are, to allow new subjectivities to emerge. . . . As Indigenous peoples increasingly take up the politics of refusal ([A.] Simpson, 2014), the settler too must demonstrate a willingness to be refused. (p. 34)

In finding paths to transform human/nonhuman, settler/Indigenous, and other relations, we ought to be accountable to where we occupy positions of domination. Cacophony allows for this accountability in a way that indistinction does not.

Summary

According to Calarco (2015), critical animal theorists attempt to remedy unethical human/animal relations through identity, difference, and indistinction frameworks. Byrd's (2011) concept of cacophony works as another framework for ethics. Cacophony disrupts distinctions by overrunning them with too many irreducible positions for sharp distinctions to hold—thereby calling for a transformative rather than an affirmative enactment of ethics (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 74-75). But cacophony also recognizes that different beings have different needs and grounds for ethical consideration, meaning individuals need to find their own cacophonous paths for transformation. Respect for differences makes cacophony better than indistinction at avoiding hegemonic centring, not becoming a move to innocence, and upholding accountability. Therefore, interrelationality ought to be understood as demanding ethical relations through cacophony.

Chapter Three
Enacting Ethical Relations Against Settler Colonialism

Understanding that interrelationality demands ethical relationships through cacophony raises questions of how to enact these ethical relationships. As I have formulated, grounded normativity holds that interrelationality with the more-than-human world provides a basis for ethical relationships, and that engaging with the more-than-human world ought to teach us what ethical relationships look like and how they can be enacted. Coulthard (2014) says, "land . . . can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms" (p. 13). In classroom discussion, Coulthard and L. Simpson elaborated on the idea that in Indigenous cultures it matters *what you are doing* in relationship with the more-than-human world (personal communication, May 27, 2016), echoing ideas from the "Task Force" (1991) regarding process (p. 9–3). Certain practices enact grounded normativity and ethical relationships.

I believe that this understanding of learning with and from the more-than-human world may be the crux of grounded normativity. However, I have not yet had the space and time to explore how one can learn ethical relations through engagement with the more-than-human world: I plan for my Ph.D. work to focus on such questions. This paper closes with some of my preliminary thoughts regarding learning ethical relations with the more-than-human world, but this chapter focuses on exploring how ethical relations ought to be enacted in the context of settler colonialism.

Chapter One addressed where, when settler colonialism is a structure, and settlers are the agential manifestation of that structure, decolonization requires an end to settler colonialism and an end to the settler position, i.e., transformation not affirmation (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 74-75). Tuck and Yang (2012) denounce premature settler attempts at 'reconciliation' as not

decolonial.[46] Reconciliation enacts where indistinction can go problematically wrong: it asserts that settlers and Indigenous peoples are reconciled and are indistinct without doing the work to transform settler/Indigenous relations. Tuck and Yang describe reconciliation as where "the settler, disturbed by her own settler status, tries to escape or contain the unbearable searchlight of complicity, of having harmed others just by being one's self. The desire to reconcile is just as relentless as the desire to disappear the Native; it is a desire to not have to deal with this (Indian) problem anymore" (2012, p. 9).

Against reconciliation, Tuck and Yang (2012) call for an ethic of incommensurability, most readily as a call for solidarity between decolonial efforts and "human and civil rights based social justice projects" (p. 28). But incommensurability is a solidarity that recognizes where these projects have goals that do not and cannot align: civil rights projects are often about gaining rights within the settler state and decolonization is precisely about ending that state. With these understandings of reconciliation and incommensurability, Tuck and Yang end their paper by saying

> Reconciliation is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future. Reconciliation is concerned with questions of *what will decolonization look like? What will happen after abolition? What will be the consequences of decolonization for the settler?* Incommensurability acknowledges that these questions need not, and perhaps cannot, be answered in order for decolonization to exist as a framework.
>
> We want to say, first, that decolonization is not obliged to answer those questions - decolonization is not accountable to settlers, or settler futurity. Decolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity. Still, we acknowledge the questions of those wary . . . settlers who want to know what decolonization will require of them. The answers are not fully in view and can't be as long as decolonization remains punctuated by metaphor. The answers will not emerge from friendly understanding, and indeed require a dangerous understanding of uncommonality that un-coalesces coalition politics . . .
>
> To fully enact an ethic of incommensurability means relinquishing settler futurity, abandoning the hope that settlers may one day be commensurable to Native peoples. It

[46] See Freeman (2014) for a survey of Indigenous critiques of the Canadian government's efforts at 'reconciliation,' and also a discussion of how alternative (Indigenous) processes of reconciliation might be significant for decolonization.

> means removing the asterisks, periods, commas, apostrophes, the whereas's, buts, and conditional clauses that punctuate decolonization and underwrite settler innocence. The Native futures, the lives to be lived once the settler nation is gone - these are the unwritten possibilities made possible by an ethic of incommensurability. (2012, p. 35-36; Tuck & Yang's italics)

To me, incommensurability reflects where I have discussed settlers' need to be accountable to their dominant position, and where cacophony seeks to account for different violences of empire without reducing them and requires that people find their own paths to transformation. In this chapter, exploring how to enact ethical relations against settler colonialism—cacophonously—I outline Indigenous roles in decolonization via Indigenous resurgence, and then turn to considering what appropriate settler roles in decolonization are. I present, via Coulthard (2014), how politics of recognition fail to be decolonial and address how settlers are similarly not working towards decolonization if they only take on passive roles in decolonization. Thereby, I develop a tension where settlers ought to pursue *active* roles in decolonization, but settler action also needs to follow direction from Indigenous peoples. I enter into conversation with Victoria Freeman and Martha Stiegman to explore this tension. Freeman and Stiegman are settlers who have been involved in decolonial work with Indigenous peoples, and critically engaging with questions of how to appropriately, ethically, and effectively do decolonial work from a settler position, for considerable time. My conversations with Freeman and Stiegman particularly touch on appropriate engagement with Indigenous knowledge; the importance of developing relationships with Indigenous peoples; how settlers might work towards self-transformation; and how settlers might work through emotional difficulties that can arise in decolonial work.

Indigenous Roles in Decolonization: Indigenous Resurgence

In terms of Indigenous roles in decolonization, Coulthard (2014) calls on Indigenous peoples to "begin to collectively redirect our struggles . . . toward a *resurgent politics of recognition* premised on self-actualization, direct action, and the resurgence of cultural practices that are attentive to the subjective and structural composition of settler-colonial power" (p. 24; Coulthard's italics). "[Indigenous resurgence] calls on Indigenous people and communities to "turn away" from the assimilative reformism of the liberal recognition approach and to instead build our national liberation efforts on the revitalization of 'traditional' political values and practices" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 154).

L. Simpson and Alfred are amongst the prominent Indigenous writers currently putting forth visions of Indigenous resurgence. For L. Simpson (2011),

> Although I have been thinking about resistance for my entire adult life, it was not until I read Taiaiake Alfred . . . that I began to think about resurgence. Alfred's seminal works immediately spoke to my *(o)debwewin*, literally the sound my heart makes, or 'truth,' [47] because at the core of his work, he challenges us to reclaim the *Indigenous* contexts (knowledge, interpretations, values, ethics, processes) for our political cultures. In doing so, he refocuses our work from trying to transform the colonial outside into a flourishment of the *Indigenous* inside. We need to rebuild our culturally inherent philosophical contexts for governance, education, healthcare, and economy. We need to be able to articulate in a clear manner our visions for the future, for living as *Indigenous Peoples* in contemporary times. To do so, we need to engage in *Indigenous* processes, since according to our traditions, the processes of engagement highly influence the outcome of engagement itself . . . In essence, we need to not just figure out who we are; we need to re-establish the processes by which we live who we are within the current context we find ourselves. We do not need funding to do this. We do not need a friendly colonial political climate to do this. We do not need opportunity to do this. We need our Elders, our languages, and our lands, along with vision, intent, and commitment, community and ultimately, action. We must move ourselves beyond resistance and survival, to flourishment and mino bimaadiziwin.[48] If this approach does nothing else to shift the current state of affairs—and I believe it will—it will ground our peoples in our own cultures and teachings that provide the ultimate antidote to colonialism, which I believe is what Indigenous intellectuals and theorists have been encouraging us to do all along. (p. 16-17; L. Simpson's italics)

[47] See L. Simpson (2011) for a larger discussion of this term.
[48] See L. Simpson (2011) for a larger discussion of this term.

L. Simpson's project focuses on turning away from settler society and enacting Indigenous ways of being and living. Using Tuck and Yang's (2012) language, I want to say that L. Simpson aims to enact Indigenous futures in the present, although I imagine L. Simpson may dislike this characterization as her work emphasizes how Indigenous ways of being and living have continued to survive since before European arrival on Turtle Island, to the present day.

For Alfred (2009), in *Wasáse*, settler colonialism will be challenged via "spiritual transformation channelled into a political action and social movement" (p. 28), and therefore, resurgence begins with spiritual self-transformation:

> We will begin to make meaningful change in the lives of our communities when we start to focus on making real change in the lives of our people as individuals. It may sound clichéd, but it is still true that the first part of self-determination is the *self*. In our minds and in our souls, we need to reject the colonists' control and authority, their definition of who we are and what our rights are, their definition of what is worthwhile and how one should live, their hypocritical and pacifying moralities. We need to rebel against what they want us to become, start remembering the qualities of our ancestors, and act on those remembrances. This is the kind of spiritual revolution that will ensure our survival. (p. 32; Alfred's italics)

Alfred (2009) presents a framework where Indigenous peoples—often referred to as Onkwehonwe by Alfred—ought to become warriors, emerging from Indigenous understandings of what a warrior is, which differ from common English usage of the term. "Wasáse is an ancient Rotinoshonni war ritual, the Thunder Dance" (Alfred, 2009, p. 19). In developing this warrior framework, Alfred considers principles that Indigenous warriors ought to abide by, and names "creative contention, rootedness, and the ethic of courage" (2009, p. 257) as "the ideals I had come to know as the essence of being an Onkwehonwe warrior" (2009, p. 257).

Reflecting cacophony, Alfred (2009) believes that these ideals can and ought to be enacted in diverse ways, saying, "[t]here are many pathways to the achievement. The freedom and power that come from understanding and living a life of indigenous integrity are experienced by people in many different ways, and respect must be shown to the need for individuals to find

their way according to their own vision" (p. 39). L. Simpson (2011) also supports cacophonous enactments of Indigenous resurgence, stating "[w]e are each responsible for finding our own meanings . . . for coming to our own meaningful way of being in the world" (p. 43).

However, for both Alfred (2009) and L. Simpson (2011), *resurgence* is an *Indigenous* path to decolonization. L. Simpson states, "[w]e need to do this on our own terms, without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or the opinions of Canadians" (2011, p. 17). Alfred, however, does open space for settlers to find their own paths to decolonization. Alfred quotes Malcolm X to say that "Whites who are sincere should organize among themselves and figure out some strategy to break down the prejudice that exists in white communities. This is where they can function more intelligently and more effectively [Malcolm X, 1965, p. 221]" (2009, p. 236).

Settler Roles in Decolonization

Regarding settler roles in decolonization, the program for a talk by Richard Day and Bob Lovelace at the 2016 Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Conference at Trent University states: "we have the Tuck & Yang proposal that settlers should assume no 'futurity' and therefore no active role/voice in decolonization, or at least 'before' decolonization, which they understand as an event that will happen all at once in the future" (Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Conference, 2016, p. 19).[49] I do not read Tuck and Yang (2012) as stating whether or not settlers should assume an active role in decolonization, but just that decolonization requires 'no settler future,' and therefore it follows that if settlers want to participate in decolonization, we need to reject settler futures in the process.

[49] The talk is described as "[a] guided discussion on settler-Indigenous solidarity that tries to respond to the array of 'advice' that's out there right now" (Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Conference, 2016, p. 19), and positions Day and Lovelace's conceptualization of Tuck and Yang's (2012) rejection of settler futurity against other accounts of settler involvement in decolonization.

In my opinion, a strict reading of Tuck and Yang (2012) asserts that people who are currently settlers cannot exist in decolonial futures, and therefore, settlers ought to pursue not having a future. I see parallels between settlers pursuing 'no settler future,' and the nihilist anarchism of contemporary anarchist Aragorn! (2009): "[n]ihilist anarchism isn't concerned with a social revolution that adds a new chapter to an old history but the ending of history altogether. If not revolutionaries then possibly epochanaries, for the transformation of society without a positive program" (p. 12). In a decolonial context, Indigenous futurities exist as the positive program against an ending of settler history altogether. I believe that actively denying our own futures out to be considered in terms of settler roles in decolonization.[50] I have written a term paper on pursuing 'no settler future,' largely applying Lee Edelman's (2004) work on queer denials of futurity to a settler context. However, outside of Tuck and Yang, I have not read works by settlers *or* Indigenous peoples that focus on denying settler futures, and therefore, I will set aside that project for this paper. Instead, I will focus on what I consider to be a less strict reading of Tuck and Yang, where settler futures are denied because settlers cease to exist *as* settlers, and instead become something post-settler.[51]

Reflecting the differences between colonialism and settler colonialism, Sexton (2016) says that in colonialism, where colonizers retain distance from colonized lands, "[d]ecolonization . . . entails breaking the colonial relation, ending the encounter, and removing the colonizer from

[50] Although, I want to reiterate from Chapter One that not all non-Indigenous peoples on colonized lands ought to be considered settlers and that I am not interested in defining who is a settler. Here, where I am endorsing pursuing 'no settler future,' I am talking for myself. Especially where other oppressed and marginalized groups might be lumped into the category of 'settler,' I do not want to claim who else ought to pursue 'no settler future.'

[51] Becoming 'post-settler' is a phrase that I have come up with for describing settlers ceasing to exist *as* settlers in decolonial futures. This concept is further developed in the next few paragraphs. I am, myself, dissatisfied with this terminology, but I have had a difficult time developing a better term that does not also prematurely define decolonial settler identities or settler/Indigenous relations. I want to avoid language of transformation, such as 'transforming settlers,' because I have already presented Fraser and Honneth's (2003) definition of transformation. I also want to avoid language of decolonization, such as 'decolonizing settlers,' to avoid over-metaphorizing the term 'decolonization,' which Tuck and Yang (2012) are concerned about.

the territory in order to destroy the zoning that creates spaces for different 'species' and enables such massive exploitation" (p. 585).

> Settler decolonization, in turn, seeks to undermine the conditions of possibility of settler colonialism, but its trajectory involves consequences that are more severe, as it were, because the colonizer, **having taken root on conquered land**, must stay and live under a new dispensation. Undergoing conversion to native lifeways and submitting to native sovereignty and its related modes of governance, the erstwhile colonizer ceases to exist *as* colonizer, having been either taken in by the native community and/or repositioned, materially and symbolically, as a migrant engaged in an open-ended practice of reconciliation. (Sexton, 2016, p. 586; Sexton's italics; my bold)

The thought is that, in settler colonialism, settlers are so tied to colonized lands that they cannot or will not be easily removed, and therefore, the focus of decolonization ought to shift from removing settlers from colonized lands to settlers becoming something other than settlers. Along these lines, Flowers (2015) asserts that "[t]he labor of settlers should be to imagine alternative ways to be in relation with Indigenous peoples" (p. 34), adding that "[t]here has and continues to be space offered by Indigenous peoples for settlers to align themselves with our struggles to support the transformation of the colonial relationship and constructing alternatives to it, or put differently, to move forward in a shared future" (p. 34-35). Reflecting Sexton's (2016) idea of settlers becoming "migrant[s] engaged in an open-ended practice of reconciliation" (p. 586), Richard Day, in a classroom discussion, presented how he believes that settlers need to follow Indigenous protocols if we are to exist in decolonial futures, meaning we will need to become perpetual visitors unless Indigenous peoples accept us as more (personal communication, May 25, 2016). Freeman and Stiegman also envision decolonial futures where 'settlers' remain (Freeman, personal communication, May 17, 2016; Stiegman, personal communication March 22, 2016). Freeman says, "I don't have an ultimate vision for where this is going to take us . . . If I have an assumption it is that non-Indigenous people are not going to leave Turtle Island wholesale, so that whatever comes next is going to involve them in some

way. Maybe they should leave, but I don't think it's going to happen" (personal communication, May 17, 2016).

Although I am foregoing a strict reading of 'no settler future,' I feel it is important to note how focusing on becoming something post-settler might conflict with Tuck and Yang's (2012) presentation of decolonization and incommensurability. Most readily, "*what will decolonization look like? . . .* [and] *What will be the consequences of decolonization for the settler?*" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 35; Tuck & Yang's italics) are questions that, Tuck and Yang assert, "decolonization is not obliged to answer" (2012, p. 35). Moreover, Tuck and Yang state that "[t]he answers are not fully in view and can't be as long as decolonization remains punctuated by metaphor" (2012, p. 35). I believe that, at least, Tuck and Yang are saying that settlers ought to not concern themselves with questions of post-settler futurity until non-metaphorical decolonization is actually achieved, and even then, it will be Indigenous peoples who decide what post-settler futurity looks like; settlers will not have a say. Tuck and Yang also address "settler adoption fantasies" (2012, p. 13-17) as a move to innocence, acknowledging that adoptions of settlers by Indigenous peoples and nations do happen, but "because the prevalence of the adoption narrative in American literature, film, television, holidays and history books far exceeds the actual occurrences of adoptions, we are interested in how this narrative spins a fantasy that an individual settler can become innocent, indeed heroic and indigenized, against a backdrop of national guilt" (2012, p. 14). I do not believe that these tensions with Tuck and Yang mean that settlers ought to not work to become something post-settler, but these tensions should direct settlers to *focus on enacting decolonization* instead of worrying about how they might exist after decolonization.

Against Passive Roles in Decolonization

Some settlers purportedly interested in decolonization seem to understand that settlers ought to *only* act in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. In my opinion, active roles in decolonization involve actively thinking through and enacting strategies to challenge the settler-state, and therefore, I characterize *only* acting in solidarity as passive engagement in decolonization. I believe that there are limitations regarding what settler solidarity can provide to decolonization, and therefore, settlers can and should take active action to challenge settler colonialism alongside acting in solidarity;[52] solidarity alone is not enough. However, settlers should still provide solidarity and support for Indigenous actions, especially when we are asked to. As Nora Butler Burke (2004) says,

> [d]ecolonisation is not a process which entails solely the Indigenous nations of this continent. All people living in Canada have been distorted by colonialism. It effects [*sic*] us all, not only those whom it most severely oppresses. Therefore, a decolonisation movement cannot be comprised solely of solidarity and support for Indigenous peoples' sovereignty and self-determination. If we are in support of self-determination, we too need to be self-determining. Unless we exercise our own self-determination and fight our own governments, then we risk reinforcing the isolation of Indigenous communities and their resistance.

Most practically, settler solidarity risks taking away space for Indigenous voices and presences, physically, symbolically, and discursively. Settler attendance at Indigenous actions can turn Indigenous actions into settler actions, at least in how they are perceived. Coulthard (2014) discusses the decolonial significance of Indigenous direct action, saying that

> first, the practices are directly undertaken by the subjects of colonial oppression themselves and seek to produce an immediate power effect; second, they are undertaken in a way that indicates a loosening of internalized colonialism, which is itself a precondition for any meaningful change; and third, they are prefigurative in the sense that they build the skills and social relationships (including those with the land) that are

[52] I am concerned that asserting a need for active engagement, and disapproving of passive engagement, might be tied to ingrained capitalist assumptions I may hold regarding people only being valuable when they are working. My immediate feeling is that being passive amounts to being idle, which will be ineffective at decolonial transformation, but I likely ought to further explore where passivity may have its own merits.

> required within and among Indigenous communities to construct alternatives to the colonial relationship in the long run. (p. 166)

L. Simpson (2011) also describes a parade of Indigenous peoples where "we didn't have any *want*. We were not seeking recognition or asking for rights" (p. 11; L. Simpson's italics). L. Simpson sees this action as "a quiet, collective act of resurgence. It was a mobilization and it was political" (2011, p. 11). In taking away space for Indigenous voices and presences, settler solidarity risks undermining the decolonial power of Indigenous actions. In order to not overtake Indigenous actions, settlers might ask Indigenous peoples how settlers ought to participate. And while I feel this is a good practice, it also asks Indigenous peoples to discuss and address this question of settler involvement instead of giving Indigenous peoples space to do their own work: it asks Indigenous peoples to focus on settler concerns and redirects Indigenous action back towards settlers. Flowers (2015) writes that, "it is crucial that settlers find a place to stand in resistance that does not take up spaces for and appropriate the labor of Indigenous peoples (in particular, Indigenous women)" (p. 37); Flowers also asserts that "in the case of Idle No More, struggles that began in our communities were co-opted by settler allies, our messages were distorted, and the original voices, such as those of Indigenous women, were silenced in our own sites of resistance" (p. 38).

However, I believe that issues with settler solidarity go deeper than practical concerns about use of time and public perception of actions. I believe that settler solidarity fails to be decolonial in a similar way to how Coulthard (2014) critiques politics of recognition. Coulthard defines politics of recognition as

> the now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to "reconcile" Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state. Although these models tend to vary in both theory and practice, most call for the delegation of land, capital, and political power from

> the state to Indigenous communities through a combination of land claim settlements, economic development initiatives, and self-government agreements. (2014, p. 3)

Coulthard claims that "it would certainly appear that 'recognition' has emerged as the dominant expression of self-determination within the Aboriginal rights movement in Canada" (2014, p. 2).

In *This Is Not a Peace Pipe*, Dale Turner (2006) critiques three proposals for how to rectify Indigenous claims against the Canadian settler state: White Paper Liberalism, Alan Cairns' Citizen Plus view, and Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights. Turner summarizes his critiques of these proposals with four points:

1. They do not adequately address the legacy of colonialism.
2. They do not respect the sui generis nature of indigenous rights as a class of political rights that flow out of indigenous nationhood and that are not bestowed by the Canadian state.
3. They do not question the legitimacy of the Canadian state's unilateral claim of sovereignty over Aboriginal lands and peoples.
4. Most importantly, they do not recognize that a meaningful theory of Aboriginal rights in Canada is impossible without Aboriginal participation. (2006, p. 7)

White Paper Liberalism seeks to end the Indian Act and make Indigenous peoples the same as Canadian citizens, offering nothing as far as Indigenous rights or sovereignty. Cairns offers some form of Indigenous rights, albeit via liberal Canadian understandings of individual rights; 'Citizens Plus' does not offer Indigenous self-governance, believing that Indigenous peoples need to see themselves as citizens of the Canadian state. Turner asserts that Cairns' "account of Aboriginal rights fails to accommodate Aboriginal people's understandings of their rights and nationhood" (2006, p. 6). And,

> [w]hile Kymlicka defends the Aboriginal right to self-government, he does so by classifying Aboriginal rights as a form of cultural rights rather than as rights that flow out of Aboriginal peoples' legitimate status as indigenous nations. Thus the rights of Aboriginal peoples, although they empower Aboriginal communities to some degree, ultimately gain their legitimacy by virtue of the unquestioned sovereignty of the Canadian state. (Turner, 2006, p. 6)

Coulthard (2014) argues that White Paper Liberalism is not a form of politics of recognition, and that Indigenous resistance to assimilation via White Paper Liberalism actually played a role in shifting Indigenous demands towards recognition (p. 2-3). However, I believe that Cairns' and Kymlicka's proposals are examples of politics of recognition, and demonstrate that politics of recognition continue to subsume Indigenous rights, sovereignty, etc. under the Canadian state, and define Indigenous rights, sovereignty, etc. in settler colonial terms. The problem is precisely what Fraser and Honneth (2003) note as the distinction between affirmation and transformation: the politics of recognition is an affirmative project, "aim[ing] to correct inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying social structures that generate them . . . target[ing] end-state outcomes, [whereas] transformation addresses root causes" (p. 74). Politics of recognition fail to be decolonial because they do not work to address the underlying settler/Indigenous relationship, or settler colonial structure. And, as Coulthard says, "when delegated exchanges of recognition occur in real world contexts of domination the terms of accommodation usually end up being determined by and in the interests of the hegemonic partner in the relationship" (2014, p. 17). Therefore,

> instead of ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence grounded on the ideal of *reciprocity* or *mutual* recognition, the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend. (Coulthard, 2014, p. 3; Coulthard's italics)

In a similar way, settler solidarity fails to be decolonial by failing to address the settler position and how settlers are settler colonialism manifest. By *only* acting in solidarity—by *only* listening to Indigenous voices and participating in Indigenous actions—settlers do not have to work through their own lived relation to settler colonialism. As described by L. Simpson (2011), "[Indigenous] cultures and teachings . . . provide the ultimate antidote to colonialism" (p. 17). Indigenous peoples can challenge settler colonialism by engaging in actions that manifest

themselves as this antidote. If settlers participate in these actions, 'in solidarity,' they attempt to position particular settlers as an antidote to settler colonialism, which does not offer a challenge when settlers *are* settler colonialism. Settlers occupy a different position than Indigenous peoples, and therefore settler challenges to settler colonialism need to proceed in different ways.

But the politics of recognition is also an engulfing process: 'recognizing' Indigenous rights, self-determination, cultural practices, etc. within the state subsumes them to the state, even against the wishes of Indigenous peoples, potentially degrading their decolonial potential. I believe that all settler solidarity can ultimately provide is recognition, and therefore it risks enacting this engulfment. Settler solidarity says that some Indigenous rights, claims, cultural practices, acts of resistance, etc., *should be acceptable to* settlers and the settler state. Where Indigenous actions can work to turn away from the settler state, settler solidarity can force Indigenous actions back into settler society. Settler solidarity turns Indigenous actions into calls for state minority-rights even if Indigenous peoples do not desire minority-rights. Thereby, settler solidarity can actually hurt Indigenous efforts at decolonization by forcing Indigenous actions into recognition.

Toward Active Roles in Decolonization[53]

Alternatively to acting only in solidarity—passively engaging in decolonization—settlers can be active in decolonization by finding paths to decolonization that arise out of our own positionalities, reflecting what I presented regarding cacophony. I am only starting to figure out such paths for myself, whereas Freeman and Stiegman have been engaging in decolonization from settler positions, and critically thinking about *how* to engage in decolonization from settler positions, for a considerable time. Therefore, I am going to turn to interviews I conducted with

[53] Throughout the rest of this chapter, all quotes from Freeman are from personal communication, May 17, 2016, and all quotes from Stiegman are from personal communication, March 22, 2016, unless otherwise specified.

Freeman and Stiegman in order to explore what is involved in active settler engagement in decolonization.

Engaging in Decolonization; Introducing the Interviewees

L. Simpson (2011) says that Indigenous resurgence "refocuses [Indigenous peoples'] work from trying to transform the colonial outside into a flourishment of the *Indigenous* inside" (p. 17; L. Simpson's italics); in so doing, L. Simpson opens up the possibility that settler roles in decolonization might be to focus on dismantling the colonial outside. How Freeman and Stiegman summarized their roles in decolonization reflected such an understanding. Stiegman claimed: "I'm part of the project of exposing the power relations of settler colonialism, and that settler colonialism tries to make invisible." And Freeman said: "I see decolonization as trying to dismantle systems of oppression and exploitation . . . reclaiming jurisdiction for Indigenous peoples . . . restitution of land and restoration of land . . . There are a lot of different elements to that process." Given the need to do away with the settler position, I would add that settlers ought to also work toward becoming something post-settler, which was also reflected in Stiegman's claim that decolonization is "about engaging in a collective process of learning, to better understand what our relationships and responsibilities to all of this, and to each other and to the land, are."

Both Freeman and Stiegman understand that, in practice, settlers can engage in decolonization in various ways, mentioning direct action and education as examples. Freeman mentioned how, as an academic, she brings Indigenous peoples into her classroom "so that the students hear firsthand and learn [about decolonization] from the people who are doing it."[54] Stiegman also mentioned "making films that attempt to change how people feel about things . . .

[54] From my own personal experience of taking a course with Stiegman, I know that she does this as well.

raising my child, and needing to consider the education system that's brainwashing his mind . . . writing letters to [Members of Parliament] . . . and doing other levels of organizing" as potentially decolonial actions.

According to Freeman, who has been engaging in work with Indigenous peoples for roughly 30 years, what appropriate settler roles in decolonization are is "a moving question, in that circumstances are always changing. And so the answers for how to be in a good relationship or what needs to be done now, changes as the times change." Reflecting cacophony, Freeman and I also discussed how roles in decolonization are different for everyone, including Indigenous peoples: "their positionalities are all over the map too . . . There's so many different experiences and places." Understanding settler colonialism as a structure, Freeman suggested that "[t]here's so much societal structure that colonialism has created that we all have to address . . . I've come to understand that it's so big you can really start anywhere . . . It exists on every level so we can work on it on many different levels, as long as we don't think that only this [level] is what matters." Stiegman added that decolonization is "a road that we make by walking."

Freeman started working on Indigenous issues after hearing Maria Campbell, a Métis author, speak in 1980, and later, by getting to know some Indigenous women while working on a project around racial and sexual discrimination in housing in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Being involved in feminist writing—putting on conferences and publishing—Freeman "tr[ied] to create space for Indigenous voices to be heard. I think that's really what it all came out of. And then, the experience of hearing those writers speak at the conference was also very transforming, and I've really been working on it ever since." "I really started in terms of cultural activism, but it always had a political tone to it because the artists I was engaging with were extremely political" (Freeman).

Freeman has since shifted focus towards "doing a lot of work that's been trying to raise non-Indigenous people's consciousness about how they are shaped by colonialism. And how we're all implicated in it, whatever our good intentions are. And how colonialism obviously isn't a thing of the past." This shift largely occurred out of two events. First, Jeannette Armstrong, an Okanagan writer, artist, and activist, told Freeman that "what we really need is to have a better understanding of white racism. We don't understand why people do what they do, and it would be very helpful if white people were examining that for other white people." Second, Freeman got into a serious conflict with her friend and colleague, Dorothy Christian, a Secwepemc/Syilx woman, which caused Freeman to think about "how did I get into this particular relationship with her? And this particular conflict with her? What is the history that's standing between us? What's the history that's creating us both? Where do we go from here?"[55]

Stiegman came to engage with decolonization out of social justice activism. In Cuba, discussing a conference addressing political prisoners, Stiegman was asked by Assata Shakur "if there were political prisoners in my country." Subsequently, learning about the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Canadian prisons, Stiegman realized that the treatment of Indigenous peoples "was kind of a fault line in the place that I'd grown up. And [I] started asking questions about that and looking for some kind of 'in' to explore that from a community-organizing food-based perspective, because that's how I'm wired."

Stiegman attended a forum on community-based resource management "as someone who's working in urban agriculture and asking questions about whose land she was building food justice on, frustrated that I couldn't find a meaningful way to engage with that question." At the end of that conference, a man who organized the blockade of Mi'kmaq fishers at Esgenoôpetitj/Burnt Church following the *Marshall* Decision spoke of how he had come to learn

[55] Freeman and Christian write about their relationship, and this conflict, in Christian & Freeman, 2010.

that Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishers had to work together to preserve fisheries against corporate interests. He had learned this particularly through a sharing circle between Mi'kmaq and non-Indigenous fishers, initiated by former Chief of Bear River First Nation, Frank Meuse. That sharing circle is how "that blockade was dissipated . . . that confrontation was averted" (Stiegman).[56] According to Stiegman, "I was so blown away that that kind of moment had happened, so in the course of my graduate work I interviewed everyone who had been part of that circle." Stiegman also noted that "[Chief] Frank has talked about it in other venues as people being drawn to that story, and people coming by the power of that story, and so I think there's a way that I was also . . . drawn to that . . . The power of that story brought me there."

Stiegman later made two films about the *Marshall* Decision and the privatization of the fisheries, one from the Mi'kmaq perspective, *In Defense of Our Treaties*, and one from the non-Indigenous perspective, *The End of the Line*. The two films were presented together as *In the Same Boat?* (Stiegman & Pictou, 2010). According to Stiegman, the films were made "in this very participatory way that felt really authentic and solid,[57] and at the end, [Chief] Frank gave me an Eagle Feather. And I thanked him. And he said 'careful' . . . his words were basically 'this comes with responsibility, you don't get to walk away.'" Stiegman has continued to work with Bear River First Nation, and is now working with members of Bear River on "charting these old canoe routes that leave from the reserve and cross the territory . . . [in a] participatory research/film project . . . explor[ing] what the importance [is for the community in] re-establishing those relationships with the land."

[56] For more information on the *Marshall* Decision, the blockade, and how the blockade ended, see Stiegman & Pictou (2010).
[57] For more information on Stiegman's process for making these films, see Stiegman & Pictou (2010).

Engaging with Indigenous Understandings

Where "[d]ecolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 35), I believe that decolonization needs to proceed according to Indigenous desires and understandings, and especially the particular desires and understandings of the Indigenous nation(s) whose lands are being decolonized. To pursue decolonization according to settler desires and understandings would be to continue to place Indigenous peoples beneath settlers. I raised, with Freeman, my belief that settlers need to work to understand Indigenous understandings to even *begin* to understand what decolonization actually means and looks like, and she agreed:

> Kapron: Decolonization, as I understand it, needs to happen according to Indigenous peoples' wishes and worldviews, and also particular to the particular nations whose land you're on…
> Freeman: Exactly.
> K: . . . and so to even begin to engage with [decolonization], I need to have some understanding of [Indigenous understandings].
> F: Exactly . . . And coming back to land, you're on particular land . . . with particular cultures associated with it; particular societies who have their understanding of responsibilities the Creator gave them to care for this particular land. And then, ok, where do you fit into that?

Where, in *Wasáse*, Alfred (2009) asserts a need for Indigenous peoples to engage in personal transformation in order to engage in decolonization, I believe that settlers also need to engage in personal transformation. I believe that part of why we need this transformation is so that we can better push beyond assumptions that we hold about the world, in order to better engage in decolonization, especially where decolonization must proceed according to Indigenous understandings.

In "Property as Ontology" Bradley Bryan (2000) relays how the way a culture understands 'property' reflects that culture's ontological understanding of the world, "by providing indicia of the way we relate to it" (p. 4). "English conceptions of property demonstrate

the underlying ontological structure of Western life . . . . namely, that all things are enframed or understood in terms of their ability to be turned into something consumable. The ontological structure underlying property is thus rooted in a technological view of society" (Bryan, 2000, p. 16-17). This differs from other cultures' understandings of property.[58] The English word 'property' itself carries certain underlying connotations, which can make translation and cross-cultural dialogue difficult. Bryan engages with alternative (Indigenous) views in order to highlight the limits of English understandings, and push their boundaries.

In the Introduction to this paper, I switched from using Coulthard's (2014) language of 'land' to language of a 'more-than-human world' with hopes of avoiding where 'land' might create confusion for readers who are used to understanding land as a passive material object or set of resources, and not a myriad group of beings that includes minerals and earth. What I highlight in these examples is how, at least in dominant Western culture, it is common to be so encased in certain understandings of the world that it becomes difficult to see that one's personal understandings are not universal or normal. As Mohawk (2010) says "[t]he culture we were born into nurtured each and every one of us to a belief in certain premises, and our socialization in that respect is surprisingly complete. We are each of us 'prejudiced' to certain beliefs, certain ways of seeing the world, and certain ways of being in the world" (p. 92). I believe settlers, too stuck within their own assumptions of the world, are influencing settler proposals for 'decolonization' that fail to meet the requirements of decolonization, for instance, where politics of recognition fails to address settler colonialism as a structure, or question the legitimacy of the Canadian state. Certainly sometimes settlers *want* to perpetuate the settler state at the expense of

[58] Bryan (2000) goes on to describe understandings of property in a variety of Indigenous cultures, although I feel him defining these understandings may be problematic when he is a cultural outsider.

Indigenous peoples, but I think well-intentioned settlers are also often too stuck in their assumptions about the world.

Stiegman is currently engaging with Mi'kmaq understandings to better understand her place, and role in decolonization, on Mi'kmaq lands:

> Talking about different political traditions within Indigenous thought . . . the relationships that are set up in Haudenosaunee thought in the Two Row Wampum[59] and this idea of separate boats that don't interfere is very different, from my understanding, than the Harold Johnson, two-families Cree idea of adoption into a nation,[60] in a way. Through treaty-making we make relatives; we make relations. From the get-go there's an intermingling there. And one of the interpretations of the Mi'kmaq nation's eight-point star is because the Mi'kmaq [nation is] separated into seven traditional districts, and so pre-contact the Mi'kmaq had a seven-point star as a 'national' symbol . . . And one of the interpretations is that with the peace and friendship treaties, they created an eight-point star to integrate [settlers] into this understanding of . . . relation to the land. That's a new direction of my thought right now in terms of what it means to recognize Indigenous jurisdiction . . . When you talk about understanding us as being related, that's kind of the heart of this tradition: this idea of holding up your obligations to the land in its fullest sense. And so, if I think of that from the Mi'kmaq perspective that I've been engaging with . . . there's coming together: adoption ceremony as symbolic of entering into treaty. Which is very different from 'you have your laws, we have our laws, we share land.' How do we share land if we don't respect that law?

However, engaging with Indigenous understandings comes with risks. Tuck and Yang (2012) write that "the adoption of Indigenous practices and knowledge . . . is invested in a settler futurity and dependent on the foreclosure of an Indigenous futurity" (p. 14). As I understand this statement, the issue is that believing that someone can come to *understand* Indigenous understandings suggests that Indigenous understandings are defined—finished—thereby removing Indigenous peoples to history and ending the possibility of Indigenous futurity. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) also argues that "[f]rom the vantage point of the colonized . . . 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (p. 1); 'research,' here, refers to

[59] An account of the Two Row Wampum from Grand Chief Michael Mitchell (1989) has been included in Appendix G.

[60] See Johnson (2007). An account of Johnson's understanding of 'adoption,' via L. Simpson (2008), has been included in Appendix H.

the various ways that non-Indigenous peoples have tried to learn about Indigenous peoples, including Indigenous understandings. "From some indigenous perspectives, the gathering of information by scientists was as random, *ad hoc* and damaging as that undertaken by amateurs. There was no difference, from these perspectives, between 'real' or scientific research and any other visits by inquisitive and acquisitive strangers" (L. Smith, 2012, p. 3). Therefore, a difficult balance needs to be struck between learning Indigenous understandings, and not doing so in a harmful way. I asked Freeman and Stiegman about how they work to engage with Indigenous understandings and push the boundaries of their assumptions, in a good way.

Although both Freeman and Stiegman do engage with Indigenous understandings, they found it difficult to relay specific examples of when they had pushed their own understandings. Stiegman stated, "[t]hat's one of those questions that's hard to go back to . . . because it's all built up . . . I'm kind of immersed in it. It's hard for me to pick out moments that stand out." For Freeman, "I did twenty years of solidarity work before I went [to the University of Toronto] to do a Ph.D. And I have to say I suffered extreme culture shock going into a history program, because it did not reflect the cultural understandings that I had been working within, which were largely Indigenous understandings, even if I was trying to find my own way through them."

Addressing pushing understandings generally, Stiegman offered that "one of the things that my training has taught me about ideology and worldview is that it's difficult to understand [ideology and worldview] unless you step outside of it . . . bell hooks taught me that you do that by standing on the margins or by standing with and behind people on the margins, and starting with their perspectives"; although Stiegman went on to say how "talking about . . . Black feminist epistemologies is different than talking about Indigenous worldviews."[61]

[61] "Just to clarify—bell hooks; standing on the margins—talking about feminist epistemologies or Black feminist epistemologies is different than talking about Indigenous worldviews. One is around political struggles, and it's

Freeman agreed on the difficulty of understanding one's own position, and relation to power, from inside of it: "so much of our knowledge is taken for granted knowledge; those assumptions are not visible to us a lot of the time." Therefore, she noted the importance of paying attention to where our understandings are *challenged* by "Indigenous writers and scholars," as these are often places for learning: "reading some Indigenous scholars . . . *I have a reaction*. I notice 'whoa, I really don't like what they're saying.' And then I have to think about it. And I hate having those reactions. I'm not proud of those reactions. But I have them. And I have to pay attention to them: to what gets my back up; where do I feel uncomfortable?" (Freeman).

However, Freeman also addressed that problems can arise regarding which Indigenous voices to listen to: "allies [sometimes believe] . . . because they often don't have a lot of experience with different Indigenous peoples, if any Indigenous person says it, it must be true." Lynn Gehl (2011) raises similar issues in the *Ally Bill of Responsibilities*, stating that,

> *Responsible* Allies:
> . . . .
> 8. Strive to remain critical thinkers and seek out the knowledge and wisdom of the critical thinkers in the group. *Allies cannot assume that all people are critical thinkers and have a good understanding of the larger power struggles of oppression*;
> . . . .
> 12. Ensure that they are supporting a leader's, group of leaders', or a movement's efforts that serve the needs of the people. For example, do the community people find this leader's efforts useful, interesting, engaging, and thus empowering? If not, allies should consider whether the efforts are moving in a questionable or possibly an inadequate direction, or worse yet that their efforts are being manipulated and thus undermined, possibly for economic or political reasons;
> 13. Understand that sometimes allies are merely manipulatively chosen to further a leader's agenda versus the Indigenous Nations', communities', or organizations' concerns, and when this situation occurs act accordingly. (p. 1-2; my italics)

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pretty easy for me to say Indigenous struggles allow us to understand ways that settler colonialism operates—in a political frame. I think it's different to talk about the limits of my worldview being informed by Indigenous ways of knowing, because that's entering into the world of the spiritual. That's entering the world of culture. And the terms that we cross those cultural borders in relation to appropriation and in relation to all those kind of things is more murky and less comfortable" (Stiegman).

Freeman maintained that questions of which Indigenous voices to listen to are not easily answered, and instead need to be struggled with:

> The question about Indigenous knowledge—whose Indigenous knowledge? Who do you listen to? . . . It's not like all Indigenous knowledge agrees. How do you find your way as a non-Indigenous person? . . . What's my role in this? I'm not the adjudicator. How do I learn to appreciate different perspectives in Indigenous knowledge and hold them without being in a position of power in terms of deciding you're right and you're wrong?

I discussed with Freeman how dominant Western assumptions that there is one universal truth play into creating these tensions between different understandings:

> K: On the stuff around assumptions . . . we [settlers] have an assumption that there is…
> K & F (together): …one truth…
> F: …Absolutely.
> K: And that's the problem. So when you're getting different [understandings or opinions], instead of being able to take them and [say] there's difference of opinion here, and difference of understanding, and they can coexist, we're like "what's the truth?"
> F: That's right. That's very true. And so we're [First Story Toronto] trying to do this film project now . . . and we've just come to that point where we're going to represent different perspectives. And some people are not going to like that we're representing different perspectives.

With these continuing tensions around deciding who to listen to, Freeman suggested that we do need to listen to ourselves as well: "you still have to filter this also through your own sensibilities; still have to figure 'what does this mean to me?'; and, 'do I agree?' That's what's so tricky. You can't just make yourself into a vacuum. It's not like you are an empty vessel, and it's not good for you to be an empty vessel."

Stiegman relayed how she has continuing questions around engaging Indigenous understandings as a settler, especially regarding accepting Indigenous ways of knowing 'on their own terms,' when she is not Indigenous:

> If you accept [Indigenous ways of knowing] on their own terms, you accept that they're true. Like, if you accept that the Dene believe that an animal offers itself in the hunt, it's not enough to say "the Dene believe an animal offers itself in the hunt." [You need to say—or believe] "an animal offers itself in the hunt" . . . that kind of border work, for me, is a place that's . . . unclear to me. I have a lot of discomfort around making assumptions

> when it comes to solidarity, and to allyship, and to cultural appropriation, in relation to these kind of things.

Freeman also retains questions of how to appropriately engage with Indigenous understandings, but expressed that this uncertainty also stems from different Indigenous people having different opinions on these questions, and what was discussed earlier regarding settler roles in decolonization being a moving question:

> It's so delicate. Because you always can be accused of appropriating—or we can appropriate, not just be accused of it. Or someone who doesn't know your history can say "what the hell do you think you're doing?" where other Indigenous people may have encouraged you in those ways. The elder at First Nations House telling me to bring out the feathers I've been given. Other people finding that very offensive.[62] So it's a very tricky negotiation. And I can't say I have a single answer. I always feel I'm trying to understand, "ok, what's my role here? What's appropriate? How far do I go? Where do I step back?" . . . There's so many questions. I wish I had more answers, but I don't. I feel that the more I do this, the more questions I have.
>
> Also the whole field is evolving very quickly. And so I know that things that I came to understand in a certain context . . . may or may not still be relevant. And other people who have grown up in different circumstances or are starting from here might have another kind of view or another perspective that I can learn from . . . I don't feel that I'm an expert in that way.

The Importance of Relationships

Against these remaining questions of how to appropriately engage with Indigenous understandings, Freeman offered that "being in relationship is really important . . . The single most important thing is being in ongoing relationships." Having relationships with Indigenous peoples has allowed Freeman to better understand when she is holding assumptions that she ought to push against:

> Most often I recognize [I'm holding assumptions] because someone points it out to me. I regret that that's the way I seem to learn, but it's often the truth—that someone gets mad at me. Or, if they're not mad, at least they point out 'well what about [this]?' or 'you're assuming.' Or [they] just get supremely pissed off, and so offended. It's hard to see what's invisible to yourself.

[62] Freeman discusses questions she has faced around displaying eagle feathers that she has been given, and interrelated questions regarding what is appropriate engagement with Indigenous worldviews , in Freeman, 2010.

I critiqued passive engagement in decolonization in part by arguing that the risks of settlers coopting Indigenous actions—or forcing them into recognition—are too high. Now claiming that settlers need to have relationships with Indigenous peoples may seem contradictory. I believe that this is another unresolved complexity of settler engagement in decolonization. Active engagement in decolonization runs risks of whether it is actually decolonial, primarily regarding whether settler actions are actually challenging the settler position or are perpetuating settler colonialism in new ways. Freeman and Stiegman have touched on how it is difficult to see the impacts of settler colonialism from the privileged settler position. I want to add that it will be difficult to see whether our actions are truly decolonial, from the privileged settler position. Therefore, risks of perpetuating settler colonialism are exacerbated if settlers only talk amongst ourselves. Settlers need to listen to Indigenous voices regarding what actions to take and to see if our actions are working. However, asking Indigenous peoples to address settler actions raises the same issues as settler solidarity around asking Indigenous peoples to focus on settler concerns and potentially redirecting Indigenous efforts at decolonization back into settler concerns. Harsha Walia (2012) writes,

> One of the constant questions and discussions within the Indigenous solidarity movement is the notion of "taking leadership." This is the principle that nonnatives must be accountable and responsive to the experiences, voices, needs, and political perspectives of Indigenous peoples themselves. Based on antioppression praxis, it is the realization that meaningful support for Indigenous struggles cannot be directed by nonnatives . . .
>
> . . . [T]here is a difference between the principle of taking leadership and waiting around to be told what to do while you do nothing. Certainly guidance is imperative, but it must be balanced against the possibility of further overwhelming Indigenous Peoples with questions and nonnatives' own plans and agendas, as well as the possibility of "I am waiting to be told exactly what to do" being used as an excuse for inaction or paralysis. (p. 242-243)

For Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox (2012), "[r]elationship creates accountability and responsibility for sustained supportive action. This does not mean requiring Indigenous energies for creating relationship with settlers; it means settlers taking initiative to live on a personal level what they

claim on a political one." And Flowers (2015) adds, "settlers can make changes in their systems, and their cue should be taken from Indigenous action. However, at some point, settlers will need to figure out where to stand without Indigenous peoples marking an 'X' on the ground for them and pointing out clear and plain injustice" (p. 37). Managing the need to have ongoing discussions and relationships with Indigenous peoples, in order to ensure actions are decolonial, and the need to allow Indigenous peoples the space to do their own decolonial work, creates another difficult balance that needs to be negotiated in settler engagement in decolonization.

As showcased in my introductions of Freeman and Stiegman, their relationships with Indigenous peoples have directed how their engagement with decolonization has developed. They have also both put considerable focus into building and maintaining relationships with Indigenous peoples, for instance, with Freeman's personal relationships shifting the focus of her decolonial work, and with Stiegman's efforts to make films and conduct other work in a participatory way and ongoing involvement in work with Bear River First Nation.

Freeman and Stiegman's relationships with Indigenous peoples also demonstrate where my focus on finding settler paths for engaging in decolonization may perhaps be inappropriate. I have developed where settler/Indigenous relations need to be transformed and where settlers need to become something post-settler, where they are no longer dominant over Indigenous peoples. Freeman and Stiegman's relations with Indigenous peoples may, at times, work to pre-figure such decolonial relations, or at least explore what decolonial relations may look like. For instance, Freeman shared a story of working with an organization of largely Indigenous women, but also some non-Indigenous women allies,

> At one point I said that . . . as part of the research we were doing, I wanted to look at the role of non-Indigenous women allies. And this one Indigenous woman turned to me and said, "you're not an ally, you're a relative" . . . And so that really got me thinking about . . . "what does that mean?" And on the one hand it was sort of flattering that . . . I could

> be considered a relative. But on the other hand, it's a responsibility . . . And partly she was saying she didn't like the way people who considered themselves 'allies' kept themselves sort of separate. And . . . in her thinking, if we're allies, then we're family . . . It doesn't mean it erases difference, but it's a different kind of relationship. And that's a relationship for life.

Such a relationship, of being relatives and not just allies, and still respecting differences, might be what is needed for decolonial relations. Such a perspective is also reflected in Stiegman's thinking about the Mi'kmaq eight-point star.

I touched on where Alfred (2009) and L. Simpson (2011) view Indigenous resurgence as an *Indigenous* aspect of decolonization; settlers have little role in it. When asked about her role in, or alongside, Indigenous resurgence, Freeman provided strategies for supporting Indigenous peoples and actions, including "support for Indigenous resurgence in putting your body on the line, in acts of civil disobedience, protest, etc.", and her aforementioned efforts to bring Indigenous peoples into her classrooms, so that they "can articulate in their own words, with their own concepts." Freeman noted that "I try to create space as much as I can, for that to happen."

Stiegman also believes that resurgence "definitely feels like it's an Indigenous project." However, her relationships with Indigenous peoples have brought her into a complicated engagement with Indigenous resurgence. She described how the work she is currently doing, working with members of Bear River First Nation to chart ancient canoe routes, is "kind of a project of resurgence. And that's the direction that people gave me, so I followed it." When asked about how she understands her role in, or alongside, Indigenous resurgence, Stiegman referenced Alfred's (2009) work:

> He's talking about how we (Indigenous people) need to stop engaging the state on its own terms . . . we need to step back, we need to strengthen ourselves, so that we can engage from an effective place . . . It's a regrouping, in a sense; and building your strength. So if Indigenous people are learning from that, I think it's our [settlers'] job to be learning from their learning, to better inform our ally-work.

However, regarding the work she's currently doing, Stiegman pondered, "in this one case anyway, there's a bit of a role [in resurgence]. Maybe . . . And I think some people would think that's a problematic role, and some people would think that it's an important role."

Although they reveal a tension, I think that Stiegman's comments highlight the importance of settlers developing relationships with Indigenous peoples when doing decolonial work: even if straightforward guidelines of what is appropriate and what is not are never developed, maintaining relationships creates space for negotiation and trying to struggle through *complicated questions.*

Settler Self-Transformation: Rootedness & Creative Contention

I believe that Alfred's (2009) concepts of rootedness and creative contention expand on the importance of pushing against assumptions and developing relationships, while also developing a clearer vision of the kind of self-transformation that settlers need to undergo in order to engage in decolonization. As I understand Alfred's concepts of rootedness and creative contention, they are two sides to regeneration:

> Regeneration means we will reference ourselves differently, both from the ways we did traditionally and under colonial dominion. We will self-consciously recreate our cultural practices and reform our political identities by drawing on tradition in a thoughtful process of reconstruction and a committed reorganization of our lives in a personal and collective sense. (2009, p. 34)

Regeneration is a dual process where Indigenous peoples at once work to understand Indigenous traditions, languages, ceremonies, rituals, etc. because there are significant teachings, theories, values, etc. within these traditions (rootedness); and at the same time, Indigenous peoples work to understand and enact these traditions, teachings, values, etc. in new ways, to meet the current challenges and structures (creative contention).

Settler rootedness might seem like a problem: a call to become entrenched in colonial understandings, which would lead to a reinforcement of the settler state. However, I believe that settlers are so entrenched in our assumptions, and in the settler state, because we do not know the diversity of our histories. As Lee Maracle (1996) says, "I am less concerned about your distortion of my history than your inability to hang on to your own" (p. 76).[63] Alfred (2009) describes how "[t]he monotheistic belief system and worldview is ideally suited to be the justification for subjugation and genocide. It trumpets one right way; singularity; judgement and condemnation" (p. 108), erasing diversity and complexity in ways of living, being, and understanding that exist even in Western cultures and histories. 'One right way' has always been a myth, even in Western cultures. Therefore, regarding rootedness, I believe that settlers ought to learn our cultures and histories to discover where alternative ways of living, being, and understanding exist within *our* histories, not simply to know, but so that we might use them as inspiration and education for acting against settler colonialism. Settler rootedness pushes against our assumptions.

I also see rootedness as important for self-assurance. I feel it is less daunting to act against settler colonialism and other structures of oppression if we know that we are not alone, that within our own histories there are peoples and communities that lived dissident lives, and that what we know and how we live is not universal or normal, but has arisen through particular histories, meaning our present can also be transformed.

In *A Canadian Climate of Mind*, Timothy B. Leduc (2016) explores people and traditions of thought that reveal alternative ways of minding relations with other humans and the more-than-human world, particularly for settlers on Turtle Island. I believe that Leduc's work is an

[63] Maracle (1996) says this in relation to the lack of knowledge about crimes committed by the church, particularly the persecution of women healers (p. 75-76), but I feel this quote addresses this related problem of settlers not remembering alternative ways of living that exist in our histories.

example of the work that settlers need to do regarding rootedness. For instance, Leduc describes for the coureurs de bois, "in the unrestricted spaces of the pays d'en haut that a braiding with Indigenous ways became possible" (2016, p. 103). "The majority of coureurs de bois . . . came to align themselves with Indigenous customs" (Leduc, 2016, p. 102). I expect that some people will understand this adoption of Indigenous customs as a problematic appropriation of Indigenous culture, but as 'settlers' and Indigenous peoples were on a more equitable level at the time, I understand the adoption of Indigenous customs as coureurs de bois complying with the Indigenous societies and ways of life with which they were engaging. "There was a recurring concern expressed by governors and missionaries that the assimilation of Indigenous peoples was becoming less common than the pattern of . . . colonists adapting Indigenous ways" (Leduc, 2016, p. 103). The coureurs de bois present how European migration to Turtle Island did not need to impose settler sovereignty over Indigenous lives and lands. Leduc quotes Carolyn Podruchny to say that the coureurs de bois "represent a time of possibility when the pattern of colonization was not inevitable or inexorable" (2016, p. 104). In exploring how we can become something post-settler, Leduc's analysis of the coureur de bois offers a possible vision of what else we could be on decolonized lands. However, as circumstances on Turtle Island have immensely changed since coureurs de bois were prominent, we will need to engage in *creative contention* if we are to enact such a process of becoming post-settlers now.

Freeman noted how "one of the things that colonialism does is it dehumanizes—on both sides [settler and Indigenous]." To me this claim suggests that while, indeed, relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples need to be transformed, relations among settlers also need to be changed. I do not believe that we relate to each other in ways that provide support or encouragement for creative thinking, especially thinking that pushes against dominant

assumptions, and therefore we lack much of what is needed to be creatively contentious. Facing monotheistic notions of 'one right way' when we do not know our alternative histories means that settlers often believe that assumptions we hold about the world are universal and normal. These assumptions impact what we believe a transformative world can look like, and also what tactics we believe we can use to transform the world.

In "Land as Pedagogy," L. Simpson (2014) tells the story of a young Nishnaabeg girl[64] who learns how to get maple syrup from maple trees by observing a red squirrel, and then shares what she has learned with her family and community (p. 2-5).[65] L. Simpson uses this story to showcase myriad elements of Nishnaabeg knowledge systems and pedagogy. I want to highlight the way that Nishnaabeg pedagogy involves trusting the knowledge of children: "Kwezens . . . takes her Elders to the tree already trusting that she will be believed, that her knowledge and discovery will be cherished, and that she will be heard" (L. Simpson, 2014, p. 7). This support for children's knowledge is about interrelational and intergenerational knowledge; in my mind, it also extends to supporting creative thinking more broadly. When Kwezens brings the innovative knowledge she learned from the red squirrel to her family and community, she knows that she will be supported. If settlers want to be creatively contentious in order to effectively dismantle settler colonialism, and to enact transformative relations, then I think we need to start supporting each others' creative thinking.

Although she does not use the term, Plumwood (2002) offers valuable insight into creative contention in *Environmental Culture*. I find that activists can be extremely concerned with getting things perfect before attempting innovative political actions, which can lead to inaction. Instead of getting things perfect, Plumwood asserts that we need to attempt actions to

[64] A footnote states, "I have chosen to gender the main character as a girl because I identify as a women [*sic*], but the story can be and should be told using all genders" (L. Simpson, 2014, p. 2).
[65] I have included this story in Appendix I.

even discover what produces results: "[f]or many activities, we may need to decide if a process is working well by seeing if it is turning out the right sort of product" (2002, p. 94). I do not intend to call for activists to try anything, especially where political actions can reproduce, perpetuate, and reinforce settler colonialism and other structures of oppression. I also do not mean to offer any excuses or innocence when actions are problematic. Instead, we need to be thoughtful about our actions; pay attention to what results they produce; be accountable and make amends when our actions produce problematic results; and learn from our mistakes to improve future actions. Plumwood, who is primarily writing about transforming relationships between humans and nonhumans, and the difficulties that arise when we cannot easily communicate with nonhumans, "stresse[s] corrigibility and open expectations" (2002, p. 60):

> Dealing with both human and non-human cases of translation indeterminacy requires openness to the other and careful, sensitive, and self-critical observation which actively seeks to uncover perspectival and centric biases.
>
> . . . An appropriate and modest way to deal with indeterminacy in non-human as well as human cultural contexts would be to note uncertainties and present alternative interpretations of problematic cases. (2002, p. 60)

We need to work to ensure that our actions are effective and do not reinscribe oppression, but we also need to be open and have some leeway to make mistakes.

Freeman shared with me how, when she began working on settler colonialism, there were very few non-Indigenous activists doing this work, so few that she remembers the first time she met another one. She shared the loneliness she felt at the time, and how "it was helpful to start meeting other non-Indigenous activists because our position is different. The struggles we have are different than what Indigenous people have, as we all confront colonialism." Nevertheless, Freeman invoked that settlers ought to continue to work to support each other, echoing what I am discussing in this section regarding creative contention:

> It's very easy for non-Indigenous people to jump on each other and say "oh, you're racist." "You did this." "You did that." "Your analysis is wrong. I've got the correct

> analysis." But personally, I'm much more interested in how do we support each other to do this learning, without falling into the traps that we can fall into: privileging our view, privileging our struggle, all that kind of stuff.

Freeman shared that "my belief is that, at least we can develop some friendships and some working relationships that are respectful. Then we can have a little bit of compassion for each other, as we continue through this process."

The Ethic of Courage, Emotional Difficulties, and Compassion

As mentioned, along with rootedness and creative contention, Alfred (2009) describes "the ethic of courage" (p. 257) as "the ideals I had come to know as the essence of being an Onkwehonwe warrior" (p. 257). I understand the ethic of courage as tied to Alfred's greater 'warrior' concept, given his assertion that "[i]t is a warrior's definition of courage that most concerns us, as it will be individuals who will contend against the state. Willpower and determination are the elements of courage" (2009, p. 52). I do not mean to suggest that settlers should attempt to become Indigenous warriors, but I believe that settlers also need willpower and determination in our work. We need to feel confident that pursuing decolonization is the right action to take.

I am concerned about how asserting a need for willpower and determination might be read as male-coded and ableist. However, I want to challenge where willpower and determination might be read as male traits. Women have proven themselves to often be agents of transformation and continual anti-colonial resistance. L. Simpson (2011) highlights the role of women, and particularly grandmothers, in retaining and passing on Indigenous knowledge to future generations (p. 35-39). Audra Simpson (2014) outlines where, during the Oka Crisis of 1990, it was "women who called a peaceful protest and then an armed refusal against further dispossession. And we have here women who then *managed* that refusal during a seventy-eight-day armed standoff" (p. 148; A. Simpson's italics). And Flowers (2015) writes of the political

agency in Indigenous women's love, rage, and power to refuse to forgive colonial and gender violence, particularly relating to current efforts to end colonial gender violence against Indigenous women and to seek justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women.[66] Therefore, I would proffer that men have more to learn regarding an ethic of courage from women than the other way around. Alfred (2009) does his own work to "reth[ink] and recast from the solely masculinist view of the old traditional ways [of understanding warriors] to a new concept of the warrior that is freed from colonial gender constructions" (p. 84).

Regarding ableism, I know that there are material and psychological effects of settler colonialism affecting both Indigenous peoples and settlers, which make it difficult to enact an ethic of courage. For a lot of people, an ethic of courage is not something that they can just 'turn on.' However, I am not currently sure of how to encourage paths to an ethic of courage against these material and psychological conditions. Better engagement with Frantz Fanon (1970; 2004), Coulthard (2014; 2016), and others' work on resentment and *ressentiment*, A. Simpson's work on refusal (2014), and passive nihilism (Aragorn!, 2009) might help to find ways of encouraging an ethic of courage. Perhaps learning rootedness and enacting support for creative contention can help as well. But what I really see as important for developing confidence in taking decolonial action is Freeman's call for compassion.

Stiegman mentioned how "it's kind of shocking when you learn that the world you thought you had grown up in, is not at all the world that . . . you have grown up in." This shock can create emotional difficulties for settlers attempting to engage in decolonization. My conversation with Freeman ended up being, what felt to me like, a frank discussion of these emotional difficulties. For instance, Freeman shared a story of how, when she was working on

[66] Flowers (2015) notes: "I acknowledge concerns that the word 'missing' inappropriately diminishes the active role of the perpetrators in disappearing women and could become a trope that disparages the violences experienced by Indigenous women. See Margot Leigh Butler (2003); Amber Dean (2009)" (p. 34).

Distant Relations,[67] her book that explores her own family's involvement in the colonization of Turtle Island,

> a relative said, "you're just wallowing in guilt." And I thought about that, and I realized no, it's not guilt . . . it's grief . . . I think there is a grief that needs to be felt, by all of us [settlers and Indigenous peoples]—maybe differently . . . We have to acknowledge the wrong that has been done. And what that does to our self-image as people, as a nation, everybody. And the incredible loss of life. The incredible waste of what's happened.

For Freeman, mourning is a necessary part of decolonization, even for settlers; though she noted that "usually mourning is something that you move through . . . and come to a new understanding on the other side."[68] Emotional difficulties also arise where, "[y]ou're not going to get it right [decolonial work and relations with Indigenous peoples] . . . If you're a non-Indigenous person . . . you can't just cleanse yourself of all your privilege and all those things that you've learned" (Freeman). *This discussion of emotional difficulties faced by settlers is not meant to ignore Indigenous grievances against settler colonialism, or to equate settler and Indigenous pain*, but there is a pain that settlers feel, "and it's a pain that's different from the pain that Indigenous people feel. It may not be as deep. Indigenous people go through *so much*. But it's still real. And to just deny it and say you shouldn't feel that [pain]—that's not helpful. We need to feel things and help each other move through them" (Freeman).

Freeman later added, "[m]y point here is that settler-allies have to help each other move through that pain. I don't expect Indigenous people to help me through it" (personal communication, August 17, 2016). I agree that settlers must not ask Indigenous peoples to focus on settler pain. It might be different in particular relationships, where Indigenous peoples might want to help their settler *friends* deal with their pain, but as a political principle, I believe settlers must not ask Indigenous peoples to focus on settler pain because it refocuses decolonization onto

[67] See Freeman (2000).
[68] Leduc (2016) writes about the importance of mourning against settler colonialism, and human separation from the more-than-human world, and how ceremony might help to move people through mourning.

settlers. It commits errors that Tuck and Yang (2012) talk about regarding making decolonization metaphorical, overlooking where decolonization must be a process of liberation for Indigenous peoples, given the injustices they have faced. Where, for instance, Indigenous resurgence has been developed as a particular *Indigenous* role in decolonization, I believe that dealing with settler pain ought to be a *settler* project. I do not expect, or even want, Indigenous peoples to concern themselves with settler pain, but I believe that if settlers want to effectively engage in decolonization, *we* need to be more honest about where *we do* experience emotional difficulties and need to work through these difficulties. Given this call for honesty, I would like to share where I feel emotional difficulties in engaging in decolonization.

Earlier, I discussed where Freeman believes that finding an idea to be uncomfortable often reveals where a person is holding assumptions beyond which they need to push. Freeman went on to say, "I think what I find most difficult in trying to unpack those sorts of assumptions is when my own psychological baggage gets in the way. My fear, my pain about other issues, all the ways I was silenced as a child, get in the way of me shutting up and standing back because 'I want to be heard.'" I appreciated this insight into carrying psychological baggage into our efforts at decolonization. I live with depression and have for a very long time. It comes and goes in its severity, but because of how long I have experienced it, and likely just related to how depression manifests, many of my assumptions about the world, and especially about myself, are influenced by this depression. Even when I am not necessarily feeling depressed, I generally have a hard time, deep-down, believing that I have any self-worth, which causes me to believe that my wishes, desires, needs, etc. are not worthy of consideration: for myself, let alone for anyone else. I carry these depressive assumptions with me into my efforts to engage in decolonization, as they are such a part of me.

Because our conversation had turned to the emotional difficulties of settler engagement in decolonization, I asked Freeman about the difficulties of self-love as a settler;[69] her response outlined how I often feel regarding engaging in decolonization: "[h]ere you are, as a settler. You're here . . . for illegitimate reasons . . . There's a part of you that, I think it's very easy to feel very illegitimate. And that you have no right. You're taking up too much space . . . All of those things. And it can be very harmful to your sense of self."

I earlier mentioned where Freeman feels that settlers cannot and should not attempt to make themselves into empty vessels when engaging in decolonization; at the time, I was discussing becoming an empty vessel in relation to needing to make choices about which Indigenous voices to which to listen. However, given my depressive beliefs about my own lack of self-worth, an empty vessel is something that I often want to be, regarding decolonization and more generally. Therefore, I voiced questions around this understanding with Freeman:

> K: For me . . . all the time, [an empty vessel[70] is] what I want to be. I want to be able to just cease to exist myself, and just provide…
> F: …Support.
> K: But that…
> F: …Doesn't work.
> K: . . . and it can't happen . . . but it also doesn't work in that it won't do what needs to be done. [I do not believe that one actually *can become* an empty vessel, but also believe that if one were to, it would not truly be beneficial for decolonization]
> F: And you are what has made you.

I will return to Freeman's comment that "you are what has made you," but as it works to propose compassion as a path through the emotional difficulties of settler engagement in decolonization, I want to first present another way that I believe my depression affects my decolonial understandings.

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[69] I do not have my question recorded, as I did not feel comfortable putting myself 'on the record' regarding these questions while I was interviewing Freeman.

[70] In my conversation with Freeman, I misremembered her phrase, and referred to being a 'void' rather than an 'empty vessel' or 'vacuum'—another term Freeman used.

My depression includes periodic suicidal thoughts, where I often not only *want* to kill myself, because I, frankly, find life to be miserable; but I also feel that I *ought to* kill myself as an ethical act: to release others from where I understand my existence is, at least, a burden and, at most, an unethical manifestation. I believe these suicidal understandings might influence why I maintain the possibility of strict reading of Tuck and Yang's (2012) decolonization, which would require 'no settler future,' whereas others seem so easily to turn to becoming 'post-settler.' Pursuing a project that focuses on my disappearance suits where I believe that, perhaps, I ought to cease to exist. As Freeman said, "you still have to filter this also through your own sensibilities"; 'no settler future' suits my sensibilities.

I believe that Freeman's comment, "you are what has made you" relates to the fight she had with Christian, mentioned in my introduction of Freeman's work. Freeman relayed how during this fight, Christian "said this wonderful thing. She said, 'even if we end up not being able to be friends, let's recognize that it's not just our fault. It is all of the stuff that we're trying to deal with.' And . . . her compassion for me, as well as her own compassion for herself, really helped me."

I believe there is something significant in these calls for compassion. I am not sharing these insights into my emotional health as any sort of plea for innocence against critiques of my engagement with decolonization, but because I believe Freeman is correct in recognizing a need to address emotional difficulties in decolonization, and that compassion may help to alleviate these difficulties. However, talking about the difficult emotions that Freeman feels when she makes mistakes when working with Indigenous peoples, Freeman said "it's a personal thing. I can't make that person feel guilty for whatever they said to me [calling me out]; I have to take

care of myself." I believe that we also need to start with ourselves regarding compassion.[71] I wonder how self-compassion would direct my decolonial efforts: whether, if I came to understand my own self-worth, I would feel more inclined to preserving some future for myself, and thereby reject 'no settler future' in favour of becoming something post-settler. However, as of yet, I want to maintain that 'no settler future' might end up being what is necessary for decolonization.

Settler colonialism is a structure that overwhelms our lives. Dismantling it will take a lot of work, from diverse angles. Our cacophonous individualities—our personal concerns, desires, attitudes, faults, etc.—will play into how we engage in decolonization. Yes, settlers must not privilege ourselves in decolonization, where privileging ourselves might refocus decolonial efforts on settler futurities or otherwise shift decolonization into metaphor. But offering some compassion to ourselves as we struggle toward decolonization seems invaluable.

Summary

Indigenous peoples can enact decolonization through Indigenous resurgence; however, settlers need to need to find ways of enacting ethical relations in settler colonial contexts, arising out of our own positions. Passively engaging in decolonization, such as *only* acting in solidarity with Indigenous actions, does not adequately challenge the settler position when settlers are a manifestation of settler colonialism. And settlers acting in solidarity with Indigenous actions can pacify the decolonial power of such actions by forcing them into recognition from settler society. Instead of passively engaging in decolonization, settlers ought to find active ways to engage in decolonization. However, acting from the settler position needs to be balanced with finding

[71] In calling for compassion, I am not meaning to say that people are not compassionate. Especially related to my depression, I know that I am not compassionate towards myself; and that because of this lack of self-compassion, I often do not recognize when and how people are compassionate towards me. I need self-compassion, and I want to acknowledge that I *am* working on building self-compassion.

direction for decolonization in Indigenous understandings and desires: settlers need to engage with Indigenous understandings, but doing so can be problematic. Maintaining relations with Indigenous peoples is invaluable for negotiating engagement with Indigenous understandings, and for prefiguring transformative, decolonial relations, but runs its own risks of redirecting Indigenous efforts towards settler concerns. These relationships also need to be negotiated, with a difficult balance. I believe that settler self-transformation, through rooting oneself in histories that are alternative to dominant understandings, supporting creative contention, and acting with self-compassion, will significantly contribute to settler efforts to engage in decolonization.

Moving Forward

Re-Examining Settler Grounded Normativity

This paper has been ultimately aimed at proposing settler grounded normativity as a settler path for decolonial transformation. To reiterate, grounded normativity is understanding that: (1) humans are interrelated with a more-than-human world; (2) interrelationality demands that humans develop ethical relationships with others; and (3) these ethical relationships can be learned and enacted through engagement with the more-than-human world. *Settler* grounded normativity puts an added focus on addressing interrelatedness with settler colonialism and enacting ethical settler/Indigenous relations. Settler grounded normativity is not a path to decolonization in the sense of a strategy to challenge the settler state, but is instead taking on attitudes that I hope will allow for the kind of self-transformation that Alfred (2009) asserts is necessary to engage in decolonization, albeit paralleled to a settler position. Adhering to settler grounded normativity is a means to an end: a tactic for more effective and appropriate engagement in decolonization. Adhering to settler grounded normativity does not, itself, transform the settler/Indigenous relationship; it does not decolonize. But, I hope that adhering to settler grounded normativity will allow for understandings of relations to prosper that differ from dominant hierarchical, unethical, and unjust settler/Indigenous relations, human/nonhuman relations, and other relations based in oppressive structures. And if we begin to understand relations differently, then we might be better able to transform, in real ways, the oppressive relations that undergird our society. I believe that settler grounded normativity is predominantly a path for becoming 'post-settler'—through engaging in settler grounded normativity we will come to understand what else we can and ought to become—but I want to leave open the possibility that in engaging in settler grounded normativity we may come to understand that

settlers do not have a place even on decolonized lands; that is, there ought to be 'no settler future.'

Considering this paper as a whole, proposing settler grounded normativity, *now*, might be tautological: I have presented how settlers can be understood to be interrelated with the more-than-human world and settler colonialism, and have argued that interrelationality ought to be understood as calling for ethical relations via cacophony, as cacophony accounts for differences while also focusing on addressing underlying oppressive and divisive structures. Where interrelationality and interrelationality demanding ethical relations are two tenets of my definition of grounded normativity, I may now be using settler grounded normativity to argue for settler grounded normativity.

I believe that my third tenet—enacting ethical relations through engagement with the more-than-human world—is paralleled in Freeman and Stiegman highlighting the importance of developing relations with Indigenous peoples when trying to engage in decolonial work. To make settler grounded normativity decolonial, settlers need to develop relations with Indigenous peoples to ensure that our actions are decolonial, to negotiate interactions with Indigenous knowledges to push the boundaries of our understandings, and to pre-vision what ethical relations with Indigenous peoples look like. I believe that settlers ought to enter into processes for engaging in relationships with the more-than-human world for similar reasons.

Indigenous knowledges may contribute to such processes of more-than-human engagement, but I do not believe that settlers can or ought to attempt to *make themselves Indigenous*—doing so would be cultural appropriation. Instead, related to what has been discussed regarding rootedness, settlers ought to explore our own histories, traditions of thought, and even our own lives, to find what lends itself to engaging with the more-than-human world

and enacting ethical relations through those engagements. This call for settlers to look to our own traditions of knowledge, and our own lives, is not, however, meant to make invisible how Indigenous understandings have and continue to inspire and inform this project. I believe settlers should *engage with* Indigenous understandings as part of their engagement with settler grounded normativity, especially regarding Indigenous understandings being necessary for decolonization. But I want to stress, from my discussions with Freeman and Stiegman, that engagement with Indigenous understandings requires negotiation with Indigenous peoples.

I believe settler grounded normativity to be a form of creative contention: it is an attempt to build the skills and understandings we will need to effectively contend with the settler state given the circumstances we presently find ourselves in, especially cognizant to where settler colonialism has affected the more-than-human world as well as humans. As a creatively contentious project, settler grounded normativity might prove to be ineffective, or might be problematic in other ways including reinforcing settler colonialism or other structures of oppression. In the hopes of pre-empting possible missteps, I will discuss some ideas regarding what I feel settler grounded normativity must *not* be if it is to be decolonial. But I also open settler grounded normativity to alteration and refinement as it is enacted; and to rejection if it fails to achieve what it seeks. In order to be effective, I believe engaging with settler grounded normativity will need to be done with an ethic of courage: determination, willpower, and commitment to decolonization. And I believe that self-compassion will also significantly contribute to this ethic.

What Settler Grounded Normativity Must Not Be

Throughout this paper, I have reiterated how the irreducibility of cacophony means there cannot be narrowly defined paths to decolonization: people need to find paths to decolonization that

emerge out of their own particular positionalities. This necessary open-endedness remains with settler grounded normativity. However, I believe there are risks of perpetuating settler colonialism through settler grounded normativity, which settlers need to be aware of and make efforts to avoid if settler grounded normativity is to work towards decolonization. Largely, these risks relate to 'moves to innocence': efforts by settlers and other dominant parties "to remove involvement in and culpability for systems of domination" (Mawhinney cited in Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9).

Tuck and Yang's (2012) primary concern in "Decolonization is not a metaphor" is where 'decolonization' is used to mean metaphorical or symbolic transformations without real material changes, ignoring that "decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (p. 21)—"that is, *all* of the land, and not just symbolically" (p. 7; Tuck & Yang's italics). Settler grounded normativity risks being metaphorical 'decolonization' if interrelatedness and ethical responsibilities are acknowledged but relationships are not transformed in meaningful ways. Therefore, I have described settler grounded normativity as a means to an end and a tactic: if settler grounded normativity does not help to truly transform the settler/Indigenous relationship, then it fails at being decolonial. Tuck and Yang name a move to innocence "*Free your mind and the rest will follow*" (2012, p. 19-22; Tuck & Yang's italics), and although their discussion is about a different concern—that developing a critical consciousness might forego real decolonization at the same time that it advances social justice—settler grounded normativity must not become a freeing of the mind that presumes the rest will follow.

More than potentially not working to achieve real decolonization, settler grounded normativity risks reinforcing settler colonialism if it is not undertaken critically. Settler colonialism largely functions by settlers making claims to land—that it is our right to be on

colonized lands and live as we please—while ignoring and erasing Indigenous claims to land (MacKey, 2005; Sexton, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5-6; Veracini, 2010). By emphasizing interrelatedness with land, settler grounded normativity risks adding another dimension to settler claims to land. In this way, settler grounded normativity can contribute to problems that Tuck and Yang (2012) discuss regarding settlers playing Indian, as well as settler adoption fantasies (p. 13-17):

> These fantasies can mean the adoption of Indigenous practices and knowledge, but more, refer to those narratives in the settler colonial imagination in which the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping. This is a fantasy that is invested in a settler futurity and dependent on the foreclosure of an Indigenous futurity. (p. 14)

Whether settler grounded normativity is inspired by Indigenous understandings, or developed via Western understandings, it risks becoming a settler adoption fantasy:

> The act of adopting indigenous ways makes him 'deserving' to be adopted by the Indigenous. Settler fantasies of adoption alleviate the anxiety of settler un-belonging. He adopts the love of land and therefore thinks he belongs to the land. He is a first environmentalist and sentimentalist, nostalgic for vanishing Native ways . . . At the same time, his cultural hybridity is what makes him more 'fit' to survive – the ultimate social Darwinism – better than both British and Indian; he is the mythical American . . .
>
> Similarly, the settler intellectual who hybridizes decolonial thought with Western critical traditions (metaphorizing decolonization), emerges superior to both Native intellectuals and continental theorists simultaneously. With his critical hawk-eye, he again sees the critique better than anyone and sees the world from a loftier station. It is a fiction . . . just as the adoption, just as the belonging. (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 15-16)

Beyond just *claims* to land, Tuck and Yang (2012) discuss how settlers continue to uncritically (re)colonize lands, especially urban lands, using the Occupy Movement as an example where occupying land is seen as liberatory, and the ways that colonized lands are already occupied are not recognized or addressed (p. 23-28). Especially by suggesting that settlers should be engaging in processes to learn with the more-than-human world and, therefore, should be spending time on land, settler grounded normativity risks (re)occupying already occupied and colonized lands. Describing how critical pedagogies should be engaging with

decolonization, Tuck and Yang describe critical pedagogies as having a "lack of fluency in land and Indigenous sovereignty" (2012, p. 30). A fluency of land, Indigenous sovereignty, and also the history and ongoing realities of settler colonialism is needed in settler grounded normativity. Instead of "position[ing] land as public Commons" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p. 30), we need to be aware of what Coulthard (2014) says: "the 'commons' . . . belong to somebody—*the First Peoples of this land*" (p. 12; Coulthard's italics). Considering both settler adoption fantasies and re-occupation, settler grounded normativity must recognize Indigenous sovereignty, and must not be used to make claims to land.

Enacting Ethical Relations with the More-Than-Human World

As noted, a piece missing from my proposal for settler grounded normativity is *how* we can learn and enact ethical relations through engagement with the more-than-human world. Considering my assertion that settler grounded normativity ought to arise out of settler understandings, being attentive to Western understandings of interrelationality, such as those presented in Chapter One, is highly valuable for imagining ethical relations with the more-than-human world. Thoughtfully considering what these accounts of interrelationality also propose regarding human/nonhuman relations moving forward is valuable. For instance, M. Smith (2013) calls for "reconsidering the very sense of community . . . in ecological *and* ethical *and* political terms that are no longer beholden to either the exemption of the human (from ecology) or the exception of the ecological (from ethical and political community)" (p. 26; M. Smith's italics). Plumwood (2002) asserts that "[w]hat we *need* for a viable future is an integrated democratic science that is dialogical, non-reductionist and self-reflective – a science that can bring itself and its ends under critical and democratic scrutiny" (p. 53; Plumwood's italics); and Plumwood develops the need for

democratic, dialogical, non-reductionist, self-reflective human/nonhuman relations beyond science.

But beyond theories of how ethical relations ought to be enacted with the more-than-human world, we need accounts that address how we can learn from and with the more-than-human world. David Jardine (1998) writes about going for a walk with friends, through a forest that he connects with, and discusses the value of listening to his friends' conversations, but also the value of listening to the more-than-human world:

> My friends' conversations were, in an ecologically important sense, *of a kind* with the abundance of bird songs and flights that surrounded us—careful, measured, like speaking to like, up out of the hot and heady, mosquitoed air. And, standing alongside them there, sometimes silent, certainly unpractised in this art, involved a type of learning that I had once known but, like cicadas, long-since forgotten.
>
> I had forgotten the pleasure to be had in simply standing in the presence of people who are practised in what they know and listening, feeling, watching them work.
>
> I had forgotten the learning to be had from standing alongside and imitating, practising, repeating, refining the bodily gestures of knowing.
>
> I had forgotten how they could show me things, not just *about this place*, but about how you might carry yourself, what might become of you, when you know this place well.
>
> Part of such carrying, such bearing, is to realize how the creatures of this place can become like great teachers (Jardine, 1997a) [*sic*] with great patience. Such a realization makes it possible to be at a certain ease with what you know. It is no longer necessary to contain or hoard or become overly consumptive in knowing. One can take confidence and comfort in the fact that this place itself will patiently hold some of the remembrances required. (p. 93-94; Jardine's italics)

We need to find our own ways of remembering the knowledge that the more-than-human world holds. Abram (1997) is valuable for this task, as he begins his book by revealing how his own lived experiences with the more-than-human world brought him to consider how humans are phenomenologically interrelated with the more-than-human world. Abram tells stories of how, for instance "[i]t was in Indonesia . . . that I was first introduced to the world of insects, and there that I first learned of the great influence that insects—such diminutive entities—could have upon the human senses" (1997, p. 4).

Leduc (2016) describes the 'ecology of mind' tradition as "where environmental thinkers began attempting to reconnect modern ways of minding relations with a broader milieu" (p. 10): "[f]rom the marshy flight of a heron to immersion in a ravine forest, relations with the beings in our presence and their ecological contexts can transform our minds" (p. 10). What I find so valuable in Leduc's account is how he not only discusses ecology of mind—and works to bring it into conversation with the Haudenosaunee Good Mind tradition—but also works to enact these traditions in his writing. Most of *A Canadian Climate of Mind* was written outside (Leduc, personal communication, May 25, 2016). And throughout the book, Leduc describes his experiences in different places including Toronto's High Park, the Humber River, Long Sault, and Notre-Dame de Chartres cathedral in France, sharing the ideas that arise for him in these places and the histories that he encounters. My primary plans for further developing settler grounded normativity are to explore more ecology of mind literature, and enact my own ecology of mind practices in my life and my work—although I aim to bring a focus on settler colonialism into my engagement with ecology of mind.

Tsing (2012) writes that "[*b*]*iological and social diversity huddle defensively in neglected margins* . . . evolutionary process in zones of neglect continues to produce more useful species and species interactions by many orders of magnitude . . . . we might undertake to know something of the point of view from disordered but productive edges—the seams of empire" (p. 151; Tsing's italics). Tsing's comments lead me to imagine how it might be valuable to develop relations with marginalized aspects of the more-than-human world, such as how the more-than-human world is so often present, but overlooked, in cities—breaking through in cracks—in order to learn relations that can also break through, and transform, structures of oppression.

My own preliminary experiences have led me to see the value in trying to learn from and with the more-than-human world. Against the difficult emotions and feelings of illegitimacy that can arise in attempting to do decolonial work from a settler position, which Freeman and I discussed (personal communication, May 17, 2016), and my own depressive assumptions, engaging with the more-than-human world has, at times, given me a sense of belonging and made me feel that I do have a place for engaging in decolonization and for existing in a transformed future on decolonized lands.

The strongest example comes from the summer of 2015, when I was visiting British Columbia. More related to depression than considering my position in settler colonialism, I was struggling with feeling that I was on that land illegitimately. Early one morning, unable to sleep, I went for a walk along the beach. After heading quite a ways down the beach, I came across a group of maybe seven Canada geese in the water, heading back up the way I had come from. I started walking with them, matching their pace as they paddled along the water, stopping when they stopped, moving when they moved, and altogether remaining quite close to them. They did not seem to mind that I was there. I spent a fair amount of time with them—I want to say at least a half hour, gradually moving closer to the motel where I was staying. And when I finally decided that I had to head back to the motel, the geese took off, flying away. Regardless of what I am reading into this experience—interpreting it as I want to interpret it, especially as I do not know much about Canada geese—the fact that these geese seemed to accept me hit me in a spiritual way and helped me to believe that it was all right that I was on this land. Feeling accepted by these geese is not to forgive that with a true decolonial and Indigenous resurgent mentality, I likely should have engaged in Indigenous processes to be welcomed onto this land, but it is an experience that affirms for me a value to engaging with the more-than-human world.

Continuing the theme of welcoming, it was after being part of an environmental education course in May 2015 that I felt, I believe more consciously than I ever have, that I have a place on Indigenous lands even though I am a settler, even if my position on these lands does need to be transformed in pursuit of ethics and justice. This course was largely held outside, with five classes in different parks and green spaces around Toronto, as well as one day on the York University campus. Being involved in the course also inspired me to spend my own time outside, including when I was doing readings for the course. And having to lead the class one day required preparation, which involved more time spent outdoors. Before this course, I had been struggling with questions around my role in decolonization, and what it meant for me to be on Indigenous lands. And although details regarding these questions persisted—and continue to persist—after that course, I felt comfortable that I do have a role in decolonization and have a place on Indigenous lands. I expect many factors influenced this understanding arising at the time, but I would attribute my frequent engagement with the more-than-human world as one significant factor.

Beyond a sense of welcoming, engaging with the more-than-human world has also, at times, revealed to me beings that I ought to ethically consider, but had been overlooking. Canoeing on Eels Creek, near Stony Lake in central Ontario, the first weekend of August 2015, I noticed a swath of large plants underwater, looking like giant pipe-cleaners, and became strikingly aware of how much is likely living in that creek. Prior to this realization, although I rationally *knew* that there were nonhuman beings in the creek, I predominantly saw it as empty space: just water until the cliffs, trees, and other plants of the far shore. However, the environment beneath the water was likely as *full* as the environment above it, containing plants, rock formations, fish and other animals and beings, occurring not in one homogeneous

arrangement, but with great diversity. It was a moment of understanding, provided by the more-than-human world, that made me more keenly aware of all that needs to be considered when pursuing ethics and justice: where underwater beings can easily be forgotten about as it can be difficult for humans to directly face them. Critically engaging with this realization also led me to better consider the difficulty, but also the need, to consider people's emotions when trying to enact ethical relations: similar to underwater beings, emotions can go unnoticed.

As a final story, another moment of understanding occurred once when I was sitting outside of my house, in Toronto, reading for the aforementioned environmental education course. The sun was behind my house, so I was in the shade, and somewhat chilly despite it being a hot summer day. At once, I became aware that at one point the place where I was had likely been in a forest, although it has undoubtedly existed in varied forms, with shifting interactions of water, earth, rock, plants, etc., and that if this forest remained, I would likely be in a similar situation: in the shade and chilly, albeit under trees instead of buildings. This experience caused me to feel linked to the past with an understanding that what currently exists is not inevitable, natural, normal, etc. but the result of certain histories and processes. What currently exists will also change: it is possible that this land will become forest again. Radically different futures, indeed decolonial, Indigenous, and transformative futures, are possible. My desire, now, is to explore how I might engage with the more-than-human world in order to help understand and enact transformation and these futures.

Appendix A

This appendix is fully quoted from Coulthard, 2014, p. 61-62. Coulthard cites the long quote from Blondin, 1990, p. 155-156.

. . . Ethically, this meant that humans held certain obligations to the land, animals, plants, and lakes in much the same way that we hold obligations to other people. And if these obligations were met, then the land, animals, plants, and lakes would reciprocate and meet their obligations to humans, thus ensuring the survival and well-being of all over time. Consider, for example, the following story told by the late George Blondin, a respected Sahtu Dene elder. The tale recounts an experience his brother Edward had while hunting moose:

> Edward was hunting near a small river when he heard a raven croaking, far off to his left. Ravens can't kill animals themselves, so they depend on hunters and wolves to kill food for them. Flying high in the sky, they spot animals too far away for hunters or wolves to see. They then fly to the hunter and attract his attention by croaking loudly, then fly back to where the animals are.
>
> Edward stopped and watched the raven carefully. It made two trips back and forth in the same direction. Edward made a sharp turn and walked to where the raven was flying. There were no moose tracks, but he kept following the raven. When he got to the riverbank and looked down, Edward saw two big moose feeding on the bank. He shot them, skinned them, and covered the meat with their hides.
>
> Before he left, Edward put some fat meat out on the snow for the raven. He knew that without the bird, he wouldn't have killed any meat that day. [Blondin, 1990, p. 155-156]

Notice how Blondin's narrative not only emphasizes the consciousness and individual agency of the raven, but also depicts the relationship between the hunter and the bird as mutually dependent. The cooperation displayed between Edward and the raven provides a clear example of the ethic of reciprocity and sharing underlying Dene understandings of their relationship with land.

Appendix B

This appendix is fully quoted from Wilson, 2008, p. 95-96.

Before I start the next chapter on discussing relational accountability, I want to share with you a story that my father shared with me. This story tells about a revelation that came to him that he was literally a part of the land that his ancestors had gone back into. It speaks to our relationship

to the land that forms us but also to the accountability that we must uphold to our ancestors. I guess with all revelation comes responsibility. These are his words:

> It was on one of those really fine sunny and warm September days after the leaves have turned to their many colours that I was out walking on the Saskatchewan prairie. I was enjoying the autumn stillness when I started to wonder how it may have been like there on that very spot several hundred years ago. I could imagine the endless stretches of faded green grasses with perhaps herds of thousands of buffalo grazing along the hollows trying to store up as much fat in their bodies as a way of getting ready for the cold and snow-filled months ahead. I could see the flocks of neepin-ayesuk (summer birds) winging their way south as their way of coping with the winter. I began to wonder if there would be any of my ancestors anywhere nearby also busy getting themselves ready for the harsh months ahead. As I topped a gentle knoll I spotted a wooded area below along one of the many creeks that wind their way through the prairies. I went into the woods to see if there would be enough resources in the vicinity to sustain a camp for the winter. There would be enough of a shelter from the winds in the woods and enough dry wood for warmth and cooking. Perhaps they would have dried a lot of buffalo meat to last the winter along with a good supply of wild berries that would have been picked while they were ripe. The creek would supply the necessary water for the winter and perhaps even some fish. There would also have been a harvesting of what is known as the passenger pigeon. One of my grandfathers told me of them when I was a young boy. "These birds were a gift from the Creator to us Human Beings," he used to say. They were not afraid of Humans so our ancestors used to harvest enough to last them through the winter. This gift was sort of like our insurance that we would not starve during severe winters. Unfortunately that characteristic caused their extinction once the white settlers arrived. They recklessly depleted, like the buffalo, these wonderful birds.
>
> Anyway as I was walking through the spaces between the clumps of willows and trees all of a sudden I realized in mid-stride that if our ancestors have been living here for centuries it is likely that some may have died even on the very spot I was going to step. If that were the case then everywhere I go on this continent is also likely the case. Everywhere their remains would have gone back into the land that became enriched by them. They would supply nutrition for the grass I was walking on, the worm that feeds on

> the grass, and the bird that feeds on the worm and so on. We Two-legged Beings eventually find nutrition from those same sources! Thus our ancestors ARE part of us in that way. We are all connected! Now I truly understood the term "and all our relations." We are only a part of that circle.

Appendix C

This appendix is fully quoted from Wilson, 2008, p. 75-77.

I want to share an experience with you that I remember from several years ago. Jamie was attending California State University at the time and had been home for part of the summer. I decided to keep him company on his drive back to Sacramento, so we took off together in his jeep. We camped along the way with no real timeline for when we would arrive or definite route that we would take. It turned out that the jeep was what decided when and where we would stop for breaks.

While driving through South Dakota, the jeep bonked out on us just as we approached Bear Butte. This butte is a sacred site for Indigenous North Americans, so who knows what forces were at play, but we ended up spending the night there. Jamie and I decided to sleep up on the butte so that we could conduct a pipe ceremony there at sunrise. (It was still summer, so sunrise would be pretty early.) We took our sleeping bags and slept in the crook of the bear's neck—between the large butte that was its back and the smaller one that was its head. We made our beds on the south side of a large tree, about ten metres from a small rock face. Mosquitoes started to descend upon us, thankful for the fresh blood on their doorstep. After a brief prayer to ask them to leave us alone, they did.

Sometime through the night, a dream/vision came to me. I was my innermost self—a single point of light. Between the rock wall and myself were thousands of other points of light, looking in on Jamie and me. They floated in the space all around us. These lights nowhere near filled the space around me, but rather the space seemed indescribably large and well able to accommodate us all.

I cannot really describe the feeling that went along with this vision, even (especially?) after analyzing it over the years. Certainly it was not fear or even confusion; reviewing the experience now that is as clear in my memory as the night it happened, I feel a sense of mystery and of, I don't know, belonging? Words cannot adequately convey it. Another Indigenous man at

Bear Butte that night said that he earlier saw streams of light coming down the mountainside from the area where we slept. I have had Elders tell me that the spirits were looking in on us that night, and that this was what I saw.

As I sit and write about an Indigenous ontology and epistemology, I am able to gain fresh insight into the vision that was given to me that night. Once again I have real difficulty putting this into words that can come close to explaining the idea. Perhaps it might be easier if you get someone else to read you this description, while you try to visualize it with your eyes closed.

Imagine that you are a single point of light. Not like a light bulb, or even a star, but an infinitely small, intense point of light in an area of otherwise total darkness or void. Now in the darkness of this void, another point of light becomes visible somewhere off in the distance—it is impossible to tell how far off, because you and the other point are so infinitely small. You form a relationship with that other point of light, and it is as though there is an infinitely thin thread now running between you and the other. All that exists are these two points of light, one of which is you, and something that is connecting the two of you together.

Now another point of light is visible off in another direction, and again you develop a relationship, and another thin thread evolves. You are now connected with two other points. A fourth light appears, and another relationship and thread are formed. A fifth light. Then a sixth; slowly, slowly more lights appear. You build more and more connections. Now the lights are starting to appear all around you and are coming faster as you get accustomed to bringing them into your forming of relationships. The lights are coming into being as fast as you can imagine them now, and as you build your web of relationships, slowly these infinitely small threads of relationship are building up into something resembling a form around you.

As the lights and the relationships come faster and faster, the form starts to take its shape as your physical body. While you notice this, your consciousness expands outwards, and you notice that another point of light—perhaps the first other one you noticed—has also started to take on a shape as it makes its own web of relationships and builds up its threads of being. Now other lights are taking on their physical form, as their webs of relationships grow and coalesce. As more and more of these points of light take on their physical form, the world around you starts to take shape.

Now as you open your eyes, you can see all of the things that are around you. What you see is their physical form, but you realize that this form is really just the web of relationships that

have taken on a familiar shape. Every individual thing that you see around you is really just a huge knot—a point where thousands and millions of relationships come together. These relationships come to you from the past, from the present and from your future. This is what surrounds us, and what forms us, our world, our cosmos and our reality. We could not *be* without *being in relationship* with everything that surrounds us and is within us. Our reality, our ontology is the relationships.

As we relate this world into being, many other knots and connections are formed that do not take on a physical form. After all, my physical body can be defined by a boundary—generally speaking, my skin—that separates what is me from what is not. We all know though that our emotional and mental boundaries do not necessarily coincide with the physical. (If you have any doubt about this try to approach someone face-to-face, and get as close to him or her as you can. You will soon discover that our emotional boundaries are much further out than our physical ones—you will get increasingly uncomfortable when these boundaries are crossed.)

Who knows where our spiritual boundaries are; is our spiritual self that infinitely small point of light, or is it the aura that surrounds us and interacts with our environment? Perhaps that point of light is like some kind of reverse black hole—not really a point at all, but a space where so many relationships come together that they emit a light of their own.

Anyway, some of these knots of relationships are not visible or tangible entities, but they are there just the same. They are developing ideas, grand abstractions, entire systems of thinking. This is our epistemology. Thinking of the world around us as a web of connections and relationships. Nothing could be without being in relationship, without its context. Our systems of knowledge are built by and around and also form these relationships.

Appendix D

This appendix is fully quoted from Mohawk, 2010, p. 275.

The Iroquois culture has a tradition that every time we gather together to have a meeting, we open with what is called a *ga no ya* or opening speech. Some people call it a thanksgiving address. That talk is what everyone who is sane in the world should agree on. It's kind of like Iroquois diplomacy: we start with what we agree on and then we keep going to the things that we cannot agree on. So what is it that we all agree on? The speech starts with an opening that we see

one another; we need one each other; we need people to be in the world and it's a good thing that there are people in the world; we're grateful and thankful that there are other people in the world and it's good to see them here, so we give a greeting. We acknowledge the greetings and thanksgiving that there are one and another, that we can greet one another. Since that's the way we do things amongst ourselves, we should be able to do that with other beings, and so it goes on and we do greetings to the Earth. Everybody should be able to give greeting to the Mother Earth. She's a person, and—call it poetic—it's a way of us having a relationship with that, so we acknowledge that relationship. It's fundamental: right after people, Earth. Then it goes to grasses, waters, trees, plants, winds, the moon, the stars, the sun, the universe, the whole thing. Everybody in the world ought to be able to agree that we depend on those things. Those things are actually essential to us, and that's the rational mind with a poetic way of expressing a rational mind. Some people look at that and say that's spiritual. Whatever you call it is fine. It's us expressing our positive relationship to all the others, every other that we can think of. We have not separated ourselves from them. They are others and we are part of the others.

We have to do this speech at the beginning and the end of every meeting because people need to be reminded of that. It's a constant reminder.

Appendix E

This appendix is fully quoted from McGregor, 2004, p. 387-388. McGregor cites Johnston, 1976, p. 14.

In the Anishinaabe tradition, the Creation and Re-Creation stories are also shared in my class. The Creation story tells us how the Creator had a vision and how the vision was fulfilled. The Re-Creation story, reinforcing principles of harmony and respect, is particularly striking. The Re-Creation story is my favorite, and I am moved every time I hear it (or even read it). In the version retold by Basil Johnson [*sic*], Anishinaabe writer, there has been a great flood and most of the life on Earth has perished, except for bird and water creatures. Sky-woman survives and comes to rest on a great turtle's back. She asks the water creatures to bring her soil from the bottom of the waters. The water animals (the beaver, the marten, the loon) all try to help her and fail. Finally, the muskrat volunteers, much to the scorn of the other water creatures who failed. Muskrat, the most humble of the water creatures, is ridiculed, but he is determined to help; he dives down into the water and the animals and Sky-woman wait.

> They waited for the muskrat to emerge as empty handed as they had done. Time passed. Smiles turned to worried frowns. The small hope that each had nurtured for the success of the muskrat turned into despair. When the waiting creatures had given up, the muskrat floated to the surface more dead than alive, but he clutched in his paws a small morsel of soil. Where the great had failed, the small succeeded. [Johnston, 1976, p. 14]

The muskrat succeeds, and while in some versions of the Re-Creation story he dies, in others he is revived. There are many values and lessons to learn from this story, but one of the most compelling that has stood out in my mind over many years and many tellings is that all of Creation is important; all must be respected. If we lost or disrespected even the tiniest and most seemingly insignificant being, we would not be here! If the muskrat had failed, where would the Anishinaabe be?

Appendix F

This appendix is fully quoted from L. Simpson, 2008, p. 34. L. Simpson cites J. Borrows, 2002, p. 19.

. . . In a time long ago, all of the deer, moose, and caribou suddenly disappeared from the Nishnaabeg territory. When the people went looking for them, they discovered the animals had been captured by the crows. After some negotiation, the people learned that the crows were not holding the moose, deer, and caribou against their will. The animals had willingly left the territory because the Nishnaabeg were no longer respecting them. The Nishnaabeg had been wasting their meat and not treating their bodies with the proper reverence. The animals knew that the people could not live without them, and when the animal nations met in council, the chief deer outlined how the Nishnaabeg nation could make amends:

> Honour and respect our lives and our beings, in life and in death. Cease doing what offends our spirits. Do not waste our flesh. Preserve fields and forests for our homes. To show your commitment to these things and as a remembrance of the anguish you have brought upon us, always leave tobacco leaf from where you take us. Gifts are important to build our relationship once again. [Borrows, 2002, p. 19]

The Nishnaabeg agreed and the animals returned to their territory. Contemporary Nishnaabeg hunters still go through the many rituals outlined that day when they kill a deer or moose, a process that honors the relationships our people have with these animals and the agreement our ancestors made with the Hoof Clan to maintain the good life.

Appendix G

This appendix is fully quoted from Mitchell, 1989, p. 109-110.

When the Haudenosaunee first came into contact with the European nations, treaties of peace and friendship were made. Each was symbolised by the Gus-Wen-Teh or Two Row Wampum. There is a bed of white wampum that symbolises the purity of the agreement. There are two rows of purple, and those two rows have the spirits of your ancestors and mine. There are three beads of wampum separating the two rows and they symbolize peace, friendship, and respect.

These two rows will symbolize two paths or two vessels, travelling down the same rivers together. One, a birch bark canoe, will be for the Indian people, their laws, their customs and their ways. The other, a ship, will be for the white people and their laws, their customs and their ways. We shall each travel the river together, side by side, but in our own boat. Neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel.

The principles of the Two Row Wampum became the basis for all treaties and agreements that were made with the Europeans and later the Americans. Now that Canada is a fully independent nation, perhaps it will be possible to strike up the Two Row Wampum between us, so that we may go our ways, side by side in friendship and peace.

Appendix H

This appendix is fully quoted from L. Simpson, 2008, p. 30. L. Simpson cites Johnson, 2007.

. . . Harold Johnson, a Cree, explains traditional Cree conceptualization of treaty relationships in his territory, Kiciwamanawak, in terms of relations and relationships. He writes that when the colonizers first came to his territory, Cree law applied, the foundations of which rests in the "maintenance of harmonious relations." He sees the treaty as an adoption ceremony, where the Cree adopted the settlers as family and took them in as relatives, inviting them to live in Kiciwamanawak and live by the laws of the Cree. [Johnson, 2007, p. 29]

> When your ancestors came to this territory, Kiciwamanawak, our law applied. When your ancestors asked to share this territory, it was in accordance with our law that my ancestors entered into an agreement with them. It was by the law of the Creator that they had the authority to enter treaty. [Johnson, 2007, p. 27]
>
> Referring to the intersection of families, territory and treaties, Johnson states, when your family arrived here, Kiciwamanawak, we expected that you would join the families already here, and in time, learn to live like us. No one thought that we would

> have to beg for leftovers. We thought we would live as before, and that you would share your technology with us. We thought that maybe, if you watched how we lived, you might learn how to live in balance in this territory. The treaties that gave your family the right to occupy this territory were also an opportunity for you to learn to live in this territory. [Johnson, 2007, p. 21]

Appendix I

This appendix is fully quoted, including footnotes, from L. Simpson, 2014, p. 2-5.

Kwezens makes a lovely discovery[72]

Kwezens[73] *is out walking in the bush one day*
It is Ziigwan[74]
the lake is opening up
the goon was finally melting
she's feeling that first warmth of spring on her cheeks
"Nigitchi nendam, she is thinking, "I'm happy".

Then that Kwezens who is out walking
collecting firewood for her Doodoom[75]
decides to sit under Ninaatigoog
maybe just stretch out
maybe just have a little rest
maybe gather fire wood a little later
"Owah, Ngitchi nendam nongom.
I'm feeling happy today", says that Kwezens.

And while that Kwezens
is lying down, and looking up
she sees Ajidamoo[76] *up in the tree*
"Bozhoo Ajidamoo! I hope you had a good winter"
"I hope you had enough food cached."
But Ajidamoo doesn't look up because she's already busy.
She's not collecting nuts.

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[72] It is a traditional practice to begin by talking about how I learned this story and how I relate to it. This is a traditional Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg story that I learned from Washkigaamagki (Curve Lake First Nation) Elder Gidigaa Migizi (Doug Williams). This is my own re-telling of it, and it is one of the ways I tell it in March, when my family and I are in the sugar bush, making maple syrup. I have chosen to gender the main character as a girl because I identify as a women [*sic*], but the story can be and should be told using all genders. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg refers to Mississauga Ojibwe people, and our territory is the north shore of Lake Huron in what is now known as Ontario, Canada. We are part of the larger Anishinaabeg nation.

[73] Kwezens literally means "little woman" and is used to mean girl.

[74] Ziigwan is the first part of spring when the ice is breaking up and the snow is melting.

[75] Doodoom is an older Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg word that children use to for their mothers. It means "my breastfeeder". I learned this word from Doug Williams.

[76] Ajidamoo is a red squirrel.

Gawiin[77].

She's not building her nest
Gawiin, not yet.
She's not looking after any young.
Gawiin, too early.
She's just nibbling on the bark, and then doing some sucking.

Nibble, nibble suck.
Nibble, nibble suck.
Nibble, nibble, suck.
Nibble, nibble, suck.

Kwezens is feeling a little curious.
So she does it too, on one of the low branches.

Nibble, nibble suck.
Nibble, nibble suck.
Nibble, nibble, suck.
Nibble, nibble, suck.

MMMMMMMMmmmmmm.
This stuff tastes good.
It's real, sweet water.
MMMMmmmmmmmmmm.

Then Kwezens gets thinking
and she makes a hole in that tree
and she makes a little slide for
that sweet water to run down
she makes a quick little container
out of birch bark, and
she collects that sweet water
and she takes that sweet water home
to show his [*sic*] *mama.*

That doodoom is excited and she has three hundred questions:

"Ah Kwezens, what is this?"
"Where did you find it?"
"Which tree"
"Who taught you how to make it?"
"Did you put semaa[78]*?"*
"Did you say miigwech[79]*?"*

[77] Gaawiin means no.
[78] Semaa is tobacco.

"How fast is it dripping?"
"Does it happen all day?"
"Does it happen all night?"
"Where's the fire wood?"

Kwezens tells her doodoom the story,
She believes every word
because she is her Kwezens
and they love each other very much.
"Let's cook the meat in it tonight,
it will be lovely sweet"
"Nahow."
"Nahow."

So they cooked that meat in that sweet water
it was lovely sweet
it was extra lovely sweet
it was even sweeter than just that sweet water.

The next day, Kwezens takes her mama
to that tree and her mama brings Nokomis
and Nokomis brings all the Aunties, and
there is a very big crowd of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabekwewag[80]
and there is a very big lot of pressure
Kwezens tells about Ajidamoo
Kwezens does the nibble nibble suck part.

At first there are technical difficulties
and none of it works.
but Mama rubs Kwezens back
she tells Kwezens that she believes her anyway
they talk about lots of variable like heat and temperature and time
then Giizis comes out and warms everything up
and soon its drip
drip

drip

drip

those Aunties go crazy
Saasaakwe![81]

---

[79] Miigwech means thanks.
[80] Nishnaabekwewag means Ojibwe women.
[81] A saasaakwe is a loud shout or vocalization of approval used to call in or acknowledge the spirits.

dancing around
hugging a bit too tight
high kicking
and high fiving
until they take it back home
boil it up
boil it down
into sweet, sweet sugar.

Ever since, every Ziigwan
those Michi Saagiig Nishnaabekwewag
collect that sweet water
and boil it up
and boil it down
into that sweet, sweet sugar
all thanks to Kwezens and her lovely discovery,
and to Ajidamoo and her precious teaching
and to Ninaatigoog[82] *and their boundless sharing* ([L.] Simpson, 2013).[83]

[82] Ninaatigoog are maple trees.
[83] A similar version of this story is published in ([L.] Simpson, 2013). A different version of this story is told by a non-Native author (Cook [*sic*; Crook], 1999). There are several other maple sugar origin stories, see the title story from *The Gift Is in the Making* ([L.]Simpson, 2013) and Corbiere (2011).

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