"This is a continuation of genocide"[1]

Examining the pathologization of Indigeneity in the 2016 suicide crisis and state of emergency in Attawapiskat First Nation

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[1]Quotation from a press release delivered by Cathy Tsung Deh Kwe during occupation of INAC building in Toronto on April 18, 2016, (See: Richochet Media video report, April 18, 2016).

Abstract

This research paper concerns the co-constitution of pathology and Indigeneity in the settler-colonial state of Canada by 1) conducting a media analysis of national media coverage from one major Canadian newspaper, *National Post*, on the suicide crisis and state of emergency in Attawapiskat First Nations in 2016, and 2) engaging in a critical theoretical discussion of the neoliberal political economy and resultant social conditions in which Attawapiskat First Nations is enmeshed, in order to contextualize conditions of ill-health and account for the emergence and function of pathological frames of reference. Through engagement with critical Indigenous and race scholarship and the methodological practice of refusal of damage-centred research (Simpson, 2007; Tuck, 2009; Tuck and Yang, 2014), I examine the ways in which Indigenous peoples' bodies and minds are situated as the problems to be 'fixed' and how historical and material social conditions are narrated as 'symptoms' of Indigenous racialized subjectivity (Million, 2013; Tam, 2013) such that Indigeneity is made synonymous with pathology. Specifically, I address how inclusion of Indigenous subjects into the discursive arena of 'disability'- through equation of pathological frames of reference with Indigenous subjectivities as signified by the application of diagnoses of 'trauma', 'mental illness' and the stigmatization/psychiatrization of Indigenous felt experiences- does not translate into a mitigation of settler-colonial violence against Indigenous subjects. Instead, I demonstrate how this equation functions ideologically to negate the self-determination of Indigenous subjects, legitimize neoliberal, settler-colonial strategies of land theft and dispossession, and ultimately conceal from view the settler-colonial relations through which Indigenous subjects are harmed, injured, disabled and killed. Furthermore, I show how this necropolitical function of colonial violence is always/already legitimized as necessary for the (racial) project of modernity and concealed through trauma discourse and narratives of pathology that equate progress and development with 'healing.'

Foreword

My plan of study addressed the following three learnings components: 1) Psychiatry and Racism, 2) Trauma and Settler-colonialism, and 3) Healing Justice. Through my research and coursework, I fulfilled all four learning objectives outlined in my plan of study:

1.1 To learn about the relationship between psychiatry, racism, and settler-colonialism

I conducted an extensive literature review on the co-constitution of Indigeneity and pathology in settler-colonial contexts in order to develop the theoretical framework for my Major Research Paper. I also explored themes of disability and madness in relation to racialized communities and read anti-colonial critiques of psychiatry and mental health namely through the work of Frantz Fanon, and critical race and disability scholars, Nadia Kanani, Louise Tam, Rachel Gorman, and Denise da Silva, and Indigenous scholars such as Dian Million, Chrisjohn, Maraun and Young, Audra Simpson, Joseph P. Gone and Pemina Yellowbird.

2.1 To gain an understanding of the field of Indigenous feminist studies

I engaged extensively with the work of Indigenous women and feminist scholars, filmmakers, artists, activists and political leaders. The works of Audra Simpson, Dian Million, Pamela Palmater, Alanis Obomsawin and Rauna Kuokannen were instrumental in clarifying connections between gendered colonial violence, neoliberal political economy, trauma and mental health and Indigenous and settler-colonial state sovereignties. This body of literature was indispensable to my theoretical discussion and informed the critical stance I take against psychiatric diagnostic frameworks. The scholarship of Indigenous feminist scholar, Eve Tuck, and Indigenous scholar Margaret Kovach on research methodologies deeply informed my own questions around ethical research methods in relation to Indigenous communities and helped me to position myself as a non-Indigenous researcher. Through my research, I also learned about the political activism and leadership of Indigenous women such as Chief Teresa Spence, Shannon Koostachin, and Cathy Deh Kwe-Tsung. The analyses put forth by these women also provided a means through which to think through the limits of state-sanctioned mental health discourse in addressing the issues confronting Indigenous communities.

2.2 To trace the evolution of trauma as a social concept

Dian Million's scholarship on trauma in Indigenous communities has been instrumental in my own formulations on the emergence of trauma as a social concept that upholds settler-colonial sovereignty in a neoliberal era. My engagement with critical Indigenous scholarship on methodology including topics such as research as empire-building (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Martin and Mirraboopa, 2003; Simpson 2007), damage-centred research (Tuck, 2012), inquiry as invasion (Tuck and Yang, 2014), and refusal (Simpson, 2007; Tuck and Yang, 2014) also exposed me to the different ways in which settler-colonial nation-states and its institutions rely on and reproduce the construction of Indigenous subjects as pathological/traumatized/perpetually suffering to advance its own interests. Through my media analysis of *National Post* coverage on the suicide crisis in Attawapiskat First Nations in 2016, I studied the ways in which

psychotherapeutic and psychiatric discourse is mobilized in national social discourse to construct and normalize pathologizing frameworks for Indigenous subjects and issues.

3.1 To learn about non-pathologizing approaches to understanding the relationships between colonial and capitalist violence, health and racialized subjectivity

While I was initially interested in exploring non-pathologizing approaches to understanding the relationships between colonial and capitalist violence, health, and racialized subjectivity through closer study of Indigenous and other traditional systems of medicine and healthcare, the scope of this paper did not allow for this. Therefore this major paper does not reflect in its content the third learning component. However, this major paper has still fulfilled the learning objective listed under this component (see learning objective 3.1 above) through serious engagement with a range of scholarly work such as the theory of disablement (Gorman, 2010, 2016), the concept of environmental violence put forth by Indigenous activists (Native Youth Sexual Health Network, 2016), Palmater's concept of premature death (2011), Pasternak's consideration of colonial fiscal warfare waged against Indigenous communities and its role in prompting the 'slow death' of these communities, and Simpson's (2016) articulation of the sovereign death drive. This rich body of scholarship vigilantly refuses pathology and biomedical/psychiatric theories of deficiency as viable explanations for the chronic health issues in Indigenous communities, and instead attends to the complexity of colonial state relations in which Indigenous people are enmeshed. Bringing these streams of scholarship into conversation with each other has enabled me to resist damage-centred, pathologizing approaches to harm and disablement in Indigenous communities, and provided me with new ways to think through the connections between colonial and capitalist violence, health and racialized subjectivity in ways that challenge the legitimacy of the sovereignty of the settler-colonial state.

I would also like to take note of one of my learning strategies listed under the learning objective of the third component (learning objective 3.1.) which was attending the opening keynote speech of the annual disability studies conference *Reclaiming Our Bodies and Minds* entitled "Indigenous Sovereignty, Environmental Justice and Disability Rights: The Story of Chemical Valley." This event introduced me to the activism happening in Aanjiwnaang First Nation where Indigenous youth are leading the struggle against the environmental violence and racism of oil refineries and chemical plants. It was through this event I learned about the ways in which environmental violence and disablement are intimately linked to the settler-colonial state's undermining of Indigenous sovereignty through capitalist development projects. This event catalyzed a process of reflecting critically about disablement in Indigenous communities as a product of settler-colonial violence and what is at stake for the state in perpetuating and concealing environmental violence and disablement in First Nations communities across occupied Turtle Island.

Land Acknowledgement

This work was created and written on the sacred territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River. I am grateful for the countless ways I have been supported by this land and have been able to learn from the example of political resistance and leadership of Indigenous peoples and nations in Toronto and across Turtle Island. As a treaty person and resident on this land, it is my intention that this work contributes one small piece to my ongoing commitment to the decolonization of these lands.

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To my supervisor, Rachel Gorman- thank you for your ongoing guidance, support, and encouragement of this project. The respect you conferred to me as a researcher served as motivation at times when I needed it the most. I am also immensely grateful to your scholarship and artistic work, which filled me with a sense of possibility and served as a beacon of light in difficult moments. To my POS advisor, Jin Haritaworn- thank you for your attentiveness and meticulous care as an advisor. Your commitment to fostering the emergence of BIPOC scholarship and to a creating critical spaces rooted in intellectual rigour and accountability enabled me to see myself reflected in tiny pockets of the academic-industrial complex. To Liette Gilbert, my MRP advisor- thank you for your timeliness and urgent sense of duty in supporting this project. This made for a more accessible process, for which I am deeply grateful. To Andil Gosine and Honor Ford-Smith- thank you for all your work in unapologetically centering the Caribbean and its diaspora in the classroom and in intellectual and artistic discourse. It was my great privilege to learn from you. To Kelly- thank you for your whole-hearted generosity, your compassion and your distinct imaginative intellectualism. Our rituals of sharing ideas, art, conversation, and wisdom inspired me, grounded me and kept me whole. It has been an honour to journey beside you and to witness your growth as a scholar and filmmaker over the course of this Master's program. To Nadia and Siva- Thank you for consistently and brilliantly demonstrating the highest standard of integrity and ingenuity in writing, academic scholarship and community practice. My conversations with you and the spaces you created with and for me were touchstones as I moved through this process. I am also grateful to Susanda and Lamia at Six Degrees and all the progressive healthcare workers with whom I have connected throughout these past two years for taking care of my body and spirit with such deliberate care, kindness and patience and offering me nuggets of wisdom that kept me going. To my family- thank you for the unconditional love and support.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to all grandmothers who guide, teach, pray, heal, fight, and persist, and to my own grandmother, Sonia, who taught me the same. Thank you.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Question

This research paper concerns the co-constitution of pathology and Indigeneity in the settler-colonial state of Canada by 1) conducting a media analysis of national media coverage on the suicide crisis and state of emergency in Attawapiskat First Nations in 2016, and 2) engaging in a critical theoretical discussion of the neoliberal political economy and resultant social conditions in which Attawapiskat First Nations is enmeshed, in order to contextualize conditions of ill-health and account for the emergence and role of pathological frames of reference. In the aftermath of the suicide crisis at Attawapiskat First Nations, Mi'kmaq lawyer and scholar Pamela Palmater, assertively stated in an article published in *Policy Options*, "While there are many emergency actions that must be put in place in the short term to address the suicides, the longer-term solutions have to include the return of lands and resources, the recognition of indigenous autonomy and the respect and implementation of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Nothing less will save our children from premature deaths" (April 13, 2016). Discussion of these long-term solutions referenced by Palmater (April 13, 2016) was noticeably missing from national media discourse. Instead, media reporting following the declaration of the 2016 state of emergency fixated largely on the federal and provincial governments' containment strategies which included ramping up mental health funding allocated to remote Indigenous communities and increasing the number of mental health professionals sent to Attawapiskat. Media coverage also reinforced the discursive rationalization of the suicide crisis as an issue solely concerning the 'mental health' of Indigenous subjects by scrutinizing the state of Indigenous families, parenting, behaviours, emotions and personal choices, and relationships to land to locate potential explanations of the unfolding of the suicide crisis. The persistence of this scrutiny continued

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despite numerous, sustained vocal critiques made by many Indigenous activists, communities, political leaders, and scholars prior to and following the crisis regarding the limits of such an approach (Ricochet, 2016; Palmater, 2016).

Many scholars have interrogated the historical and contemporary constructions of Indigenous subjects as pathological (Chapman, 2010; Chrisjohn, Young and Maraun, 1997; De Leeuw, Greenwood and Cameron, 2009; Greenwood, 2012; Nelson, Lavoie, and Brown, 2016; Tam, 2013; Yellow Bird, n.d.; Kanani 2011, Le Francois, 2013; Million, 2013; Razack, 2013; Waldram, 2004; Yellow Bird, n.d.). This work extends and adds to this archive by examining how pathology and Indigeneity are co-constituted in settler-colonial contexts such that many of the issues facing Indigenous communities, including treaty and land rights, Indigenous sovereignty, violence against Indigenous women and children, chronic health and addictions issues, economic and land dispossession, are subsumed and disappeared within the state-sanctioned media discourse on the 'mental health' of Indigenous subjects. This work does not aim to negate or dismiss the harmful, debilitating and often disabling impacts of ongoing colonial violence that are enacted on First Nations and other Indigenous peoples in Canada. It is also does not attempt to delegitimize the urgent need for increased funding to and provision of high quality healthcare and social services for First Nations communities on and off reserves. What this research is concerned with are the ways in which Indigenous peoples' bodies and minds are situated as the problems to be 'fixed' and the processes through which historical and material social conditions are made into 'symptoms' of Indigenous racialized subjectivity (Million, 2013; Tam, 2013) such that pathological frames of reference emerge and become definitive of Indigenous subjects. Specifically, I address how the equation of pathological frames of reference with Indigenous subjectivities and the resultant inclusion of Indigenous subjects into

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the discursive arena of 'disability' (through equation with pathological frames of references/mental health disabilities) do not automatically translate into a mitigation of settler-colonial violence against Indigenous subjects. Instead, I demonstrate how this equation functions ideologically to negate the self-determination of Indigenous subjects, legitimize neoliberal, settler-colonial strategies of land theft and dispossession, and ultimately conceal from view the settler-colonial relations through which Indigenous subjects are harmed, injured, disabled and killed. This research paper asks the following questions: How is pathology constructed as synonymous with Indigeneity racialized subjectivity? When Indigenous people and the issues that confront them are collectively and homogeneously identified through diagnostic categories of pathology (including the range of diagnoses categorized as "mental health disabilities/disorders"), how does pathology/disability function ideologically to conceal the social relations of disablement, or in order words the social relations of settler-colonial, capitalist violence through which Indigenous subjects are bodily and psychically harmed, injured and murdered (Gorman, 2016)? These questions are important to consider in order to critically interrogate and challenge how knowledge production about Indigenous subjects, and notably their discursive admittance into representations of disability, continue to function as ideological tools of colonial dispossession so as to further entrench the "killing indifference" (Razack, 2013) of settler-colonial sovereignty or as Simpson (2016) names it "the sovereign death drive."

1.2 Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 discusses my methodology and research methods, which begins with an exploration of the methodological practice of self-location. I draw on Margaret Kovach's (2009) discussion of self-location to situate myself in the research, provide transparency around my intentions for doing research that is concerned with unpacking settler-colonial knowledge

production and pathologization of Indigenous peoples, and to show how this process of critical self-reflection contributed to the formulation of the research questions for this paper. In this section, I examine how as an Indo-Caribbean person living in the Caribbean, I was brought into relationship with concepts of land, labour and Indigeneity, in order to demonstrate how implicit in the construction of my own ethno-racial subjectivity- as organized through institutionalized narratives and processes of state formation, nation-building and ethnonationalism- is a relationship to Indigenous peoples and to Indigeneity as a discursive construction. I emphasize the importance of focusing on my life in Trinidad as the dominant ideologies and concepts that were entrenched in my life there informed my own processes on engaging with Indigeneity post-migration to Toronto. I draw on Jodi Byrd's elaborations of the concept of 'arrivant' (Braithwaite), Shona Jackson's concept of 'creole indigeneity' and my own lived experiences growing up in Trinidad to complicate the settler/native binary and discuss the complex positionalities and complicities of Indo-Caribbean arrivant populations in the ongoing erasure and displacement of Indigenous people.

I then move to the work of Indigenous scholars, namely Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), Karen Martin and Booran Mirraboopa (2003), and Audra Simpson (2007) to attend to the project of knowledge production in settler-colonial expansion and the role of research in constructing racial categories premised on the basis of biological inferiority through which Indigenous subjects were made recognizable and categorized as pathological, and managed accordingly by state apparatus. I then turn to a discussion of Eve Tuck's concept of damage centred research in which she interrogates the persistence of the colonial role of research in framing Indigenous communities as victims of circumstance in order to exploit their lived experiences for the purpose of knowledge production. Tuck and Yang (2014) write that it is through this impetus to

produce damage-centred research that inquiry constitutes a form of invasion into Indigenous and other marginalized communities.

I then turn to a discussion of the methodological practice of refusal, elaborated on by Simpson (2007) and Tuck and Yang (2014), as a critical intervention and strategy of resistance against damage-centred colonial research and the 'inquiry as invasion' model of knowledge production. Examining the organization of knowledge production at the site of media coverage of the suicide crisis in 2016 at Attawapiskat, I discuss how refusal informs my own research imperatives and questions by providing me with a framework through which to subvert the colonial gaze by situating it as the object of my study. I discuss how as a non-Indigenous researcher engaging in a topic of study that concerns Indigenous communities, I refuse the impetus to reproduce damage-centred research (Tuck, 2009) by refusing to study Indigenous people and develop knowledge *about* Indigenous people. Instead, I orient myself towards challenging and studying 'codes' (Tuck and Yang, 2014) or the 'grid of intelligibility' (Smith, 2014) through which Indigenous subjects come to be known to non-Indigenous peoples. My research thus became concerned with the emergence of representations of pathology and victimhood as a category of representation for Indigenous subjects and how these representations constitute active forms of state refusal to recognize the sovereignties of Indigenous subjects and nations. I also discuss that in order to resist the settler-colonial academic impetus to reproduce paradigms of pathology and damage, I paid particular attention to Tuck and Yang's (2014) call to shift the unit of analysis from people to institutions.

In my discussion of my research methods, I discuss Dorothy Smith's analysis of 'relations of ruling,' to demonstrate how national media discourse constitutes in part, the settler-colonial state ruling apparatus and to unpack how knowledge produced at this site functions

ideologically to reproduce these relations. Therefore, I use national media discourse as a site of analysis to understand how knowledge about Indigenous subjects is being constructed and organized for a non-Indigenous public. I also discuss the selection of the research method of critical discourse analysis as it enables an analysis of concepts and language devices as emerging from social relations of power and therefore through CDA, these concepts becomes important entry points into interrogating the ideological underpinnings of state power.

Chapter 3 covers my theoretical framework which draws on Indigenous feminist theory and critical race theory that attends to the co-constitution of Indigeneity and pathology in settler-colonial contexts. In particular, I engage Indigenous and critical race scholars who examine the ways in which the application of trauma and other diagnostic categories to Indigenous bodies and minds produce Indigenous subjects as sites for surveillance, invasion, and death. First, I engage with scholars who look at the historical role of psychiatry in the construction of Indigenous subjects as pathological, and how these diagnoses were used to legitimize the forced removals of Indigenous peoples from their families and incarceration in residential schools, the child welfare system and psychiatric institutions. Drawing on the work of Louise Tam (2013), Sherene Razack (2011), Chrisjohn, Maraun and Young (1997), and Dian Million (2013), I examine how psychiatric discourse continues to play a role in mediating the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state. Finally, I discuss how Denise da Silva's theorization of the horizon of death, Rachel Gorman's theorization of the ideological role of disability in the racial project of modernity, and Audra Simpson's articulation of the sovereign death drive enable me to look at the ways in which the equation of Indigeneity with pathology serves to hold intact the dominant authority of settler-colonial sovereignty.

Chapter 4 details the unfolding events of the suicide crisis, including the federal government's response to the crisis. I also emphasize the activism of Indigenous communities and allies in the aftermath in which INAC buildings across Canada were occupied by Indigenous organizers and allies to raise awareness of the inequities impacting First Nations peoples and youth in particular. I also discuss many of the arguments that were put forth by Indigenous community leaders that addressed issues of Indigenous sovereignty and land rights and highlighted the limitations of a discourse that focused solely on improving mental health as a solution to the suicide crisis.

In Chapter 5, I engage in a media analysis of *National Post* news articles written and published in the aftermath of the suicide crisis in 2016 in Attawapiskat First Nations. I discuss three emergent themes from the *National Post* media coverage on the suicide crisis and state of emergency at Attawapiskat First Nations. The first theme "Aboriginal despair and the construction of victimhood," looks at the ways in which Indigenous subjects are represented as dysfunctional and helpless victims of circumstance through references to substance abuse, addiction and the "dysfunction" of Indigenous families and parenting. I look at how Indigenous parents and caregivers are represented as negligent and careless, and scapegoated for the crisis while Indigenous communities are homogenized through a complete erasure of the specificity of the social, economic, and political relations that shape the conditions on each First Nations reserve. Finally, I attend to the ways in which suicide itself is constructed as the only means through which Indigenous subjects can practice agency and how this problematic formulation is consistent with settler-colonial logic.

The second theme "Suicide as disease" examines how suicide is represented as an epidemic or disease which entrenches the criminalization of youth who attempt or commit

suicide. I also attend to how representations of suicide as disease results in solutions being framed through psychiatrization and psychotherapeutic treatment with an intense focus and preoccupation with fixing the behaviours, psyches and relationships of Indigenous peoples. This then leads to Indigenous subjects' refusals of psychotherapeutic treatment being framed as symptomatic of pathology, rather than as a form of resistance and practice of sovereignty. The third theme "Pathologized relationships to land" examines how Indigenous peoples' relationships to land are represented as symptomatic of trauma as a way to suggest that Indigenous ways of life predispose them to suffering and that they must adhere to capitalist forms of development in order to progress and break their 'trauma bond' to their lands. This strategy requires a particular framing of land as unable to support life, which is then used to suggest capitalist models of economic development of land as indispensable to promoting health, well-being, and progress in Indigenous communities.

In Chapter 6, I begin by looking at the housing crisis in Attawapiskat in 2011, in order to contextualize the social conditions at Attawapiskat First Nations as colonial state violence propelled through the neoliberal political economy. Drawing on the work of Shiri Pasternak on the punitive fiscal war waged on Attawapiskat in the aftermath of housing crisis, Rauna Kuokannen's theorization of the impact of neoliberalism on state-Indigenous relations, and Lindsay Bell's study on diamond extraction and development projects in the Canadian North, I demonstrate how an analysis of the political and economic relations at Attawapiskat between the state, corporate sector, Indigenous band governance and Indigenous community is needed in order to fully grasp how the social conditions that prompted the housing crisis emerged as a direct result of the violent inequities and invasive mechanisms of colonial control and exploitation implicit in these relationships. I then turn to Pamela Palmater's work on the

connection between chronic state underfunding and 'premature deaths' on First Nations reserves, and draw on Rachel Gorman's theory of disablement to show how these conditions resulting from colonial oppression exacerbates conditions of ill-health, leading to disablement as reflected in higher rates of suicide and chronic disease on First Nations reserves.

I then turn to a discussion of da Silva's (2014) concept of the 'horizon of death' and Simpson's (2016) articulation of the 'sovereign death drive' to look at how a site like Attawapiskat First Nations constitutes a horizon of death insofar as it is targeted for death and destruction by the Canadian state as an exercise and reinforcement of its sovereignty. I also draw on the work of Rachel Gorman (2016) who notes that because the horizon of death is a site that is always/already constituted through raciality/racial colonial violence, the enfolding of subjects who embody or inhabit this horizon of death into an identity of disability/pathology often reinscribes the colonial relationship between the state and First Nations peoples on the horizon of death. The state is reiterated as self-determining while Indigenous subjects are relegated to the position of 'affectable other,' whose ability to be acted on and affected by the state confirms the sovereign authority of the state. Simpson (2016) allows me to consider what is at stake for the state in the reproduction of representations of pathology, that is how the representation and constant efforts to reproduce Indigenous subject as 'affectable/pathological others' stems from the threat that the sovereignties of Indigenous peoples and nations present to the settler nation (Simpson, 2016). I argue that representations of pathology should not be passively accepted as a benevolent gesture of inclusion or indication of settler sensitivity but rather should be considered for the ways that they are utilized to negate Indigenous peoples as self-determining subjects and justify various forms of colonial state violence and neoliberal state interventions. Million's (2013) analysis of the application of trauma discourse to Indigenous communities is used to

further discuss the ideological function of discursive constructions of Indigenous peoples as traumatized and pathological. I draw out this connection between affectability and pathology to show how representations of Indigenous subjects as pathological emerge out of the sovereign death drive and conceals the actual relations of exploitation and persistent impoverishment that underlies disablement and premature death on the horizon of death.

2. Methodology

2.1 Positionality

In her book *Indigenous Methodologies: characteristic, conversations, contexts*, Margaret Kovach (2009) identifies self-location as a crucial research practice. Self-location is the practice of developing an understanding of one's subjectivity by using personal experience as the starting point (Kovach, 2009). It implies a process by which the researcher reflects on their own experiences in order to discern what constitutes their own frameworks for knowing and seeing in order to develop a practice of community accountability in their research process. Self-location also fosters transparency about the intention and objectives of research. Through this imperative to practice self-location, I reflected on my experiences as a way to bring into conscious mind the ways in which my body and my choices were organized by and conditioned through the different institutions that I engaged with in my everyday life. I came to know myself as 'minority,' as 'citizen,' through the forms I filled out in doctor's offices, at social service offices, at airports and in job applications. I also reflected on the ways in which I had 'encountered' Indigeneity through university courses, activism, media and conversations with peers and family.

After moving to Toronto, I completed Grade 12 and moved to university. I did not encounter any knowledge or information about Canada's colonial history as a newcomer in a secondary public education setting. It was only when I entered university that I was introduced to courses that offered critical perspectives on Canadian colonialism as well as courses on Indigenous epistemologies. Although I was engaged in student organizing on campus throughout the four years of my undergraduate degree, it was not until the final year of my studies that I was brought to contend with my positionality as a non-Indigenous person living on the stolen land of Indigenous peoples.

In an Indigenous studies class, I shared that I had migrated to Toronto from Trinidad and then proceeded to discuss what I understood about the history of Canadian colonization. When I was done speaking, the professor challenged me by asking what I knew about the Indigenous peoples of Trinidad. My professor herself was of Indigenous ancestry from the Caribbean and her question brought me to the realization that I had been speaking about Indigenous peoples as though they were external and unrelated to my experience as part of the (Indo-) Caribbean diaspora. As a migrant in Canada, the processes of subject formation which were shaped through the years lived in Trinidad, functioned in tandem with the Canadian state's organization of its white and migrant populations in relation to Indigenous communities to facilitate a particular way of engaging with Indigeneity that alienated me from Indigenous peoples. My professor's question also forced me to confront the reality that I had never lived on land that I was Indigenous to. Despite the intimate connections to land and ocean that I had formed over the course of my lifetime in Trinidad, as a descendant of the British indentureship system I had been at least four to five generations removed from any kind of land that I could identify as being Indigenous to. This moment shifted my outlook and brought me to a place where I

understood myself as having a relationship to Indigeneity- both as a discursive construction and the real, collective presence of peoples Indigenous to lands known as Trinidad and the Caribbean region- throughout my life, rather than a relationship that began with my migration to Toronto. That this relationship is formative of my subjectivity as an Indo-Trinidadian person leads me to interrogate the mechanisms and processes through which 'arrivant' populations (Byrd, 2011) not living on lands they themselves are Indigenous to are brought into relationship with Indigeneity. I am interested in how Indigeneity is already implicit in the construction and organization of our own subjectivities (through institutionalized narratives and processes of state formation and nation-building) and yet at the same time how Indigenous peoples and epistemologies are often rendered unknowable/invisible to us.

There has been considerably more scholarship that addresses the ways in which Indigenous and racialized populations are organized in relation to each other in Canadian and U.S. settler-colonial states (Lawrence and Dua, 2005; Thobani 2007; Tuck and Yang, 2012; King, 2013; Lawrence and Amadahy, 2009; Sehdev, 2011; Dhamoon, 2015; Uphadhyay, Patel, Moussa, 2015; Phung, 2011; Thobani 2007; Mathur, Dewan & Gagne, 2011). Thobani (2007) details how the Canadian nation-state constructs a triangulated structure of subject formation through which communities are sorted as "nationals," "Indians" and "immigrants" in order to maintain colonial, class, race and gendered relations of power through which national borders are constructed and policed, labour is classed and racialized, Indigenous communities are dispossessed and Indigenous land is made into private property. She also discusses the technique of exaltation which establishes the white national subject as exceptional in his humanity through his possession of the definitive qualities and values of Canadian nationalism. While full exalted status is unattainable to racialized immigrants, their relationality to the state as citizens or as

potential citizens place them in antagonistic relationships with Indigenous peoples. Lawrence

and Dua (2005) have asserted that through their inclusions- potential, precarious or actual- in the

settler-colonial state as citizens of Canada, people of colour are enfolded in the process of

settlement, which must be confronted in order to engaged in a self-reflexive process of

decolonizing anti-racist politics. Tuck and Yang (2012) look at the ways in which settler-colonies

are formed through a settler-native-slave triad through which "the decolonial desires of white,

nonwhite, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people, can similarly be entangled in

resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further settler colonialism" (p. 1).

King (2013) has attended to the ways in which the violence committed against Black bodies in

the Americas, particularly Black women's bodies were foundational to the formation of

"plantation settler-colonies" and troubles the collapsing of Black people into the position of

settlers, while also arguing for new grammars that can more closely approximate the ways in

which colonization, and legacies of genocide and enslavement continue to unfold today with

different impacts on Indigenous and Black peoples.

Despite the obvious merits of this literature, it is limited in its ability to help elucidate

some of the formative ideologies that shaped my social consciousness about Indigeneity as an

Indo-Trinidadian youth growing up in Trinidad. Because these ideologies continued to function

and have an impact on me in the Canadian social space post-migration, it is important that I

begin with my origin into the Americas, with my life in the Caribbean, specifically Trinidad. My

discussion on subjectivity will focus on tracing the ways in which my subject formation as an

Indo-Trinidadian in Trinidad both relied on the concept of Indigeneity while simultaneously

erasing/displacing Indigenous Carib peoples. By attending to the specificities of my subjectivity

as an Indo-Caribbean person, I seek to create space to consider the complexities out of which my

relationship to Indigeneity emerged. In so doing, I hope to be able to better contextualize how critical self-reflection on subjectivity enabled me to formulate the research questions for this specific project.

In *The Transit of Empire*, Jodi Byrd (2011) develops the concept of 'transit' to denote settler-colonial violence of genocide, land thefts, removals, dispossessions and displacement of Indigenous peoples and nations and its accompaniment of the discursive emptying/hollowing out of Indigenous subjects of any signifiers of history, culture and sovereignty. Byrd (2011) discusses that this 'hollowing out' has facilitated constructions of Indigeneity or "Indianness" through which U.S. settler-colonial empire could solidly recognize itself as civilizing force of progress and as rightfully sovereign over Indigenous lands. Indigeneity as the transit of empire is a space invested with settler-colonial fantasies, inventions and apprehensions, which is traversed and expropriated by settlers in order to hold intact their imperialist invasions, occupations and expansions. As an example, Byrd (2011) explains that in the early stages of the formation of the U.S. settler-colonial state, Indigenous peoples who resisted colonial encroachments on their territories and the expanding frontiers of empire were constructed as warmongering savages who were fundamentally threatening, terrifying and diametrically opposed to the social and political order of the settler nation. These early historical formations of terror and incivility as the ideological logics of empire provide a prototype for later constructions of the "Islamic "monster-terrorist-fags" which are deployed in U.S./Canadian and European national imaginaries to justify their perpetual 'wars on terror'.

Byrd also draws on the concept of 'arrivants' put forth by Afro-Caribbean poet Kamau Braithwaite to name and theorize the complicated subjectivities of those whose migrations and journey entry points onto Indigenous lands of the Americas were tied to the development of the

'New World' in ways that necessitated their violent subjugation and the expropriation of their labour. Byrd (2011) draws on the concept of arrivant to complicate the settler/native binary that fails to take into account how the entry points of many populations, including enslaved Africans, and indentured migrant workers into the lands of the Indigenous peoples of the America was not marked by the impetus to colonize and settle Indigenous lands. The impact of this historical organization of arrivant subjects in relation to state and empire, and the transformations of these relationships under different stages in geopolitical state formation continue to complicate the relationships of arrivant populations to land, nation, state, Indigeneity and Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood.

Through their concept of colonial unknowing, Vimalassery, Pegues and Goldstein (2016) also raise questions about the complicated positioning of arrivant populations and Indigenous peoples. They caution against analytical approaches to settler-colonialism that isolate it as a self-contained, discrete history, political project and set of relations. "Colonial unknowing" describes epistemological approaches that fail to recognize the inter-relationality between different histories of colonialism, the different forms that racial capitalism assumes under different historical, temporal, and spatial conditions and the forms of racial difference that emerge. Through colonial unknowing the connections between different forms of racial and colonial violence are rendered mutually exclusive with no path of recourse to theorize connections. One result of this is the collapsing of relationships between arrivants and Indigenous peoples into the binaristic formation of settler/native. They argue that instead, different historical forms of colonialism as well as imperialism as an ongoing set of social relations, must be theorized together with settler-colonialism to determine the ways in which they are co-constitutive.

In examining the complex positionality of arrivants and the ways in which relations between Indigenous peoples and arrivant populations unfold in self-proclaimed 'post-colonial' nations, Byrd (2011) looks to the works of Guyanese fiction author Wilson Harris. She writes that while attempting to rescue Indigenous presence from obscurity by drawing out and making explicit Indigenous influences in Caribbean aesthetic, identity and cultural formations, Harris reproduces a reification of Indigeneity (Byrd, 2011). This reification occurs because of the implicit yet unacknowledged reliance on Indigeneity as transit which relies on a negation of Indigenous subjects as contemporary and complex. Indigeneity becomes discursively locked in the past. Indigeneity provides the site through which arrivants can pass through in order to engage in a supposedly transformative reimagination of cultural politics and aesthestic representations, thereby emerging as representative citizens of "postcolonizing" liberal democratic states while Indigeneity itself is rendered impervious to change and is used as raw material for 'postcolonial' development (Byrd, 2011). Using Harris' work, Byrd (2011) demonstrates how arrivant populations often reproduce Indigeneity as transit, and invest in it their own arrivant fascinations, ruminations and desires for cultural transformation, reinvention and resilience, in service of consolidating projects of multicultural nation-building and "postcolonizing" futures (p. 112).

In her book *Creole Indigeneity*, Shona Jackson (2012) looks at the ways in which the political project of nation-building, following the end of formal British colonization in Guyana, mobilized ideas that centered on the historical role of labour of Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean populations in building the societies which they had inherited post-independence. Political leaders of these ethno-racialized communities often argued that the role of enslaved and indentured labour in transforming the land into civil societies was a process through which they

had become indigenized (Jackson, 2012). The process of becoming 'indigenized' was forefronted as the basis on which Afro and Indo-Guyanese ethno-racial communities could stake a claim to nationhood and sketch out the terms of belonging to land and nation (Jackson, 2012). Through her attention to these processes and their ideological underpinnings Jackson (2012) develops the concept of "creole indigeneity" which

> refers to practices of belonging and becoming that have provided a new material, symbolic, and discursive relationships to the land for blacks, Indo-Guyanese, *and* Indigenous peoples. The term captures the unique tensions between settler and native- where native refers to a fixed identity of Indigenous Peoples and the inhabiting of that term by Creoles via their indigenization and creolization processes- that still operate in Guyana and throughout the Caribbean. It rivets our attention to the evolution of the Creole and native as interdependent yet oppositional identities that reproduce colonial geography and epistemologies (p. 64).

Jackson (2012) employs a more fluid engagement with Indigeneity through the concept of Creole Indigeneity in order to interrogate "the practices of belonging that produce ontological viability and social validity for both indigenous and nonindigenous groups... [and] is meant to make a distinction between the fixed category of "native" and the more fluid processes of belonging (indigeneity) that Indigenous *and* Creole peoples have" (p. 65). The invocation of Indigeneity both in relation to native people of the Caribbean and Creole/arrivant populations, through her theorization of creole indigeneity does not discursively displace native Indigenous peoples of Guyana and the Caribbean as Indigenous but rather seeks to rethink processes of and claims to 'post-colonial' state and subject formation, and nation-building in ways that expose Indigeneity and Indigenous native peoples as a foundational counterpoint (Jackson, 2012). In uncoupling

'native' from the concept of indigeneity, Jackson (2012) resists re-narrativizing processes of indigenization of arrivant communities as synonymous with becoming native/displacing Indigenous peoples. Her work also allows for serious consideration of Indigenous native peoples as a modern, contemporary presence (rather than as a vanished race or past reified artefact) by taking seriously the ways in which they are involved in their own ongoing processes of creolization and indigenization through being in relationship to Creole populations. As she writes "the term (creole indigeneity) conceptually ties the destabilization of native to the reinvention of Creole as native through a relationship to labour that has a regionwide, ontoepistemic function to support modern belonging and the institution of Creole as a new native" (Jackson, 2012, p. 67). Jackson confronts the implications of this destabilization on Indigenous peoples who still live on their Indigenous lands in the Guyanese nation-state. She looks at the ways in which Indo-Guyanese have negotiated national belonging through labour and tracks how shifting discursive framings of labour were used to narrate the transition of Indians into the project of modernity. She notes "Indian belonging is produced through material and cultural relationships developed through the plantation" (Jackson, 2012, p 188). She looks at the work of several authors, some of whom posit indentured labour as a force which saved the British colony, paved the pathway to civilization and therefore assured a right to land. Political leaders such as Cheddi Jagan subverted the romanticism of labour as a civilizing force and located labour struggle as a site for Guyanese workers to challenge the alienation produced historically through exploitative systems of labour and which persisted in the class divisions. It is through engagement in labour struggle that one ensured a right to nation. However, Jackson (2012) writes that in this approach, "labor struggle represents the "hour of creation" of a new humanity and the transformation of East Indians as a race embedded in imperial labour to Indo-Caribbeans as indigenous and

postcolonial" (p. 208). The linking of labour to progress and development and entry into modernity in the construction of 'postcolonial' nation-building reproduces colonial ideological framings of Indigenous Peoples as the antithesis of progress and development while erasing the colonial violence that the Guyanese state perpetrates on Indigenous native peoples through continued encroachment on their lands for large-scale resource extraction projects, and denial of their land rights and sovereignties over their territories. In this way, Indigeneity becomes a transit point (Byrd, 2011) through which arrivant/Creole populations ascribe meanings to Indigeneity that divest it from the actual Indigenous subjects and their descendants who still inhabit their traditional lands.

While Jackson looks specifically at the Guyanese context, her analysis holds much relevance to the Trinidadian context. In 1995, Prime Minister Patrick Manning officially declared May 30 a national holiday in order to commemorate the arrival of the Fatel Rozack on the eastern shores of Trinidad, the first ship which transported Indian indentured workers from India to Trinidad. The year 1995 also saw the election of Basdeo Party as the first 'East Indian' prime minister of the state and so marked an important time of transition for descendants of Indian indentured workers when the struggles for national belonging that had been exemplified in the arena of national politics seemed to come to fruition. I attended a Hindu primary school in the immediate aftermath of these historical moments and have many memories of the cultural celebrations that would be held on May 30. Political leaders from the two national parties, the United National Congress and People's National Movement, would be invited along with representatives from the Hindu religious organization the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha. They often delivered speeches that focused on themes of progress of the "East Indian community" and emphasized the contributions of the community to the economic development of the nation.

Indian indentured workers who were brought to the Caribbean and whose lives and labour were welded to the sugar cane plantations were made into the original signifiers of virtues of hard work and persistence in the face of adversity. The labour of indentured workers and successive generations who came before us was discussed as the means through which Indo-Trinidadians had contributed to the development of the economic development of the nation and therefore how we had earned our place as national subjects. This history of exploitation was used to stress the sacrifices made in order for us, the descendants of indentured workers, to have the opportunity of formal education. Formal education was pivoted as the means to an end of a life locked into manual labour, namely one which still tied Indo-Trinidadians to the industry of agriculture. Thus generational progress was measured through the ability to transition out of manual labour and into intellectual labour, that is, through the ascendance of a middle-class consisting of educated professionals and private business owners who were narrated as embodying and carrying on the social codes and virtues of hard work and persistence in the face of adversity. Those still impoverished were not the subjects of this narrative of progress. Thus while past connections to indentureship ensured some measure of national belonging, what continued to ensure inclusion in nation was the ability to ascend into the ranks of the middle-class and capitalist class.

Furthermore, these ethno-nationalist narratives of belonging which hinged on a romanticization of manual and indentured labour concealed the class and heteropatriarchal violence that was endemic to the process of insertion of a professional elite class of Indo-Trinidadians into state politics. These ethno-national narratives persist today as is evident in a column recently published in the Guardian in which the author states "During the first 100 years, many Indians had migrated from the periphery to occupy influential spaces in the national

community and they were contributing to the state in every facet of life. They put education at the forefront of family life, and helped their children rise out of the ashes of the plantations. Many achieved success in business and a few had entered politics" (Parasram, May 28, 2017). He continues

> They created new communities dedicated to preserving the richness and glory of the motherland while embracing and enhancing their new home. They preserved their rich and diverse cultural and religious traditions and adopted the best of their new environment to move forward and conquer the system through education and cultural persistence. They created new communities dedicated to preserving the richness and glory of the motherland while embracing and enhancing their new home (Parasram, May 28, 2017).

In his web article "Why I Will Never Celebrate Indian Arrival Day," Rajiv Mohabir (June 2, 2016) condemned the celebrations of Arrival Day in Guyana as a celebration of colonialism that fails to acknowledge the magnitude of its violence and the intergenerational issues that have succeeded it. Writing about his ancestors' entry point into Guyana, Mohabir (2016) states "In lieu of return fare to an India that would not take them back, they accepted land grants from the British government—land stolen from indigenous people—and hacked settlements in the periphery of the Amazon rainforest." In referencing the colonial theft of Indigenous lands and dispossession, he connects this dispossession of Indigenous peoples in Guyana to the exploitation and displacement produced through the indentureship system. Land grants tied indentured workers to the plantation and facilitated the continued displacement of Indians in order to provide a cheap source of labour for the British plantation class. However, Jackson (2012) writes, "as that diaspora transforms itself in the Caribbean with Indian peoples becoming

historical subjects as "East Indian" and then national subjects as Indo-Caribbean...that diaspora is no less a diaspora of modernity in a more advanced state of capital" (p. 187). Jackson (2012) points to the ways in which through the project of class formation, Indo-Caribbean peoples have been enfolded into the capitalist economy such that they participate and mediate processes that threaten and encroach on the forms of social organization and economic production of Indigenous nations in the Caribbean. Indigenous peoples throughout the Caribbean continue to confront loss of sovereignty, dispossession and loss of land and their ways of life are threatened by large-scale resource extraction. While at one point the displacement of Indo-Caribbeans was connected to the dispossession of Indigenous peoples in a direct way, now their insertion into the global and local capitalist economy often place them in antagonistic relationships to Indigenous peoples. Thus ethno- nationalist narratives of progress conceal the many costs of so-called 'post-colonial' development and come to be defined through insertion into the capitalist market.

The writings of both Jackson (2012) and Mohabir (2016) demonstrate the ways in which my subjectivity as Indo-Caribbean has been shaped through the dismissal and denial of Indigenous presence and sovereignties. As such it challenges me to consider the ways in which my subjectivity had already been constructed through conceptualizations of Indigeneity that rendered unknowable the lives and experiences of Indigenous peoples in Trinidad and the Caribbean as contemporary and co-existent. Arrivants are implicated in the reproduction of Indigeneity as a transit point, which continues to shape the ideological underpinnings of imperialist projects of occupation, war and economic dispossession and disenfranchisement of the places that we come from (Islamic, monster-terrorist-fag) (Byrd, 2011). Therefore, it is imperative that we look at the processes through which Indigeneity is constituted in ways that render it an absent presence as the basis on our own entry point and subject formation in

processes of nation-building across different geopolitical contexts in the Americas. While I cannot explore the full extent of these transnational processes of subject formation in this paper, this recognition and attention to processes of subject formation in Trinidad shapes my interest in unpacking knowledge production about Indigenous subjects, as a way to take accountability for the ways in which I have been brought into relationship with Indigeneity in Canada and to challenge the Canadian state's dependency on my passive acceptance of these frames of reference in order to perpetuate its conditions of genocide against First Nations and other Indigenous communities.

2.2 Research as Empire-Building and the Ethic of Refusal

Indigenous scholars have examined the ways in which processes of knowledge production have been deeply implicated in expansionist projects of empire-building and settler-colonial nation-building (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999, Martin and Mirraboopa, 2003, Simpson 2007, Kovach, 2010, Tuck and Yang 2014). Martin and Mirraboopa (2003) write

> Natural scientists such as biologists, geologists and botanists have conducted research on Aboriginal lands to identify potential resources and thus, economic value...until recent times, research conducted in Aboriginal lands was done without the permission, consultation, or involvement on Aboriginal people (p. 203).

In a similar vein, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith explains that the colonization and conquest of Indigenous lands and nations was facilitated through research which was tasked with data 'collection' (or theft), mapping territories, and the classification and construction racial and species categories through which 'Indigeneity' and Indigenous lands could be known and represented. People, along with the natural environment and geography, were treated as raw

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materials for study. Theories of difference were generated in ways that racialized Indigenous peoples as uncivilized, barbaric, and subhuman. These theories were mobilized to legitimize land theft and widescale dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples from their territories (Smith, 1999; Simpson 2007).

Indigenous researchers continue to examine this colonial legacy of research particularly in terms of how it provides the structural basis for academic institutions and processes of conducting research and knowledge production. Marlene Brant-Castellano writes "Just as colonial policies have denied Aboriginal Peoples access to their traditional lands, so also colonial definitions of truth and value have denied Aboriginal Peoples the tools to assert and implement their knowledge. Research under the control of outsiders to the Aboriginal community has been instrumental in rationalizing colonialist perceptions of Aboriginal incapacity and the need for paternalistic control" (2004, p. 102). In her letter "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," Eve Tuck (2009) introduces the concept of damage-centred research and delineates how it functions as a dominant paradigm for research concerning Indigenous communities. She also examines its complicity in the reproduction of colonial violence and undermining of sovereignty of Indigenous communities. According to Tuck (2009), damage-centred research "operates, even benevolently, from a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation" (p. 413). Through damage-centred research, there is an emphasis on contextualizing Indigenous experiences of historical exploitation and colonization through narratives of pain or 'brokenness.' Indigenous bodies and minds thus become the sites through which knowledge about Indigeneity as deficiency and pathology is localized and reproduced. Damage-centred research rests on the principle that the more that researchers can show or provide evidence for the extent of the brokenness, the more they can demonstrate the

need for change (Tuck, 2009). She cautions against the representation of Indigenous peoples as debilitatingly damaged or harmed in order to gain political and material benefits as it often comes to singularly define Indigenous peoples and has the effect of pathologizing and exposing them to increasingly intensified and often fatal forms of institutional violence, surveillance and incarceration. Furthermore, given Indigenous people's history of being pathologized and institutionalized as a mechanism to facilitate colonial dispossession and settlement (Kanani, 2012; Yellow Bird, n.d; Chrisjohn, Young and Maraun, 1997; Tam, 2013; Chapman 2010; Le Francois 2013; De Leeuw, Greenwood and Cameron, 2009; Razack, 2011, 2014), as well as being over-researched in the context of empire-building (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999, Martin and Mirraboopa, 2003, Simpson 2007, Tuck and Yang 2014), Tuck (2009) challenges us to interrogate how ways of seeing and knowing and making knowledge about Indigenous peoples as damaged is implicit in and reinforces settler-colonial social relations.

In her article "On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, Voice and Colonial Citizenship" Audra Simpson (2007) also grapples with knowledge production and research as sites through which settler-colonialism asserts authority. Simpson (2007) discusses the historical legacy of anthropology in rendering difference recognizable in ways that would legitimize white settlement and Indigenous displacement in service of settler-colonial nation-building. The development of theories of Indigeneity constructed the terms on which Indigenous nations would be rendered unknowable/unrecognizable, and colonization and capitalism would be legitimized as the only viable 'civilizing' future for Indigenous peoples. Simpson draws on the legal policy of terra nullius and the more recent legislation Bill C-31 (with its implications for Mohawk nationhood and notions of citizenship) as examples through which state recognitions of Indigeneity- what

constitutes Indigeneity and who is or is not Indigenous- were carved out through anthropological frameworks.

Drawing on the work of Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Simpson (2007) looks at the legal doctrine of terra nullius which was able to legitimize land theft, dispossession and settlement through colonial research that categorized Indigenous peoples as subhuman, uncivilized and therefore unable to possess land tenure. Simpson (2007) also shows how a similar logic underlay Lewis Henry Morgan's endorsement of the advancement of the Iroquois via assimilation whom he saw as militarily advanced. While Morgan advocated for the 'absorption' of the Iroquois, his advocacy was undergirded by an anthropologically-backed body of knowledge through which Indigeneity was rendered an inferior, uncivilized form of humanity. Therefore in recognizing the Iroquois as militarily advanced, he understood them as embodying a 'lesser degree' of Indigeneity, which merited their 'absorption' or assimilation into the white race. Thus Iroquois people could only be recognized as sovereign subjects through a negation of their status as Indigenous peoples. In so doing, this confirmed the absolute authority of settler-colonial sovereignty as a force of domination over Indigenous nations. Simpson (2007) also looks at Indian Act of 1868, which legislated the loss of status for Indian women who married non-Indian or non-status Indian men, as a colonial strategy of conquest through which the state empowered itself to define the terms of recognition of the Indigenous subject. Bill-C31 which was passed in 1984 sought to remedy the institutionalized patriarchy of the Indian Act by restoring the status to Indian women who were impacted by the Act. However, as Simpson (2007) writes, Bill C-31 produced more complications for Kahnawake people on the reserve around membership and citizenship as it interfered with the on-the-ground practices of sovereignty and citizenship that

had been developed in the aftermath of the Indian Act. It therefore functioned as yet another invasive tool that undermined Indigenous sovereignty.

Simpson (2007) documents this history to demonstrate the ways in which anthropological and legal-judicial frameworks implemented by the state have refused Indigenous peoples' claim to Indigeneity and citizens of their own self-determining nations. In so doing, she also names the political and historical context that Mohawk nationhood and citizenship in Kahnawake is asserted, negotiated and struggled for. Given the persistent refusal of the state to recognize Indigenous sovereignties as real, material practices that are negotiated by and serve to structure the everyday lives of Indigenous subjects, Simpson (2007) explores how refusal itself is often employed as an anti-colonial practice of sovereignty practiced by Indigenous people in order to subvert and resist state forms of (mis)recognition. She writes that as an anthropologist she was interested in

> the ways in which Kahnawakero:non, the "people of Kahnawake," had refused the authority of the state at almost every turn. The ways in which their formation of the initial membership code (now replaced by a lineage code and board of elders to implement the code and determine cases) was refused; the ways in which their interactions with border guards at the international boundary line were predicated upon a refusal; how refusal worked in everyday encounters to enunciate repeatedly to ourselves and to outsiders that "this is who we are, this who you are, these are my rights (Simpson, 2007, p. 73).

She discusses how refusal as an anti-colonial practice of sovereignty by Indigenous people was methodologically informative. In her own experiences, both her and her research participants were confronted with limits in their conversations/interviews beyond which they refused to expand or elaborate. Refusal in the research process was employed as a measure to protect

Indigenous sovereignty, and was used by both the participants and the researcher to assert agency in defining the limits of knowing. It was a technique employed to control the knowledge that would be permitted to enter academia as well as the knowledge that would be circulated exclusively within the community and among community members. Given that the ways of knowing and seeing Indigeneity have been tools of colonial domination, refusal to be known, to be recognized, to be seen beyond the limits of what is defined acceptable by research participants and community members becomes in and of itself a practice of sovereignty. Simpson writes of refusal

> Dominion then had to be exercised over these representations, and that was determined when enough was said. The ethnographic limit then, was reached not just when it would cause harm (or extreme discomfort) – the limit was arrived at when the representation would bite all of us and compromise the representational territory that we have gained for ourselves in the past 100 years, in small but deeply influential ways, with a cadre of scholars from Kahnawake whose work has reached beyond the boundaries of the community. (p. 78)

Simpson's discourse on refusal as a methodological practice may not be limited to questions on ethnographic research, as it demands of researchers to consider how we might engage with research in ways that uphold and support Indigenous sovereignty. Through her proposal of refusal as theoretically and methodologically generative, Simpson (2007) prompted me to take more seriously and define the research that I refused to participate it. She also prompted me to question how I, as a non-Indigenous racialized researcher and writer, could do research on media representations of Indigeneity in a way that would uphold and honour Indigenous sovereignty and undermine settler-colonial claims to sovereignty in processes of knowledge production.

Given the preoccupation of the project of knowledge production in empire-building and the expansion of settler colonies with developing terms on which Indigeneity could be known, categorized, and managed, and given that research has been a site through which Indigenous people have been dispossessed, incorporating refusal as an ethic to shape my own questions and approach to the topic of media representation became a priority. What is the knowledge that can be generated from refusing to participate in damage-centred research, from disengaging with the institutionalized impetus to frame research in ways that perpetuate tropes of victimhood?

In their article, "Unbecoming Claims: Pedagogies of Refusal in Qualitative Research," Tuck and Yang (2014), provide further deliberation on 'the analytic of refusal' as a methodological issue when confronting and countering the settler-colonial relations of academic knowledge production. They begin by detailing the ways in which settler-colonialism serves as the political context that conditions all aspects of knowledge production in the settler-colonial nation-state. Dominant forms of knowledge production thus serve the advancement of state and corporate interests namely, the need for access to land and the legitimization and expansion of authority of settler-colonial sovereignty. Tuck and Yang (2014) utilize the metaphor of a code for settler-colonialism to explicate how it structures the ways in which knowledge about Indigenous and impoverished racialized communities is produced and validated. A multitude of protocols, regulations, and conceptual apparatus governing knowledge production proliferate at the site of the academic-industrial complex as a settler-colonial institution. Observations and experiences are made intelligible only through these academic codes while the codes themselves are dominantly understood to be neutral structures through which objective knowledge can be produced. It is through the coding of observations and experiences of pain, humiliation, and suffering that research is able to transform subjects into nameless, faceless and helpless victims

of circumstance. Tuck and Yang (2014) assert that it is in this politically charged context that academic inquiry often constitutes a form of invasion into Indigenous and racialized communities. Inquiry as a form of invasion emerges through the historical relationship of academia as a settler-colonial institution and becomes the means through which colonial institutions are able to impose colonial concepts, categories and frameworks to organize and make sense of 'data' gathered through exploitative, extractive methods. Tuck and Yang (2014) state:

> Inquiry as invasion is a result of the imperative to produce settler colonial knowledge and to produce it for the academy. This invasion imperative is often disguised in universalist terms of producing "objective knowledge" for "the public." It is a thin disguise, as most research rhetoric waxes the poetics of empire: to discover, to chart new terrain, to seek new frontiers, to explore, and so on. The academy's unrelenting need to produce "original research" is what makes the inquiry an invading structure, not an event. Social science hunts for new objects of study, and its favored reaping grounds are Native, urban, poor, and Othered communities (Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 813).

Tuck and Yang propose refusal as an analytic practice that allows researchers to question the settler-colonial codes underlying organizational structure of academia and to object to the practices of settler-colonial invasion that are dominant in intellectual inquiry and knowledge production. According to Tuck and Yang (2014), refusal is premised on three main principles which are a refusal to commodify pain stemming from colonial and white supremacist violence, an assertion that academia does not deserve some forms of knowledge, and a recognition that academic research is not always the intervention that is needed by oppressed communities. A framework of refusal concerns rejecting the terms on which Indigenous and racialized

communities become known and intelligible in the settler-colonial state. As Tuck and Yang (2014) write, a framework of refusal may also include a rejection of the impetus to study people. Instead it shifts sites of analysis to settler-colonial institutions and policy, the social organization of power in the settler-colonial state and the relationships between structures of violence and oppressed communities. They state:

> At the design stage, the most prominent form of refusal in our work has been to resist the urge to study people (and their "social problems") and to study instead institutions and power. This is something Eve has described as a deliberate shift in the unit of analysis, away from people, and toward the relationships between people and institutions of power" (Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 815)

Through their discussions on refusal as methodology, both Simpson (2007) and Tuck and Yang (2014) prompted me to consider how shifting the unit of analysis from people to institutions would facilitate a resistance to the reproduction of damage-centred, pathologizing paradigms of knowledge production. Their elaboration on the significance of the methodological practice and ethic of refusal informed my choice to look at texts, particularly newspapers, to situate and unpack my analysis of the co-constitution of Indigeneity and pathology in settler-colonial Canada. The methodological critiques of Indigenous scholars on research and knowledge production in settler-colonial contexts, led me to consider how damage, pathology and victimhood as a category of representation is mapped onto Indigenous subjects, and how such representations organize knowledge about their experiences, subjectivities and histories that amount to state refusals of the sovereignties of Indigenous subjects.

At the time when I was developing a research project to guide further inquiry into this topic, there was an influx of Canadian news media coverage on the suicide crisis at Attawapiskat

First Nations which had recently been declared a state of emergency. Canadian news media discourse was saturated with discursive representations of the crisis as a 'mental health problem' and Indigenous subjects as victims of circumstance/victims to be blamed. Therefore, I became interested in how the organization of knowledge production at the site of media coverage of the crisis at Attawapiskat functioned to manage how Indigenous subjects were being made visible and known to settlers and non-Indigenous (to Turtle Island) people. I was also interested in how this knowledge production was ideologically reproducing settler-colonial relations of ruling by making Indigenous peoples' bodies and minds the objects of its discourse. Simpson's proposal of refusal as methodology influenced how I critically engaged with the content of knowledge production found in news media discourse. I refused to employ the colonial gaze on Indigenous subjects and extend the project of contributing to the settler-colonial archive of pain and "brokenness." Instead, through the refusal to perpetuate damage-centred research, I subverted the colonial gaze by making it the object of study, that is, I elected to return the gaze to the settler-colonial project and the ideologies it circulates rather than perpetuating the colonial gaze upon Indigenous peoples themselves. Through the refusal of the ethnographic project to study and 'know' the Indigenous subject, research itself in addition to news media discourse, became a site through which to subvert and challenge settler-colonial terms of knowledge production. Thus an ethic of refusal shaped my research questions to look at the ways in which categories of representation of Indigenous subjects that cohere around 'victimhood,' 'trauma' or 'mental illness' serve as conceptual codes through which Indigenous emotions are pathologized, social problems such as substance abuse are isolated as 'mental health' problems and Indigenous subjects are psychiatrized. These categories of representation were also used to bolster claims that Indigenous ways of living and land-based practices were outmoded, such that the long-terms

solutions to the crisis, as proposed in media coverage, took the form of endorsing assertions that Indigenous people's needed to move off of their traditional territories or engage in large-scale capitalist 'economic development' projects. Thus a methodological approach of refusal, in emphasising a shift from the unity of analysis from people to institutions and social relations of power as the subject of study, enabled me to examine how the equation of Indigeneity with pathology was discursively constructed at the site of the crisis in order to reinforce and obscure settler-colonial relations and therefore how it functioned as an ideological strategy of dispossession.

An ethical and methodological practice of refusal also prompted me to consider and take seriously the ways in which refusals of Canadian assertions of sovereign authority over Indigenous nations and territories constituted powerful forms of political agency and resistance and represented practices of Indigenous sovereignty. Million's (2013) discusses the Canoe Journeys of the Coast Salish people as a practice of cultural resurgence that brings together Indigenous peoples on the West Coast of the Americas and the Pacific Islands. She writes that "each community officially honours itself by giving permission to visitors to come to its shores. Communities do so to honour each other, to imprint their ancient relational and national boundaries over and across those of nation-states" (p. 168). Thus Million (2013) shows how the potlaching practices, and the refusals to recognize the legitimacy of nation-state borders, represent the active practice of Indigenous sovereignties as never conceded. In her film *Trick or Treaty?*, Alanis Obomosawin (2014) also documents the process of Attawapiskat First Nations community members' refusal of Treaty no. 9 as a valid indication of their surrender of their traditional territories and rights to their land. They uncover the ways in which the treaty-making process itself was a violent act of colonial imposition onto First Nations communities in which

First Nations leaders were deliberately misguided and miscommunicated with in order to gain their signatures of approval. However, Obomsawin (2014) documents the collective resistance of the community in conjunction with other First Nations communities and their mobilization to protest the conditions of crisis in Attawapiskat and many other communities as well as the amendments proposed by Bill C-45, which would "provide the government with the authority to determine the surrender of any portion of any First Nation territory at any given time" (Ontario Native Women's Association fact sheet: Idle No More and Bill C-45, n.d.). ONWA further noted that the "clause directly contravenes the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which calls for the "free, prior and informed consent" of all Indigenous peoples exercising their right of self-determination" (ONWA fact sheet: Idle No More and Bill C-45, n.d.). Obomsawin (2014) demonstrates how Indigenous collective resistance and their deeply resurgent forms of political mobilization are direct challenges to the legitimacy of the sovereignty of the Canadian settler-colonial state and its legislature. The refusals of Indigenous subject as practices through which Indigenous sovereignty materializes brings me to question how engaging with Indigenous polities as living, breathing practices of Indigenous nation-building can help elucidate what is at stake for the state and its institutions in reproducing pathologizing frameworks in relation to Indigenous subjects.

2.3 Texts, News media and Ideology

In *Texts, Facts and Femininity*, Dorothy E. Smith (1990) argues that the social organization of processes of control and regulation are textually mediated, that is the social organization of these processes are both evident in, and executed through the information written and recorded into texts. Smith (1990) writes that we come to know through texts and therefore texts play an indispensable role in the social organization of knowledge. Texts are largely

organized through concepts and categories, what Smith (1990) terms conceptual apparatus or schema. Much like Tuck and Yang's (2014) discussion of coding, Smith (1990) writes that when observations and information about specific, nuanced, local experiences and activities of people in their everyday lives are entered into this conceptual schema, they become abstracted from the specific local contexts and converted into knowledge that is standardized and ahistorical. She calls this objectified knowledge (Smith, 1990). Texts are primary sites of this objectified knowledge encapsulated and constructed through conceptual schema (Smith, 1990). Texts are also coordinated by "the complex of extra-local relations that provide in contemporary societies a specialization of organization, control, and initiative...those forms that we know as bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization, and the media" (Smith, 1990, p. 6). Thus the texts generated through the media play an important role in the social organization of the knowledge, through which our knowledge about specific events and subjects becomes coded within a conceptual schema derived from relations of power.

The pervasive nature of mass media in the organization of social consciousness was evident in the media coverage of the Attawapiskat First Nations state of emergency and suicide crisis in 2016. For those with no immediate ties or connections with the reserve and community members, national news media sources became the primary form through which information about the events could be gathered and comprehended. Gitlin (1980) in speaking of the role of mass media writes "Of all the institutions of daily life, the media specialize in orchestrating everyday consciousness- by virtue of their pervasiveness, their accessibility, their centralized symbolic capacity. They name the world's parts, they certify reality *as* reality...the mass media have become core systems for the distribution of ideology" (pp. 1-2).Fairclough (1989) states that "ideologies are closely linked to power, because the nature of the ideological assumptions

embedded in particular conventions, and so the nature of those conventions themselves, depends

on the power relations which underlie those conventions; and because they are a means of

legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power…the exercise of power, in modern

society, is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through the ideological

workings of power" (p. 2). While Fairclough (1989) is clear that power is not just a matter of

language and that violent practices of exploitation and domination maintain the inequalities

through which capitalism is structured, he also notes that language as the vehicle of ideology is

an important site of analysis in order to interrogate the common-sense beliefs that underlie and

lend legitimacy to the practices of state domination and the social organization of power.

2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis as Research Method

Through an interest in studying the ideological functions of news media, this study

employed the research method of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA has been employed in

a number of studies on news media representations of Indigenous peoples and issues (Nelson,

Lavoie and Browne 2016; Harding 2006; Furniss 2001; Lambertus, 2004). Nelson, Browne and

Lavoie (2016), in their study on representations of Indigenous peoples in Canadian media

coverage on pain medication, explain that critical discourse analysis is concerned with the ways

in which texts are implicated in the reproduction of social relations of institutional power. They

write that in critical discourse analysis, it is important to "focus on the text as a whole" in order

to capture "the ways in which a text reflects, reproduces, or challenges institutions and ideologies

of power" (Nelson, Browne and Lavoie, 2016, p.5). Rahimi and Riasati (2011) discuss CDA as a

practice of tracing textual strategies of representation to uncover the ways in which discourse

functions as ideology to reproduce social relations of power and domination that structure the

capitalist system. Therefore treating texts and discourse as mediated by and mediating social

relations of power is crucial to the practice of CDA. Because CDA moves beyond language as description and extends to how these processes of representation are produced and contextualized through social relations (Van Dijk 1988; Fairclough, 1995), it is well-suited to the study of representations of socially and historically marginalized groups such as Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island.

Features of the language of newspaper articles including semantics, syntax and lexical styles were examined to elucidate the 'codes" (Tuck and Yang, 2014) through which Indigenous subjects were represented (Van Dijk, 1988). These microsemantic features were used to "to describe the meanings of whole paragraphs, sections...of written discourse" (Van Dijk, 1988, p. 26). This required a focus on macrosyntax or the overall organizational patterns or the ways in which information was sequentially organized in news articles which facilitated core ideological arguments to be made (Van Dijk, 1988). Furthermore, drawing on the applications of CDA used by Nelson, Lavoie and Browne (2016), I examined language to determine the logics underlying core arguments as well as to determine "the media item's orientation to the subject matter, including implicit assumptions and biases, as well as the media item's intended audience, and the way it represented different individuals or groups." (p. 6). These logics, made evident through the examination of assumptions and biases, were then used to identify and contextualize media frames. As Gitlin writes "frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters…[they] enable journalists to process large amounts of information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences" (p. 6-7).

Given the scope of this project, I selected one major national newspaper, *The National Post*, to focus my study on Canadian coverage of the crisis. This allowed for a more thorough

and deepened engagement with the media items and emergent themes. I selected the *National Post* as it centred on key arguments and themes that I was interested in examining more closely, particularly representations of trauma and issues of land use. I used the Factiva database with the search terms "Attawapiskat" and "suicide." The time frame chosen was April 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016. Most of the articles covering the crisis were published within this time frame and therefore it was considered sufficient to yield a comprehensive analysis of the main arguments and representations that emerged in media coverage of the crisis. The search terms yielded 21 results of which 17 were retained. 13 articles from the 17 retained articles were selected to develop emergent themes in the media analysis. 4 media articles were omitted, one of which was a standard report and contained redundant information present in many of the articles. The remaining 3 dealt with the issue and debates around euthanasia and so were not relevant to my study.

3. Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework draws on Indigenous feminist theory and critical race theory that attends the co-constitution of Indigeneity and pathology in settler-colonial contexts in order to interrogate how discursive constructions of Indigenous subjects as pathological function ideologically to conceal the social relations of settler-colonial capitalism. In particular, I engage Indigenous and critical race scholars who examine the ways in which trauma and other diagnostic categories function when applied to Indigenous bodies and minds reproduce Indigenous subjects as sites for surveillance, invasion, and death.

3.1 The historical role of psychiatry in the settler-colonial state

Many scholars have noted the role that psychiatry and other psy-based disciplines in facilitating the forced institutionalization and dispossession of Indigenous subjects (Yellow Bird, n.d.; Kanani 2011, Waldram, 2004; Chapman, 2010; Le Francois, 2013). For example, Pemina Yellow Bird (n.d.) examined the Hiawatha Asylum, a psychiatric institution in South Dakota that was functional between 1899-1933, noting that it became functional at a time when the settler-colonial state was expanding on Indigenous lands and engaging in widespread activities to destabilize and decimate Indigenous nations. This settler-colonial expansion included the criminalization of spiritual practices, the withholding of treaty payments and food rations, and the ascendance of a carceral infrastructure which included Christian boarding schools into which many kidnapped children were forced (Yellow Bird, n.d.). The Hiawatha Asylum also constituted a part of this carceral system. Yellow Bird (n.d.) questions the legitimacy of the psychiatric diagnoses that labelled Indigenous people as 'insane' in order to remove them from their communities and incarcerate them. She writes that these diagnostic categories had no basis in Indigenous cultures which had entirely different ways of making sense of variations in affective

and psychic lived realities. She also notes that colonial medical practitioners were unable to communicate effectively with those Indigenous subjects who they incarcerated, which suggests the fallacy of these diagnoses. Yellow Bird's scholarship demonstrates the ways in which psy-knowledge is mediated by state institutional relations of power such that the diagnostic frameworks and their applications are indicative of the interests and organization of the settler-colonial state rather than any measure or reflection of the psychic, affective and bodily realities of Indigenous subjects. In showing how psychiatry and psy-knowledge has historically played a role in the settlement of Indigenous lands in North America, she addresses the ways in which the surveillance, management and control of Indigenous people's bodies, minds and behaviours were colonial assaults on their sovereignties as Indigenous peoples- their body, psychic and land sovereignties. She shows how state-organized psy-based practices have long been implicated in constructing Indigeneity as pathology. It is this recognition that conditions her call for an end to "the criminally misguided acts of the mental health industry" (p. 9).

Nadia Kanani (2011) has also examined the ways in which race and disability are co-constituted in settler-colonial contexts through medical and psychiatric institutional practices and discourse. She looks at the ways in which psychiatry buttressed white settler-colonial supremacy that framed Indigenous resistances to settler-colonial invasions as failures to adapt and cope owing to the primitive biological and mental constitution (Kanani, 2011). She writes "it is the perceived inability of Aboriginal people to cope with the socio-cultural changes brought about by Western civilization that is identified as a cause for mental illness" (Kanani, 2011) . In this way psychiatry provides an early historical basis for the equation of Indigeneity and pathology in order to rationalize settler-colonial domination. Kanani (2011) also attends to the ways in which psychiatric diagnoses were used to label Indigenous subjects in order to legitimize their

incarceration in psychiatric institutions and the imposition of non-consensual medical and psychotherapeutic 'treatments'. As Kanani (2011) explains, that incarceration and forced treatment required the removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands and communities, demonstrates how psychiatry was operationalized as a form of disciplinary control over Indigenous peoples whose subordination was central to structuring the settler-colonial processes of land theft and settlement.

De Leeuw, Greenwood and Cameron's (2009) study of the historical emergence of the concept of Indigenous deviance in Canadian legislature and policy, provides another example of the ways in which psy-knowledges played a crucial role in the discursive construction of Indigenous subjects as deviant and deficient. Looking at the Bagot Report, they note that in addition to labels of 'untrustworthiness', 'unpredictability' and 'violent,' 'mental inferiority' was also used in relation to Indigenous peoples. Such constructions legitimized state interventions under the guise of providing help and welfare. The authors write:

> The federal government agenda of transforming Indigenous people into 'civilized' subjects and punishing those who did not comply rested on discourses of Indigenous deviance and non-Indigenous trusteeship, discourses that validated, buttressed, and naturalized a range of violent interventions into nearly every aspect of Indigenous peoples' lives, including their families and communities, their cultures and their lands (p. 288).

This discursive framework is constructed and used in the early stages of Canadian nation-state formation, and thus provides a foundational rubric for organizing relations between the settler-colonial state and the colonized Indigenous peoples. In their analysis of the Enfranchisement Act, they show how constructions of Indigenous minds as being of 'poor mental health' and

susceptible to alcohol addiction fueled practices that engineered Indigenous dependency on the state through invasive fiscal, psychic and bodily interventions that were carried out in the name of promoting well-being and health of the Indigenous communities. Rationalizations for subsequent state infrastructure including the Indian Act, and institutions such as the residential school system and the child welfare system were mediated by the discursive framework of 'Indigenous deviance' which relied on psy-knowledge to inform the state-organized practices through which Indigenous subjects were racially stratified as 'uncivilized' non-citizens.

3.2 The continuing legacy of pathologization of Indigenous subjects

While the co-constitution of Indigeneity and disability/pathology has historically been formative of the settler-colonial state and its regulation of Indigenous peoples, scholars have also looked at the ways which psy-knowledge continues to mediate settler-colonial relations of power. Tam's (2013) deconstruction of the formulation of 'history-as-symptom' is particularly instructive of how psy-knowledge transforms historical conditions in symptoms of pathology such that Indigenous subjects are reproduced as pathological even as the very equation is being challenged. As Tam (2013) explains, the history-as-symptom approach attributes behaviours and actions that signal distress and suffering to historical conditions. Proponents of the 'history-as symptom' argument stress that it is the separation of contemporary manifestations of historical conditions from the conditions themselves that result in colonizing practices and discursive approaches in the mental health field (Tam, 2013). Trauma as a psychiatric-informed, pseudo-diagnostic framework is mobilized a potential mend to this separation. That is, Indigenous and racialized peoples are identified are 'traumatized' as a result of histories of colonization and other forms of institutionalized racial violence (Tam, 2013). Mental health institutions are called on to embed a framework of trauma into their institutional practices and treatments in order to

mitigate the reproduction of pathologizing relationships to Indigenous and racialized individuals and communities when treating 'trauma' or 'mental illness.' Tam (2013) problematizes this formulation by arguing that historical conditions become imbued with an etiological function, which reinforces the notion that 'trauma' much like 'mental illness' "names an observable disturbance to the mind" (p. 282) such that 'trauma' and 'mental illness' function as racialized diagnostic categories. Tam (2013) writes that instead these categories must be understood as being constituted through social relations of dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples that give form to the colonial and racialized structure to the Canadian settler-colonial state. In arguing for an understanding of race as "a relationship constituted through [the organization of] legal regimes and state-based practices," she implicates psy-discourse and practices in the production of race as a social relation when she writes "many of these socially organized activities have to do with the management of our thoughts (feelings) and our actions (behaviour) - our psychology" (Tam, 2013, p. 266).

Referencing the ways in which psy-knowledge plays a significant role in the constitution of social relations of race and has historically functioned to pathologize Indigenous subjects, Tam prompts me to consider the role of trauma as a category of representation that functions ideologically to construct Indigenous subjects, under certain social conditions and historical moments (for example in the instance of a declaration of state of emergency owing to a rash of suicide attempts) as a racialized equivalent of pathology. In this way diagnostic labels such as 'trauma' and 'mental illness,' when applied to Indigenous subjects in media can be thought of not as "observable disturbances to the mind" but rather as ideological forms of dispossession insofar as they are instrumentalized by and provide legitimation for psychotherapeutic interventions which promulgate notions of Indigenous subjects as unfit to self-govern and constitute sovereign

nations. When understood as such, they can be seen as produced through and holding intact settler-colonial relations that are materialized through systematic dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples and through processes of capitalist resource extraction, processes which position Indigenous subjects in opposition to the settler-citizen.

Through their critique of the invention of the diagnosis "Residential School Syndrome (RSS)", Chrisjohn, Young and Maraun (1997) provide a concrete example of the ways in which the application "history-as-symptom" reproduces Indigenous subjects as traumatized and implicates psy-knowledge in synonymizing Indigeneity with pathology. They attend to the ways in which RSS is constituted through a nexus of state-organized practices and relations informed by psy-knowledge which they term "the Therapeutic State"(p. 104) and interrogate the implications of this diagnosis when used to label residential school survivors. They argue that RSS functions in ways that are highly individualizing and depoliticizes the colonial project in which the residential school system was a foundational structure in attempting the extermination of Indigenous peoples and their ways of living. RSS accounts for the history of residential schools as the root of the problem such that all survivors are rendered diagnosable with RSS. Through the process of being labelled with RSS, the survivor becomes identified as the site wherein transformation must occur which then prompts a slew of psychotherapeutic interventions in interest of promoting rehabilitation and healing. Chrisjohn, Young and Maraun (1997) raise concerns about the ways in which these interventions further distract from deliberate and extensive consideration of the systemic changes that are necessary to end the brutal violence of colonization. Instead the diagnosis functions to transform the behaviours, thoughts, and actions of Indigenous subjects into symptoms that provide confirmation of pathology and warrants invasive forms of therapeutic management. The authors write "the function of therapy

is to talk us out of our justifiable anger; to put some time between the "wounding" and the present; to trick us into accepting our psychic murder as restitution" (p. 106).

Through their critique of RSS, Chrisjohn, Young and Maraun (1997) demonstrate the fallacy of the assumption that the use of reified notions of history to contextualize embodied impacts of colonial violence will mitigate pathology. Instead they show how this discursive move (in this case of the residential school system) utilizes psy-knowledge to consolidate a diagnosis that intensifies the state-organized mechanisms of surveillance and management of Indigenous subjects. In so doing, they effectively demonstrate how psy-knowledge holds intact the power relation between colonizer and colonized and therefore plays an integral role in the organization of social relations of race in the settler-colonial Canadian state.

The scholarship of Indigenous feminist scholar, Dian Million is perhaps the most extensive critical interrogation of trauma discourse and its concomitant project of 'healing' that centres Indigenous peoples. Million is explicit that the mobilization around trauma discourse by many Indigenous communities was not an invitation to psychotherapeutic management of Indigenous affective realities but rather a way to implicate the Canadian settler-colonial state in the extensive conditions of harm experienced and endured by First Nations peoples, by "locating blame for the historical acts of colonization to the present conditions in Indigenous lives" (p. 93). However, while Million (2013) is deliberate in recognizing the political agency of Indigenous communities who have put trauma discourse to use in fleshing out a politics of accountability and seeking redress, she expresses concern about the efficacy of trauma discourse insofar as it placates the subjects of its discourse in a trope of victimhood. Million (2013) examines the use of trauma discourse as a discursive framework to categorize and contextualize issues such substance abuse and addiction in Indigenous communities. She explains that trauma discourse

establishes that Indigenous subjects are affected by 'unresolved trauma' which gives rise to the breakdown of social and familial structures and leads to distressing social conditions of poverty and underdevelopment (Million, 2013). Through trauma discourse, Indigenous subjects themselves are located as problems in need of 'healing' in order to restore the community structures as the basis for self-determining nations (Million, 2013). By centring Indigenous subjects as victims of historical processes of oppression, trauma discourse often conceals how the settler-colonial relations of power continue to produce the conditions that harm Indigenous subjects. It also obscures the ways in which they constitute a persistent site of struggle wherein Indigenous peoples regularly contest the sovereignty of the state as absolute (Million, 2013). Thus Million's (2013) critique of the trauma discourse demonstrates its ideological function insofar as the identification of Indigenous subjects as traumatized locks them into the position of victimhood and therefore the negation of political agency, sovereignty and self-determination, which then legitimizes psy-based interventions in the name of promoting 'healing' and development (Million, 2013).

As Million persuasively argues, the ascendance of trauma discourse emerges through the neoliberalization of the relationship between Indigenous nations and the Canadian state in which Indigenous self-determination and self-governance are narrated as insertion of Indigenous subjects and their lands into the capitalist market economy. Healing mediates this process of insertion through the application of an assembly of psychotherapeutic and human potential techniques that stress that the value of human development as a prerequisite to self-determination, that is Indigenous peoples themselves must be 'developed' out of the condition of 'unresolved trauma' in order to use their agency and self-determining capacity in the interests of capitalist economic development. Million demonstrates that in the current neoliberal political

economy, Indigenous minds as well as Indigenous lands become sites of intense surveillance and management in the name of facilitating and furthering 'development.'

Razack (2013) also explores the ideological role played through the pathologization of Indigenous bodies such that Indigenous subject continue to be produced as already dead or dying in order to justify persistent neglect and denial of proper medical care. She investigates how the medicalization of deaths of Aboriginal peoples in police custody established through the process of inquest, pre-empts an understanding of these deaths as produced out of settler-colonial conditions and instead reinforces the discursive construction of Indigeneity as pathological. Through this discursive equation, Indigenous peoples in distress are systematically denied the care that they need often resulting in their deaths which Razack (2013) refers to as "a killing indifference" (p. 373). Furthermore, the lack of provision of proper healthcare is depoliticized as it is not attributed to the negligence of medical and legal professionals or to the settler-colonial logic from which they operate which assumes and treats Indigenous peoples as already dead or dying. Instead through this settler-colonial logic, Indigenous death is confirmed as evidence of the pathological frailty of Indigenous subjects. Razack (2013) shows how through the equation of Indigeneity and pathology, Indigenous people in distress are seen as already dead or in the process of dying and Indigenous peoples' deaths are therefore always timely. Razack (2013) argues that this equation plays a role in the continuing dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands because in establishing Indigenous peoples as irrevocably damaged or as dying due to pathology, they are also rationalized as unfit to self-govern. Inquests are instrumentalized to rationalize the negligence of professionals by explaining that the Indigenous bodies were beyond help or saving, in order to preserve the myth of 'settler goodness' in the interest of shoring up settler interests at the expense of Indigenous life.

3.3 The 'horizon of death' and Indigenous sovereignty

Denise da Silva's (2014) concept of the horizon of death is used to theorize those sites in which the state routinely deploy racial violence in order to assert and maintain the authority of its sovereignty. Da Silva (2014) discusses that it is through this deployment of violence that the state reproduces racial subaltern subjects as only capable of being affected by the power of the state that is, as its "affectable others" (Gorman, 2016). It is through the affectability of these subjects that they are produced as the negation of self-determination. In her theorization of the "sovereign death drive," Audra Simpson (2016) discusses the ways in which Indigenous women are targeted for death by the settler-colonial Canadian state in order to undermine the sovereignty of Indigenous nations and uphold the sovereignty of the state as absolute. Indigenous women are targeted because through their traditional roles as the political leaders of their nations, they signify the continuation of Indigenous sovereignty and the ability to "effect and affect political life" ('Bodies,' para. 4). Therefore, they represent a threat to the domination of the sovereignty of the settler-colonial state. Looking at the responses of Canadian settler political leaders to Chief Teresa Spence's body during her hunger strike to protest the state-engineered conditions on First Nations reserves, Simpson (2016) examines how Indigenous bodies and specifically Indigenous women's bodies become the site of intense scrutiny and management. These acts of scrutiny represent attempts to undermine the body sovereignty of Indigenous peoples and by extension the sovereignty of their nation bodies by invasively imposing pathologized frames that malign the integrity of these bodies by implicitly representing them unhealthy and diseased. Both da Silva (2014) and Simpson (2016) enable me to consider how representations of pathology are themselves produced out of the sovereign death drive/racial and colonial state violence and used to reinforce Indigenous peoples as 'affectable' or in other words, the negation/antithesis of self-

determination, in order to conceal how state policies and interventions amount to deployment of settler-colonial violence and are necessary to the functioning of the state.

Gorman's (2016) theorization of the ideological role of disability in holding intact the racial project of modernity is used to show how representations of Indigenous subjects as pathological are used to reproduce them as 'affectable others.' In her article "Disablement In and For Itself: Towards a 'Global' Idea of Disability," Gorman (2016) draws attention to the ways in which nation-states strategically construct and utilize the category of disability to organize and reinforce race, gender and class relations through which the nation-state is structured. Gorman (2016) writes that by overlooking how the disabled subject is constructed through and coheres around racialized notions of citizenship, we also overlook who must die so that others can live, who must be subjected to state violence, denied a claim to disabled subjectivity, or be rendered unintelligible as disabled in order for others to claim the recognition, benefits and rights of a disabled subjectivity. This leads Gorman (2016) to assert that racial violence is inherent to the formulation of the global rights-bearing and national exalted (Thobani, 2007) disabled subject and how this formulation obscures disablement (Gorman, 2010, 2016) at the horizon of death (da Silva, 2014). Disablement refers to the ways in which imperialist and settler-colonial violence results in embodied and disabling forms of harm and distress.

Furthermore, she argues that because disability is "organized by the state in coordination with other forms of (non-)citizenship status [for example Indigeneity]", the inclusion of racialized subjects into an identity of disability may only reinforce these subjects as affectable others (Gorman, 2016). Gorman provides a way to think through how inclusion of Indigenous subjects into a disabled identity such as 'trauma' or 'mental illness' (for example as signified through inclusion into pathologizing frames of reference) may only serve to reproduce them as

affectable repositories of colonial state violence while also concealing how they are harmed by this violence. It is in this context that we may contextualize governance, psychotherapeutic and economic interventions into Indigenous communities and lands on the part of the state and corporate sector as extensions of settler-colonial violence that undermine the self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous nations.

4. Research Context

4.1 Background on media coverage of suicide crisis at Attawapiskat

On April 9th, 2016, Chief Bruce Shisheesh of Attawapiskat First Nations declared a state of emergency after a group of 7 young people and 11 people in total attempted to commit suicide on that same night. Multiple media outlets, including the *National Post* and *CBC* reported that the state of emergency was the culmination of events in the time period between September 2015 and April 2016 when approximately 100 people attempted to end their lives on the reserve (Payne, April 12, 2016; Rutherford, April 9, 2016). In October 2015, one young Attawapiskat First Nations girl, Sheridan Hookimaw died as a result of taking her own life, while in March 2016, a total of 28 people had attempted suicide (Perkel, April 24, 2016; Rutherford, April 9, 2016). The *Toronto Star* reported that the state of emergency was declared by the reserve band council in response to the depletion of on-reserve resources which resulted in an inability to appropriately address the problem (Spurr, April 18, 2016). Within 24 hours following the declaration of the state of emergency, there were eleven more attempts by Attawapiskat First Nations community members to end their lives, including five children (Spurr, The Star, April 18, 2016).

Media reporting following the declaration of the state of emergency focused largely on the federal and provincial governments' containment strategies in the aftermath. *CBC* reported that following the state of emergency, the federal government sent a team of eighteen mental health workers to Attawapiskat First Nations (April 11, 2016). An article by *The Star* reported that Health Canada "partnered with local agencies to deploy a six-person team that included youth support workers, counsellors, and a psychologist to the reserve, while the local health

authority dispatched five additional mental health counsellors" (Spurr, April 18, 2016). The *Globe and Mail* addressed the failure of a federally-funded $800,000 mental health project established in 2013 whose aim was to significantly improve the quality of services and support that First Nations communities in northern Ontario received as a suicide prevention measure (Baum, April 15, 2016). The *National Post* reported that Ontario Minister of Health Eric Hoskins, Minister for Children and Youth Tracy MacCharles promised $2 million in emergency funding for mental health workers and development for a long term suicide prevention strategy (Payne, April 14, 2016). The *National Post* also reported that the Ontario provincial government sent its Emergency Medical Assistance Team, "consisting of five nurses and four mental health workers, as well as security workers to provide around the clock support for 30 days to help the community manage the crisis" (Payne, April 14, 2016).

In an article published in *Policy Options* entitled "How Canada turned a blind eye to the suicide crises in First Nations", Mi'kmaq lawyer and scholar Pamela Palmater cautioned that the federal government's response to send mental health workers to Attawapiskat represented short-term solutions and proposed that the Canadian state needed to fundamentally restructure its relationship with First Nations communities and eradicate poverty on reserves. She wrote "While there are many emergency actions that must be put in place in the short term to address the suicides, the longer-term solutions have to include the return of lands and resources, the recognition of indigenous autonomy and the respect and implementation of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Nothing less will save our children from premature deaths" (Palmater, April 13, 2016). Echoing Palmater (2016), Idle No More organizer and policy analyst Russell Diabo (Mohawk) stated "These social problems are more than just mental health issues...They are tied to the Indian Act and the government's policies which are based on colonialism: lack of self

government, self-determination, and access to resources which would help our economy, and land claims" (Commanda, April 26, 2016). Both Palmater and Diablo critiqued the tendency of settler politicians and media to approach and deal with the suicides solely as a mental health problem. They argued instead for the suicide crisis to be contextualized as part of the ongoing onslaught of colonization on Indigenous nations in which questions about land redistribution, Indigenous self-determination, and Aboriginal and treaty rights needed to be centred.

4.2 #OccupyINAC and Indigenous Resistance

On April 13, Indigenous activists, community organizers and allies began occupation of the Indigenous and Northern Affairs office in Toronto ("Suicide crisis protests at Indigenous Affairs offices spread across Canada," April 15, 2016) to draw attention to the injustice of the conditions at Attawapiskat and to place pressure on the federal government to meet the demands put forth by Attawapiskat First Nations youth. The protests and sit-ins quickly spread across Canada with Indigenous and Northern Affairs and other government buildings being occupied in Calgary, Edmonton, Quebec, Gatineau, Regina, Winnipeg and Vancouver (Cicero, April 27, 2016). The protests were bolstered by widespread support from Indigenous Peoples and allies across Turtle Islands on social media platforms and through solidarity rallies. Activists were unanimous in holding the Canadian state to account for creating the conditions that led to the high rates of suicides on northern reserve. In a *Ricochet* video report, Swampy Cree Anishnabek organizer Maanii Oakes spoke about the connections between mineral resource extraction, the hydroelectric industry and the lack of access to community resources for Indigenous nations on reserves in the James Bay region. Oakes raised the question "Why do we have to sell off our lands and sell of our waters...in order to get just enough resources to live?" (Ricochet Media, April 13, 2016). Another protester drew attention to the extraction of a diamond from the Victor

diamond mine that was worth about $35 million diamond in its raw state. She noted that this extraction had taken place around the same time as the suicide crisis (Ricochet, April 13, 2016). Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Derek Nepinak, referenced the Indian Act system as actively colonizing Indigenous peoples through the imposition of economic sanctions and colonial systems of governance. Along with many other Indigenous activists, including Davyn Calfchild (Hereditary Chief) and Cathy Tsung Deh Kwe, Nepinak criticized the government's quick fix solutions of disbursing funding for mental health interventions and Western counsellors (Ricochet Media video report, April 13, 2016). He also raised concerns about the role of Western counsellors in promoting assimilation and asserted that given that the suicide crisis was foundational to Canada's political structure, Western medicine and counselling could not sufficiently or appropriately address these issues (Ricochet, April 13, 2016). In a similar critique of mental health interventions, Carrie Lester (Mohawk Six Nations), an activist at Occupy INAC Toronto stated "Mental health is certainly an issue that needs to be dealt with but not just with a band-aid solution of having counsellors and nurses and $2 million that was allocated from the [Ontario] Ministry of Health" (Kotyk, April 14, 2016). She continued "That's going to salaries of, likely, non-Native people taking these professions and going into these reserves without the spirituality behind them of First Nations and without the cultural teachings, further colonizing the people of the land. Not that mental health care isn't necessary, but it's a band-aid solution because without the rest of the infrastructure…mental health issues will continue" (Kotyk, April 14, 2016)

Cathy Tsung Deh Kwe engaged in a thorough deconstruction of the language used by Canadian politicians and journalists in relation to the suicide crisis and state of emergency in Attawapiskat to reveal how such language served to mask the genocide of the Canadian state.

She highlighted Trudeau's description of the crisis as 'heartbreaking' and Christine Blatchford's

categorization of the crisis as a 'tragedy.' Tsung Deh Kwe condemned the use of these words in

configuring the crisis as accidental and instead directly implicated the Canadian state by

asserting that the suicides were intentional and engineered as an outcome of the Indian Act.

Tsung Deh Kwe referenced the legacy of the Indian Act that confined children onto isolated

reserves, forced them to attend residential schools and removed them from their traditional ways

in efforts to assimilate them. She discusses that it is this legacy that creates conditions of despair

that push youth "to want to take their lives in the first place", and asserted that solutions must

tackle the colonial infrastructure of Canada beginning with the abolishment of the Indian Act.

Speaking of the rampant suicides in Attawapiskat, she declared "this is a continuation of

genocide" (Ricochet, April 18, 2016)

This view of the suicide crisis as being a product of ongoing colonization of Indigenous

communities was also put forward in the press release released by the Occupy INAC Winnipeg

movement, which stated

Suicide has long plagued our communities due to centuries of colonization and its effects:

crushing poverty, substandard housing, imprisonment, child apprehension, and lack of

access to health care, nutrition and clean water. The resulting destruction of identity, lack

of self-worth and cognitive imperialism are the roots of suicide in our people...These

conditions have existed in our territories for centuries and the so-called government of

Canada administers and benefits from it. These are acts of war, oppression, and treason

against our ancient treaties (OccupyINAC Winnipeg Collective, April 15, 2016).

They went on to list the demands of the youth of Attawapiskat and Pimicikmak First Nations:

"Youth centres; Parenting centres; Traditional teachings; ceremonies; knowledge of their chants,

their songs and their skills for surviving on the land; better education; an end to the plague of drugs and alcohol; recycling systems; dry land; sports activities; shelters; recreation facilities; libraries; cinemas; mental health response and treatment; to represent themselves on Youth Councils; and to meet with Justin Trudeau" (OccupyINAC Winnipeg Collective, April 15, 2016). They also listed their own demands as follows:

> 1) The abolition of the Indian Act, the reserve system and the numbered Treaties, which are systematic violations of the sovereignty of our people — the sovereignty we have always retained and always lived, but which has never been honoured by the colonial state, from the beginning of their invasion under the lie of terra nullius.

> 2) An end to the denial of adequate healthcare, housing and education in our communities, and undenied access to our own unpolluted traditional foods and clean water.

> 3) For the so-called Chiefs and Councils and everyone in our communities to restore the culture and spirituality we have lost: to allow and encourage our traditions, ceremonies, teachings, songs, languages, and ways of knowing.

> 4) For the people of the colonial state to respect these lands and water, starting with the discontinuation of the destruction and pollution caused by the colonial corporations which exploit and deplete the resources of Mother Earth that we all need to survive.

> 5) An end to the Two-Spirit discrimination causing much of the suicidal crisis our youth are facing, which exists in our communities as a result of colonial ideology and cognitive

imperialism, in addition to the damage of everything previously mentioned

(OccupyINAC Winnipeg Collective, April 15, 2016).

On April 21, 2016, protestors in Toronto ended their occupation of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, taking instruction from the youth of Attawapiskat who called for an end to the occupation after the youth met with Federal MPs and the Regional Director of INAC on Monday April 18, 2016 (OccupyINAC Toronto press release, April 21, 2016). On June 13, 2016, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the Liberal Government would commit $70 million in funding over three years to remote Indigenous communities with the goal of improving health conditions and curbing suicides on reserves (Mas, June 13, 2016). While these new measures included improvement to the scope of mental health provisions on reserves, including increasing the number of "mental wellness teams," implementing a 24-hour crisis line, and providing mental health training to community workers, they did not address any of the other demands put forth by Indigenous community organizers and youth around providing proper education, housing and healthcare, funding for community programming, and bringing an end to exploitation and environmental violence by corporations and an end to the Indian Act system. Given the analysis and connections made by Indigenous community members and activists to contextualize the suicide crisis as the product of historical and ongoing state-organized strategies of colonial dispossession, assimilation and land theft, the federal government's response can at best be understood as a dismissal of these concerns and at worst as a commitment to continuing its 'slow death' of Indigenous communities (Palmater, 2016). Furthermore, a *Global News* article written one year following the suicide crisis and state of emergency reported that Attawapiskat was still lacking sufficient mental health resources (Russell, April 12, 2017).

Despite the political actions and analyses developed by Indigenous youth and community members in the aftermath of the suicide crisis and state of emergency in Attawapiskat, Canadian media coverage remained focused on representing the suicide crisis solely as a mental health problem. This representational framing relied on discursive constructions of Indigeneity as pathological. Through my analysis of one national media source, the *National Post*, I will map out some of the ways that Indigenous peoples were discursively constructed as pathological in order to show how this equation (Indigeneity= pathology) functions ideologically to pre-empt an understanding of the relations between the Canadian state and Attawapiskat First Nations and the role of the Canadian state in creating the crisis.

5. Media Analysis

5.1 "Aboriginal despair" and the construction of victimhood

In *National Post* newspaper articles on the suicide crisis in Attawapiskat, numerous references are made to community members as 'hopeless' (Robson, April 18, 2016, Kay, April 16, 2016), 'troubled' (Kay, April 16, 2016), 'reeling from tragedy' (Kay, April 16, 2016) and in 'despair' ((Blatchford, April 14, 2016, Hamilton, April 18, 2016, Payne, April 16, 2016; The Candian Press, April 12, 2016; Hutchinson, April 16, 2016; Perkel, April 22, 2016; Libin, April 27, 2016). Describing the community, one article goes as far as to assert that 'all that flourishes is despair' (Blatchford, April 14, 2016) while another describes the community collectively as "a desperate and hopeless people" (Libin, April 27, 2016). Other articles also fixate on the emotional state of community members who are described in terms such as "grieving", "shaking" and "teary" (Payne, April 12, 2016) while the community is described as being in a state of misery, heartache, complicated grief, 'raw pain' and 'perpetual mourning' (Ward, 13 April, 2016, The Canadian Press, April 12, 2016; Payne, April 16, 2016; Quan, April 16, 2016).

In one article, the author uses the term "aboriginal despair" which functions to render secondary or altogether dismiss arguments that center social isolation and poverty as causes for the pervasiveness of suicide at Attawapiskat and other First Nations reserves in northern Canada. A strategy of comparison is employed in which Attawapiskat First Nations is measured up against another First Nations community. The author writes:

...while isolation and economic hardship are always cited as major factors behind

aboriginal despair and rashes of suicides, they aren't universal. Maskwacis is a

community of four Cree First Nations between Edmonton and Red Deer, near Alberta's

busiest major highway...Maskwacis is neither isolated nor lacking resources. It's poorly

managed, perhaps, but does that account for its social dysfunction?...There were almost

40 suicides in the community between January 2013 and May 2015 alone. (Hutchinson,

April 16, 2016)

This statement glazes over the specific social and historical conditions of each First Nations. The

article does not address that Maskwacis First Nations was the site of oil development projects

throughout the 80's and 90's which had a profound impact on restructuring the economy and

social structures of the community in ways that broke down traditional ways of life and fostered

high levels of dependency on the energy industry (Marlow, Holdsworth, Lazin-Ryder &

Janakiram, March 13, 2016). When the energy industry depleted natural resources and moved on,

unemployment rates increased and poverty in the community was exacerbated by the energy

crisis in provincial Alberta (Marlow, Holdsworth, Lazin-Ryder & Janakiram, March 13,

2016). The author also fails to mention the economic havoc wreaked on Attawapiskat First

Nations by the De Beers Victor diamond mine which has extracted $2.5 billion worth of

diamonds since its inception and paid a disproportionate amount in royalties to Attawapiskat and

the federal government. For example, Pasternak (2015) notes that royalties paid to the

Attawapiskat amount to $2 million annually which constitutes 1.5% of the mine's revenues. That

wealth accumulated from the mine is retained by the corporation is evident in the findings of a

CBC investigative report which found that in 2014, $226 was paid in royalties to the Ontario

government (CBC, Celli, May 12, 2015). Also omitted from this news article is the culpability of

the Victor diamond mine in the sewage runoff into the community which culminated in the 2012

housing crisis (Pasternak, 2015), the toxic levels of methylmercury found in the water of the

North Granny Creek and the South Granny Creek in the James Bay Lowlands area which the De

Beers company consistently failed to report (Talaga, December 6, 2016), and the community

protests against the proposed 'Tango extension' to the mine based in concerns regarding

economic and environmental issues, which effectively halted progress of the extension ("De

Beers halts exploration of diamond mine near Attawapiskat, Ontario," February 8, 2016).

Thus the homogenization of the Maskwacis and Attawapiskat First Nations communities

is produced through the omission of these details. In their study of news media representations of

pain management among First Nations peoples, Nelson, Lavoie and Browne (2016) found that

media coverage extrapolated individual and singular experiences to represent First Nations

people through a collective identity. They write that "the effect of erasing differences between

individuals and nations, [perpetuates] a colonial imagination that sees First Nations as one group

instead of many" (Nelson, Lavoie, and Browne, 2016, p. 9). Their findings help raise an

important question particularly around how representations of homogenized group or collective

identity facilitate constructions of racialized victimhood and pathology.

Returning to the above article, the author discusses Maskwacis First Nations as having

access to financial resources, claiming that they are the recipients of '"millions of dollars" in

government funding and royalties, which suggests excess of income. Quite similarly, other news

articles have written that Attawapiskat First Nations has been in receipt of millions of dollars in

royalties and revenue shares from the De beers Victor diamond mine (Robson, April 18, 2016;

Ward, April 13, 2016; Blatchford, April 14, 2016). The authors do not question whether the funds

are sufficient to cover the cost of living, or the legal stipulations around how such money can be

used and distributed. Instead as in the case above, 'poor management' of funds is cited as the

cause of poverty which fuels questions about individual acts of financial irresponsibility or fraud

rather than infrastructures of financial domination or 'fiscal warfare' (Pasternak, 2015) on the

part of state and corporations. By leaving out the details of each community, the author is able to

obscure the social relations between the state, the corporate sectors that have effectively

occupied these Indigenous lands and Attawapiskat and Maskwacis First Nations communities.

Engagement with the social and historical context would reveal that Maskwacis and

Attawapiskat actually share similar histories and collective experiences of state-facilitated

colonial plunder of corporations on their traditional territories. However, through the

homogenization of these two First Nations communities achieved by these strategic omissions,

the author is able to invoke "social dysfunction" and "aboriginal despair" as a symptomatic of an

issue that is unrelated to poverty. By falsely representing Maskwacis as financially well-off and

juxtaposing them with Attawapiskat's poverty, the author establishes a distance between the two

nations. His logic is as follows: If one community is rich and the other is poor and they both

experience high rates of suicides and suicide attempts, then economic issues and poverty cannot

be levied as determinant factors. Through the dismissal of the significance of social relations and

the collapsing of each community into each other, it is possible for the author to imply that there

is something inherent to both communities, something they both share in common that can

account for why rates of suicide are so high. The author confirms this line of thought when he

quotes the words of Cheams First Nation chief Ernie Crey who states:

> Not all is well on the parenting front, with addictions and mental illness. People are
>
> having a heck of a time being parents and their kids end up feeling ignored, neglected,
>
> and in many cases, abused." Interventions to help suicidal kids on reserves such as
>
> Attawapiskat will only work, Crey says, if life at home is addressed. "The parents also
>
> need help, to heal and to cope with their addictions. They need to show an interest in their

children, re-establish a positive relationship with them. They don't need a symposium on

colonialism" (Hutchinson, April 16, 2016).

The chief's comments are presented after the author has established a depoliticized framework

through which to comprehend the suicide attempts at Attawapiskat First Nations. This particular

sequence allows the chief's comments to be contextualized through this framework so that his

statement appears to confirm Indigenous peoples as helpless victims to self-inflicted

circumstances. References to Indigenous parenting as inherently negligent and harmful place the

blame for suicide squarely upon these adults. Addictions and (the label of) 'mental illness'

become signifiers of the "social dysfunction" referred to by the author. Any kind of meaningful

change then becomes defined through individualistic strategies of behavioural management in

which parents, caregivers and adults must either be managed or manage themselves. Parents

must "show an interest", "cope with their addictions" and "re-establish" positive relationships in

order to avert suicide. The juxtaposition of "interventions" with "life at home" functions spatially

to map interventions as coming from outside the home and outside the community/reserve while

"life at home" is projected as a private, all-encompassing sphere, separate from public/state

spaces. The concept of "aboriginal despair" and issues of addictions and mental illness are then

mapped onto this private sphere, reinforcing the home space as a symbol of this inherent quality

of "aboriginal despair." By establishing this spatial map, both relationship-building/"re-

establishing positive relationships" between parents/caregivers and children and the phenomena

of external interventions are depoliticized. Relationship-building via 'fixing' the home life is

presented as a prerequisite to well-being while interventions are presented as forms of "help" or

"healing." This evades questions concerning the details of such interventions for example who

leads them, if there is consent on the part of community members regarding participation, how

interventions are funded, how funding impacts issues of consent and participation, what the content of these interventions are and whether they constitute new ways of surveillance, regulation and management of First Nations individuals, families and communities.

Scholars have noted how the psychiatrization of Indigenous peoples particularly mothers, caregivers and children as 'mentally ill' (Le Francois, 2013; Chapman, 2010; Kanani, 2012) and constructions of Indigenous parents as deviant (De Leeuw, Greenwood and Cameron, 2009) have been responsible for a sustained legacy of mass forced separation of Indigenous children from their parents and families and removals of Indigenous peoples from their traditional lands. They have also looked at how these state and psychotherapeutic interventions have been rationalized as forms of benevolent care, help and healing (Million, 2013; Le Francois 2013; Chapman, 2010). "Healing" is thus also sanitized from its political implications and serves to reinforce the image of First Nations peoples as helpless victims who can only be helped through their ability to be passive recipients of externally imposed interventions and behavioural management techniques.

Finally the inclusion of a quote from the chief about not needing "a symposium on colonialism" is instructive of and reinforces the construction of the discourse of victimhood. Such a statement is used by the author to imply that colonialism is an abstract, purely academic concept that bears little to no relevance to the daily life experiences of Attawapiskat First Nations peoples. Implicit in this framing is a dismissal of colonialism as a shifting yet ongoing set of relations that continue to structure and organize Indigenous lives on and off reserves in the Canadian state. This pre-empts an understanding of reserves, as well as Indigenous peoples' bodies and minds, as sites that are still actively being colonized/targeted for colonization (but not without resistance on the parts of First Nations peoples). The divestment of suicide, addiction

and substance use issues from this social and historical context out of which they emerge, enabled a discourse of victimhood to be projected onto Attawapiskat First Nations peoples through which they were held responsible for the suicide crisis through representations of negligence, carelessness and dysfunction.

Another article which uses the problem of substance abuse to construct Indigenous familial structures as inherently dysfunctional and Indigenous youth and adults as hopeless victims of self-inflicted circumstance, states

Nishnawbe-Aski police Insp. Eric Cheechoo says some residents will put some of their government assistance money toward drugs. Others will steal items from homes, re-sell them, then use the money for drugs. Adds Armstrong: "Presumptively, kids (are) going without boots, houses (are) going without a fridge full of food." Police suspect the youths involved in the recent rash of suicide attempts likely did not buy their drugs, but simply stole them or found them lying unsecured in the home. (Quan, April 22, 2016)

This passage constructs community and familial structures as damaged and broken by suggesting that people thieve to pay for their addictions and squander money on drugs. Here we see the ways in which media coverage uses the actions of individuals to construct a homogenized characterization and collective identity of First Nations peoples (Nelson, Lavoie and Browne, 2016). The references to 'government assistance' creates an image of helplessness and incompetence, that is, the dependency on federal funding is not treated as a carefully contrived system of dependency (Alfred) but rather as evidence of the inability of Attawapiskat First Nations community members to take care of themselves. Constructions of helplessness as well as tropes of inherent social dysfunction and victimhood are invoked through images of 'children going without boots...or fridge full of food' and of drug smugglers and bootleggers "hiding

contraband in diaper bags, even in children's Ski-Doo pants." Yet another article discusses the

case of a woman who died of a drug overdose in front of her children (Payne, April 12, 2016).

That the cause of the suicides rests on the breakdown of interpersonal, familial relationships is

reinforced in the last sentence of the above passage which states that the youth involved in the

suicide pact may have found the drugs lying around at home. Though it is an unconfirmed

suspicion (the police 'suspect'), the statement is presented as fact as it appears after the author

represents the collective identity of the community members as negligent criminals.

Furthermore, language like "lying unsecured" implies that home spaces are unsafe for the youth

owing to their parent's lack of care. Therefore while the adults are portrayed as victims of self-

inflicted addictions, children are portrayed as victims as a result of being trapped through the

negligent and harmful actions of their caregivers. The discourse of social dysfunction and

victimhood is shored up to provide a rationale for the impetus of youth who attempt to end their

lives.

The generative and resurgent ways in which Indigenous subjects resist and employ

agency in the face of colonial subjugation are made invisible through this discourse. Instead

academic-sanctioned, research-based rationalizations of suicide represent it as an act of agency,

as demonstrated by an excerpt from a news article which quotes

> Ronald Niezen, "a Canada research chair of anthropology in law at McGill University"
>
> who "watched a suicide crisis unfold when he lived in the northern Manitoba First Nation
>
> of Cross Lake for several years in the late 1990s doing research." His direct quote: "So
>
> self-destruction becomes the one act that gives people a sense of making themselves
>
> known or *recognized* as a person."(Payne, 12 April 2016)

Through victimhood discourse, agency is comprehensible only through Indigenous death and destruction. This inversion of agency, as destructive rather than generative, mirrors the ways in which actors and institutions established by settler-colonialism employ agency/act in the interest of preserving settler futurity at the expense of Indigenous futurity. The equation of agency (i.e. the ability to act) with settler futurity and Indigenous death emerges through the social relations of settler-colonialism. The settler-colonial logic that Indigenous peoples can only "make themselves known" and "recognized as persons" by taking their lives holds intact a settler audience from whom Indigenous subjects supposedly seek recognition. This framing of suicide holds intact the power relation between settlers and Indigenous subjects. It is settlers who command the colonial gaze and the Indigenous individual who is gazed upon. It is settlers who hold the authoritative power to recognize, confer and consolidate personhood status and Indigenous subjects who must strive for this recognition. Suicide-as-agency is a settler-colonial logic that reinforces the ideological construction of Indigenous peoples as victims.

Through the omission of engagement with the social relations that structure life on the Attawapiskat First Nations reserve, Indigenous communities and individuals as categorized as socially dysfunctional through numerous references to addiction, substance abuse, criminality, and erosion of familial relationships and structures. This contributes to a discourse of victimhood through which Attawapiskat First Nations peoples are constructed as helpless to remedy the ruptures in their communities and therefore as victims of circumstances. Through the lens of victimhood, the only means that First Nations peoples have to practise agency is through the act of taking their own lives. This equation not only reveals the "sovereign death drive" behind this settler-colonial logic (that is that settler governance requires and facilitates the death of Indigenous peoples) (Simpson, 2016) but also demonstrates how the discourse of victimhood

through which Indigenous peoples are represented as helpless and trapped by social circumstance is indispensable to pathological constructions of Indigenous peoples as already dead or dying (Razack, 2011, 2014).

5.2 Suicide as disease

References to suicide as an 'epidemic' and 'contagious'(Quan, April 16, 2016; Libin, April 27, 2016; Payne, 12 April 2016) and as preceded by 'mental illness' (Hutchinson, April 16, 2016) construct suicide as a diseased condition and enact an understanding of Indigeneity as pathology. One article cites a medical practitioner Dr. Ian Manion whose expertise in the field of psychiatric medicine is levied as proof of authority and expert knowledge on suicide. The article states

> Manion and others who study suicide say clusters such as the one that occurred over the weekend in Attawapiskat, where 11 people attempted suicide in a single day, can be contagious. That is, they can make other members of the community more vulnerable to attempting suicide themselves. (Payne, 12 April 2016)

The use of terms such as "suicide clusters" and "contagious" prompt a medical understanding of suicide and propose suicide as a threat insofar as it can "make other members of the community more vulnerable to suicide". This conjures up images of suicide as a disease that can 'spread' and infect other community members. In addition to constructing suicide as disease, this discourse diagnoses suicidality as deviance. Individuals are presented as being a danger to themselves and each other because they are vulnerable to the contagion that is suicide. This notion of suicide as a threat easily lends itself to acts of criminalization when mapped into Indigenous bodies and minds which is evident when the author writes that some of the youth who attempted suicide

were detained by the police as a 'protective measure'(Payne, April 16, 2016). While the detention by the police is justified as a protective measure, it reinforces an image of the youth as dangerous and threatening enough to warrant police intervention. But how would the police actually be able to protect the youth? What are some of the measures that they would take? Is police intervention the best response given the vulnerability of the youth after attempting suicide as well as the history of forced incarceration of Indigenous communities and overrepresentation in the prison system? The ideological construction of suicide as an invasive threat or epidemic sets up a rationalization for material invasions and bodily intrusions onto Indigenous subjects.

Furthermore, through the mapping of disease and threat onto the bodies of Indigenous racialized subjects, Indigeneity is made comprehensible through the lenses of pathology and criminality in which social conditions and emotional responses to surviving immense loss become attributable to and serve as confirmation of this construction of racialized pathology. Emotive language such as 'hopeless', 'troubled' and 'despair' (Robson, April 18, 2016, Kay, April 16, 2016, Kay, April 16, 2016; Blatchford, April 14, 2016; Hamilton, April 18, 2016; Payne, April 16, 2016) as well as the actual labelling and projection of emotions such as grief, mourning and pain onto Indigenous subjects are transformed into symptomatic markers through which Indigeneity may be diagnosed as pathology by a non-Indigenous settler public (Payne, April 12, 2016; Quan, April 16, 2016). Thus even when social conditions are cited as sources of distress, suicide is still discussed as part of a "cultural script" as is suggested in one article which writes:

Heather Stuart, the Bell Canada antistigma and mental health research chair at Queen's University, said they (suicide clusters) can become the "cultural script." "They have every problem you could imagine, including remoteness, lack of things to do, the living

conditions are terrible," she said of Attawapiskat. "What happens with suicides is people start to see this as their only way out." (Payne, April 12, 2016).

When suicide becomes categorized as a diseased condition inherent to Indigeneity and in this case inherent to Attawapiskat First Nations people, treatments that fixate on Indigenous minds and bodies are prescribed as offering a potential remedy or solution. Thus another way in which pathologization happens was through raising concerns around Attawapiskat First Nations peoples' refusals to participate in psychiatric and psychotherapeutic treatment protocols. This is illustrated in one article in particular, where the author recounts a memory from a personal visit to the reserve. He writes:

> When I visited Attawapiskat four years ago, one of my most depressing conversations was with the resident mental-health nurse, who complained that many patients never showed up for their scheduled meetings at the community's modern, state-of-the-art government-built health clinic. People will sleep till noon, she told me - not just because of substance abuse issues, but because they usually have no reason to get out of bed. Like many remote reserves, Attawapiskat is a welfare state with almost no real jobs. (Kay, April 16, 2016)

By making representing the mental health nurse as willing and able to assist community members and the health clinic as "modern" and "state of the art," the state is portrayed as a caregiver that is providing the resources and supports for community members to get the help that they need. The measures taken by the state as well as the complaints of the mental health nurse could then be more easily juxtaposed with the supposed negligence on the part of the community members. By making reference to their sleeping patterns (sleeping till noon), and

blaming it on a combination of substance use and lack of employment and therefore lack of purpose, the article constructs Attawapiskat First Nations peoples as degenerate, hopeless and lacking the motivation to help themselves. That they refuse to participate in state-funded psychotherapeutic and mental health-based programs is not used as an entry point to question what may be flawed about these programs but rather is used to fixate on and condemn the behaviours of community members of Attawapiskat First Nations (and of other 'remote reserves') as lazy and negligent. Another passage in the article states:

> When residents did show up for their mental-health appointments, I learned, communication between caregiver and patient could be maddening. The whole enterprise of treating mental-health issues - of therapy, of deconstructing human relationships in clinical terms, of talking about one's childhood and neuroses, of looking for hidden meanings in words, dreams and actions - is based on a particular kind of Freudian and post-Freudian vocabulary about the subconscious mind. These ideas often are completely alien to other cultures, including First Nations' cultures, which are more likely to see mental healing through the lens of collective non-verbal spiritual rituals. (Kay, April 16, 2016)

The depoliticization of social conditions established through a discourse of victimhood, facilitates the psychiatrization of social issues such that all issues experienced by First Nations peoples on reserves are coded as "mental-health issues". The path to recovery and wellbeing is thus defined through psychotherapeutic treatment in which the behaviour, thoughts patterns and interpersonal relationships are prioritized as sites for transformation. The psychiatrization of social issues reinforces the pathologization of Indigenous subjects as it is Indigenous subjects themselves who must be 'fixed' and improved upon. The use of the words "caregiver" rather

than for example 'medical practitioners' or 'mental-health professionals' is strategic as it suggests an emotional relationship based in feelings of care and benevolence on the part of medical practitioners towards Indigenous people with whom they work, while "patients" medicalizes Indigenous subjects and alludes to their need for and dependency on provisions of care. This lexiconical strategy is what Tuck and Yang (2012) may refer to as a 'settler move to innocence' insofar as it effaces the transparency of naming the institutional relationship between practitioners and Indigenous clients. This effacement dissolves questions about injustice and violations of power that readily come to mind when relationships are understood as organized through institutionalized relations of power. It also obfuscates the institutional power and authority that medical and social welfare institutions and its practitioners have historically held in relation to the Indigenous subjects with whom they engage, and preserves the notion that their actions and modes of treatment constitute benevolent forms of help that serve the interests of the Indigenous people with whom they work with (Kanani 2012; Gone, 2008; Million, 2013; De Leeuw, Greensmith and Cameron, 2009; Le Francois, 2013; Chapman, 2010). The allusion to care and by extension settler innocence preempts a more critical reading of psychotherapeutic and psychiatric interventions that locate them as part of a settler-colonial state apparatus. For example, what exactly are the "clinical terms" on which human relationships are deconstructed and how might psychiatric and medical authority figures be empowered institutionally to use their medical knowledge to monitor and disrupt the complex everyday social relations in First Nations communities? How might the relations that communities organize among themselves separate from and perhaps in resistance to settler-colonial institutions on reserves be clinically labelled, diagnosed and pathologized? How might talking about childhood neuroses and looking

for hidden meaning in dreams etc. constitute forms of colonial surveillance that invite a slew of varying forms and degrees of intervention, incarceration and control?

Furthermore, through the comparison between "Freud and post-Freudian vocabulary" to First Nations "non-verbal spiritual rituals". Western psychotherapy is presented as being based in an extensive discursive language that encapsulates theories stemming from a long history dating back to Freud. This "vocabulary" is then described as being "completely alien" to First Nations cultures. Language such as "alien" firmly locates Indigenous subjects as outside the Euro-American/Euro-Canadian canon such that "collective non-verbal spiritual rituals" are rendered untranslatable and unintelligible/unintelligent to Western subjects leading to "maddening communication". This move draws on and reinforces racist tropes through which First Nations peoples and cultures are coded as backward and uncivilized while their complex and intricate philosophies and knowledge systems are stripped of their scientific basis and reduced to "non-verbal spiritual rituals". By fixing Indigenous subjects as "aliens" and placing them firmly outside the purview of these modalities, Indigenous subjects are constructed as irreconcilable with white civility. Thus the goal of psychotherapeutic interventions is to impart the lexicon of Western psychiatric and psychotherapeutic modalities to Indigenous subjects through which they can become translatable and comprehensive to Western subjects. The assimilative function of Western psychotherapy has been noted by a number of scholars (Gone, 2008; Million, 2013; Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014) and was cautioned by Indigenous activists during the occupation of INAC offices across Canada. It is only through a willingness to engage with these modalities that Indigenous subjects can hold any hope for "mental healing." "Mental healing" codes for this shift from incomprehension/unintelligibility toward translation, in which unintelligibility is seen as the result of being locked into "non-verbal spiritual rituals" as the only

option for healing. Thus to move towards healing is to move away from incivility and to internalize and assimilate Euro-American psychiatric and psychotherapeutic modalities. "Mental healing" signifies the path of progression from the dysfunctions that have become indicators of pathology of Indigeneity.

Furthermore any rejection of these modalities is collapsed as evidence of cultural difference, rather than attending to the ways in which white supremacy and settler-colonial-capitalist ideologies inform the content and forms of mental healing such that this healing itself constitutes an invasive strategy of colonization of First Nations peoples. See below:

> "The problem was that you couldn't say anything that might be considered a form of criticism, or humiliating," the husband told me. "So observations that in our culture would be readily accepted - like me pointing out that a man seemed depressed - was something that I wasn't supposed to say. That makes communication and diagnosis very difficult."(Kay, April 16, 2016)

So for example in a statement like this, having already established a paradigm which asserts the legitimacy of Western psychotherapeutic modalities as markers of progress and human development, psychiatric labels such "depression" when dispensed by the authority of a psychiatrist, are legitimized as objective facts capturing reality rather than as social constructions that reflect the relationship of power between a particular institution (psychiatry) and a colonized Indigenous population. Instead of diagnoses being framed as a type of censorship of Attawapiskat First Nations community members, it is the psychiatrists who are portrayed as silenced and censored ("you couldn't say anything") which further misconstrues the imbalance of institutional power held by either parties. However, what might be humiliating about a label? Is it the way they limit a view of suffering through the lens of pathology and inherent deficiency

rather than through the reality of colonial domination? What might be threatening about a medical authority figure who has no previous relationship with the community coming in and prescribing diagnoses? What might be fearful about a lack of clarity around what purposes these diagnoses would serve? Would they be used to legitimize the separation of children from parents, the removal of individuals from their communities and into psychiatric institutions, or to justify further mental health interventions that diagnose people's connections to their lands as 'trauma bonds' for example? We lose this line of questioning when western psychotherapy is held up as an objective progressive force through which Indigenous subjects can be civilized, through which they can help and heal themselves.

5.3 Pathologization of relationships to land

In addition to the pathologization of Indigenous subjectivities, another theme was the pathologization of Indigenous relationships to land. In one article, the author graphically describes the case of an abused woman who was eventually murdered by her abusive partner (Blatchford, April 14, 2016). Blatchford cited an unnamed 'domestic violence expert' to conclude that a 'trauma bond' can form between an abuse victim and her abuser and accounts for why she stayed in the relationship even when it was so violent. Drawing on the observation that Attawapiskat First Nations community members refuse to leave the reserve despite the abysmal conditions, the author extends this diagnosis of a 'trauma bond' to categorize the relationship that Attawapiskat and many other northern FN communities peoples have with the lands they live on. Blatchford writes that "virtually everything on the reserve is substandard"and recommends that ties to land must be broken so that community members can move away. In diagnosing Indigenous relationships to land as a symptom of pathology, Blatchford's argument is congruous

with other assertions in which the land is described as inhospitable and desolate (Libin, April 27,

2016, Perkel, April 27, 2016). One article referencing the ongoing housing crisis writes:

> Built on muskeg - soft, marshy wetland - in a region where temperatures can plunge into
>
> the minus-50s, home construction poses special challenges. About 75 per cent of the
>
> houses, poorly designed for the extreme climate, were built between 1960 and the 1990s -
>
> often on badly prepared sites and inadequate foundations….The spring thaw brings
>
> shifting structures, cracked walls, flooding, leaks and mould (Perkel, April 27, 2016).

Through physical images of 'soft, marshy wetland', 'extreme climate' and 'spring thaw', the land

is represented as fundamentally un-inhabitable which shifts the question away from the

conditions that result in this reality and towards an understanding of the land as "what is

essentially swamp" (Blatchford, April 14, 2016), or in other words as inherently indisposed to

sustaining communities and life. The construction of the land as indisposed to sustaining life

distracts from the history of Indigenous peoples who inhabited these regions for many centuries

prior to European colonization. Instead, the land is represented as able to be developed only

through ventures like mining for raw natural resources such as when the author cites the Victor

diamond mine as the lifeline and income generator for the community. The diamond mine is

juxtaposed with the land with the former signifying progress and development and the land as a

signifier of persistent poverty and source of trauma in its 'undeveloped' state. Such

representations of land allow for Indigenous people's refusals to leave their lands as clinging on

desperately to a fading or non-existent past. For example one article uses a comment from

Chretien who states:

"I went to northern Manitoba and it is extremely difficult to have a life there," he said.
"But they are traditional. They want to be close to the land. They are nostalgic about the
past when they were going hunting and fishing and it takes time." (Ward, April 13,
2016).

'Nostalgia' firmly fixes traditional forms of social production in the past. These ways of living
are framed as already dead. Million (2013) has discussed that when Indigenous peoples practice
their relationships to land in ways that reinstall and seek to strengthen their social and political
economies and felt connections to land, these practices are deemed "maladaptive" and
"inconsistent with basic realities" (p. 115). Indigenous peoples and their relationships with land
are pathologized as symptoms of trauma when they practice ways of being and living on the land
that constitute their identities as sovereign Indigenous subjects and contribute to the material
basis and cultural enrichment that ensures the continuation of the life of their nations (Million,
2013). The pathologization of these practices is legitimized through trauma discourse since
unresolved trauma often serves as a blanket diagnosis through which to make sense of the
actions of Indigenous peoples. Thus acts of agency and assertions of sovereignty are deemed as
yearning for a long gone/already dead past, as manifestations of nostalgia and therefore
maladaptive. As Million shows, this logic follows that it is maladaptation stemming from
unresolved trauma that results in the underdevelopment of Indigenous communities.

  In the above passage from the news article, Indigenous relationships to land and traditional
ways of living on the land are dismissed as ongoing and central to their identity as Indigenous.
Felt connections to land are also dismissed through the condescension invoked in the sentiment
of nostalgia. Implied in the comment is a recommendation that these felt connections need to be
put aside in order to 'move on' or rather move off of the land. In another article, the author

admonishes Indigenous peoples stating "Modernity has washed over all of us, for better or worse, and they must face it just like anyone else" (Robson, April 18, 2016) while in another article, First Nations cultures and ways of life are reified as an old, "extinct" remnants of the past to justify the author's claims that living on ancestral lands is a futile project. He writes:

> First Nations culture..is the great constellation of skills, knowledge, lore and manners that animate a particular way of surviving within small kin groups of hunter-gathers - a way of surviving that started to go extinct once Canadian aboriginals began moving into modern houses and eating food out of cans. (Kay, April 16, 2016)

Refusal to leave the land is framed as a resistance to 'modernize', as persistent denial in the face of ongoing circumstances, and as victims trapped in a violent relationship in which the land is abuser. The diagnosis of First Nations communities' relationships to land as indicative of a 'trauma bond' constructs their refusals to leave as pathological and reinforces the victimhood status of Indigenous peoples. The social issues that negatively affect Indigenous peoples are constructed as evidence of their failures and resistances to adapt to 'modernity' i.e. capitalism (Million, 2013). Given that leaving is posed as the only 'rational' solution, failure to adapt to changing conditions is scapegoated as the cause for social problems, not the colonial violence of the state.

 In his analysis of historical representations of Indigenous peoples in newsmedia coverage, Harding (2006) notes that racist stereotypes about Aboriginal people as inferior were often attached to difference in Indigenous uses of land and settler-colonial uses of land. He writes

> The fact that aboriginal people embraced collective, rather than individual, land ownership, in itself, disqualified them from having the same land rights as settlers...By

the 1880s, many colonists had as much confidence in the power of private property and

laissez-faire capitalism to transform aboriginal people (Harding, 2006, p. 227)

'Development' in settler-colonial contexts is defined through the imperative to transform

collectively owned land into private property and use land to establish large-scale raw material

extraction projects to accrue profit for private corporations. These processes of development are

tied to and rely on white supremacist ideas about Indigenous peoples as inferior, backward and

uncivilized but are based in the contradiction between Indigenous forms of land usage and social

economy and settler-colonial imperatives. Indigenous peoples and their use of land are framed as

unproductive i.e. unable to produce capital and reproduce class and property relations necessary

for the accumulation of capital. Thus it is through the settler-colonial imperative to settle and

'develop' the land of Indigenous peoples that they become racialized as uncivilized. Furthermore

as demonstrated by the news articles included in my own study, psychiatric discourse plays a role

in discursively constructing Indigenous peoples' ways of living and relationships to land as

pathological and symptomatic of trauma when land is not used in accordance with settler-

colonial capitalism. Thus through the co-constitution of processes of racialization and

psychiatrization, both Indigenous peoples and their lands are understood as underdeveloped

while capitalism and psychotherapy are then posited as symbols of modern progress and

development.

Comparisons to other more 'successful' FN communities serve as jumping off point to

provide models of what 'sustainable development' might look like for Attawapiskat First

Nations. In one article the author discusses the James Bay Cree:

When Hydro-Quebec showed up in the early 1970s with plans for the massive James Bay

hydroelectric project, the Cree fought back in court, leading to the landmark 1975 James

Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. In exchange for allowing the dams to be built, the

Cree received financial compensation, guaranteed land-use rights and control over local

government, including health, education and economic development. The substantial

Cree civil service that resulted provides employment, and successful Cree-owned

businesses have been built, including the Air Creebec airline that will deliver the letters

and drawings to Attawapiskat this week. Resource companies seeking to operate in the

region typically have to agree to offer employment to Cree workers.

This title of this article is a direct quote from Denis Georgekish, Chief of the Cree Nation of

Wemindji who states "Our Heart Go out to them; they're Crees just like us". This quote when

decontextualized and made into a headline, is intended to evoke feelings of pity and also invites

comparison between the James Bay Cree and Attawapiskat First Nations. The model of

development taken on by the James Bay Cree is posited as a way out of suffering. Highlighted

are the many privileges conferred unto the community as a result of the selling of their land for

the purpose of dam construction. These privileges include job production, Cree-owned

businesses and locally-controlled government. The article then suggests that it is this privilege

that allows them to be generously benevolent by sending letters of support using their own

airline, Air Creebec. Through an extensive listing of the privileges enjoyed by this particular

First Nations community, the author concludes that it is these privileges that enable them to sit in

the role of generous neighbour and not in the role of the pitiful/pitiable. The article transforms a

symbol of solidarity into a sentiment of pity which is used to reinforce the image of

damage/deficiency of Attawapiskat First Nations peoples. This article takes a different position

from the one outlined in Chretien's comment that they need to leave the land. Instead, the author

outlines the 'success' of the James Bay Cree to show what is available to the Attawapiskat FN if

they are willing to 'modernize' i.e. sell their land for state or corporate usage. As if to confirm this, the article goes onto to say that these paths to 'economic development' provide the means to ensure 'cultural continuity' as a protective factor against suicide. In this way capitalist forms of economic development are proposed as preventative measures against suicide, as a path of progression out of pathology, and as an effective promoter of health and human development.

6. Discussion

6.1 The 2011 housing crisis at Attawapiskat: Canadian colonialism in a neoliberal era

On October 28, 2011, Chief Teresa Spence declared a state of emergency in response to the housing crisis in Attawapiskat. At that time, 5 families were living in non-insulated tents, 19 families were living in makeshift sheds without water or electricity, 87 buildings fit for condemnation were being used as homes for 128 families, and 35 families were living in houses in need serious repair (Toulouse, December 20, 2011). Palmater (2011) notes that "people were sleeping in unheated tents and mold-infested shacks without power or running water in -20 degree weather" (p. 121). The abysmal conditions of the housing crisis were also impacting the collective health of the community which further instigated the need for a state of emergency to be declared (Pasternak, 2015). An article written by the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa (IPSMO) also discussed the impact of the housing crisis on community health stating that "The medical workers there [at Attawapiskat] say peoples' lives are at risk from the coming winter cold and health problems, such as infectious diseases, scabies, lice, respiratory problems and acute depression, associated with the crowded, unsanitary living conditions. Substance abuse and suicide often follow" ("Canadian Colonialism: The Attawapiskat Humanitarian Crisis – an Example of Continuing Oppression and Genocide by Canadian Government," December 20, 2011). On November 30, 2011, the federal government appointed a third-party manager who assumed full private control of band finances which would "seize complete control of all the community's financial decisions for programs and services on the reserve" ("Canadian Colonialism: The Attawapiskat Humanitarian Crisis – an Example of Continuing Oppression and Genocide by Canadian Government," December 20, 2011) and meant "an instant loss of band council power to determine how to allocate and prioritize federal transfer funds" (Pasternak,

2015, p. 5). On December 1, 2011, Attawapiskat submitted a press release in response to the installation of third party management in which Chief Spence stated

> In our territory, we have a world class diamond mine, the pride of the Canadian, and Ontario governments, as well as De Beers Canada...each party has failed to acknowledge the First Nation peoples who continue to use the land as our grandparents did. While they reap the riches, my people shiver in cold shacks, and are becoming increasingly ill, while precious diamonds from my land grace the fingers, and necklaces of Hollywood celebrities, and the mace of the Ontario Legislature. (Spence quoted in 'Solidarity', December 20, 2011)

In December 2011, a comprehensive audit of the band finances was commissioned by the Minister and Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC, September 28, 2012). The audit would be conducted in regard to the band's expenditures of $104 million dollars of federal funding between 2005 and 2011 ("Attawapiskat chief slams audit leak as 'distraction'," January 7, 2013). On August 1, 2012, after a judicial review of the decision by Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan to have a third-party manager take control of the community's finances, the federal court declared that the decision was an unjustifiably invasive response that "did not respond in a reasonable way to the root of the problems at Attawapiskat nor to the remedies available upon default under the Comprehensive Funding Agreement" (Fitzpatrick, August 1, 2012). However by this time the third-party manager had already been removed as of April 19, 2012 ("Attawapiskat chief slams audit leak as 'distraction'," January 7, 2013). On 28 September, 2012, the comprehensive audit commissioned by the federal government was submitted and its finding were leaked to *CBC* on January 7, 2013, only 28 days after Chief Teresa Spence began her hunger strike ("Theresa Spence pulls out of

meeting with Harper," January 9, 2013). According to Pasternak (2015), the audit found that

"only $3.6 million of Attawapiskat's $6.85 million budget allocated by AANDC for housing had

been spent on housing renovations and maintenance. The rest of these funds – a little less than $3

million – were being spent on debt repayments" (p. 6). This discrepancy was mobilized by the

media as evidence of financial mismanagement and corruption, evidence which was then held up

as the underlying basis of the deplorable housing conditions and the ensuing crisis on the reserve

(Pasternak, 2015). A press release issued by Attawapiskat First Nations (2011) indicated that on

December 11, 2012, Chief Spence began her hunger strike to protest the unjust treatment of First

Nations peoples by the Canadian state which was marked by a blatant disregard for Indigenous

life and rights and the persistent violation of treaty agreements made with First Nations

communities. Chief Spence contextualized the conditions in Attawapiskat and the colonial

invasive measures endured by her community in the aftermath of the housing crisis as evidence

of this injustice (Pasternak, 2015, Attawapiskat First Nations, 2011). She also located her

community's treatment as continuous with that of other First Nations communities (Attawapiskat

First Nations, 2011). In the press release, Chief Spence is quoted as stating "Canada is violating

the right of Indigenous peoples to be self-determining and continues to ignore our

constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights in their lands, waters, and resources"

(Attawapiskat First Nations, 2011). The release also stated

> First Nations are already severely and chronically underfunded on basic essential services
> like housing, water, food and education. These discriminatory practices have led to the
> current poverty crisis which impacts many First Nations which often suffer from multiple
> overlapping crises in housing, water, sanitation, food insecurity, health and education.
> (Attawapiskat First Nations, 2011)

The state was held accountable for its violation of Aboriginal and treaty rights and creation of the abysmal conditions that residents on reserves had been confronting and enduring. The end of her hunger strike was contingent on a meeting between the Prime Minister at the time, Stephen Harper, the Governor General, David Johnston (representative of the Crown) and First Nations leaders including herself (Macdougall, December 22, 2012). On January 23, 2013, Chief Spence ended her hunger strike after representatives of AFN, NDP and Liberal parties signed a 13 point declaration developed by Chief Spence and other First Nations leaders ("Chief Theresa Spence to end hunger strike today," January 23, 2013). The list included demands for "an immediate meeting between the Crown, the federal and provincial governments, and all First Nations to discuss treaty and non-treaty-related relationships," for the development of clear work plans and timeline to ensure the immediate resolution of the housing crisis and for the creation and implementation of frameworks for treaty agreements that would uphold with integrity the nation-to-nation relationship between the Canadian state and First Nations ("Chief Theresa Spence to end hunger strike today," January 23, 2013).

Looking closely at the case of Attawapiskat First Nation, Pasternak (2015) examined the ways in which the execution of state-organized practices, namely the installation of third party management and the commission of an external audit, waged a fiscal war on the First Nations community after Chief Teresa Spence declared the state of emergency on the reserve. These actions forestalled the emergence of any actual resolution to the housing crisis (Palmater, 2011; Pasternak, 2015) and more over were blatantly dismissive of Chief Spence's call for the crisis to be contextualized as the historical accumulation of the state's persistent violation of their treaty agreement. Instead, the installation of third party management constructed the crisis as resulting from financial irresponsibility, mismanagement, and corruption on the part of the band council

(Pasternak, 2015). The findings of the external audit attributed the housing crisis to

mismanagement of funds due to the band's allocation of federal funds for housing to service debt

repayment (Pasternak, 2015). While mismanagement of funds was cited as evidence to confirm

claims of financial incompetence and corruption, Pasternak (2015) clarifies

> the band was servicing debt forced upon them when AANDC and De Beers refused to
>
> shoulder costs for damages to Attawapiskat's housing stock. In 2009, for the second time
>
> in four years, the Victor diamond mine nearby triggered sewage backups in the band's
>
> fragile septic tank causing flooding in the community. The flooding forced almost 100
>
> people out of their homes. Aboriginal Affairs refused to act when the flooding took place,
>
> so Attawapiskat was forced to pay for damages (p. 7).

She further points out that the failure of the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Canada (AANDC) and De Beers to be held accountable for the damage they inflicted on the

reserve revealed the shortcomings of the impact and benefit agreement (IBA) process undertaken

by Attawapiskat and De Beers (Pasternak, 2015). Pasternak (2015) notes that the negotiation of

an impact benefit agreement, a private legal contract between Attawapiskat and De Beers, was

designed to consolidate the terms on which the Victor diamond mine would be established on

Treaty 9 lands. The IBA and the mine itself were hailed as solutions to the problem of

"Aboriginal dependency" on social welfare by carving out a pathway for economic development

and poverty alleviation of Attawapiskat First Nations through the creation of employment and

job training opportunities and increased access to resource revenues. However, as Pasternak

(2015) explains "[w]hile IBAs technically constitute a consultation process, since they imply

consent from First Nations, these agreements contain confidential and non-compliance clauses

that scholars refer to as a hostage situation of "indentured servants, who promise to work a

certain number of years in exchange for their freedom, no matter how bad the working

conditions" (p. 121). Lindsay Bell (2013), in her doctoral dissertation on diamond extraction in

Northern Canada notes that

> IBAs are confidential documents signed by the developer and the Aboriginal authority
>
> and usually specify private arbitration as the means for settling disputes. In the case of the
>
> Canadian North, IBAs extricated the federal government from the sticky business of
>
> dealing with Aboriginal politics...Because of their confidentiality, it is difficult to assess
>
> the terms of IBAs (Sosa & Keenan, 2001). Broadly, they involve royalty sharing and cash
>
> payments...these agreements are steeped in the language of the local, yet are global
>
> industry standards for dealing with Indigenous populations (p. 135-136),

She further cites the work of Caine and Krogman (2010) who write that the confidentiality of

IBAs can "stifle Aboriginal people from sharing information about benefits negotiated by other

groups, prevent deeper understanding of long-term social impacts of development, thwart

subsequent objections to the development and its impacts, and reduce visioning about the type

and pace of development that is desirable" (Caine and Krogman, 2010 quoted in Bell, 2013, p.

136). These pressures faced by Attawapiskat political leadership to negotiate private agreements

with De Beers in order to promote large-scale resource extraction as a poverty alleviation

strategy is consistent with the ascendance of the neoliberal political economy in the Canadian

settler-colony. Rauna Kuokannen (2011) explains that conditions of welfare dependency and

reliance on state funding on First Nations reserves created through legislature like the Indian Act

are being transformed and replaced by a model of economic development for First Nations and

other Indigenous communities that prioritizes "large-scale resource extraction, and privatization

and commodification of the land" (p. 275). In the face of deplorable social conditions and

shrinking state funding to cover basic needs and social services, Indigenous communities are strained to find alternatives to meet their needs. Kuokannen quotes Irlbacher-Fox (2009) who writes

> Indigenous peoples are forced to exploit their resources and lands according to the interests of multinational resources developers in an attempt to provide their people with basic needs, opportunities for a comfortable life, and support for those who still wish to live a land-based lifestyle within an ever-encroaching economic and social interests of the dominant capitalist society (p. 286).

Thus, Indigenous communities continue to be disempowered in relation to both the Canadian state and multinationals and often occupy positions where they negotiate land claims and modern treaties with the state and impact benefit agreements with corporations who seek to secure stable access to land, on terms outlined by each of these institutions. This leads Kuokannen (2011) to conclude that such a model of economic development does not eradicate the issue of Indigenous dependency but instead simply shifts dependency from the state to corporations.

Kuokannen (2011) also examines how Indigenous self-governance under this model of economic development is underlined by the principle of economic fundamentalism which "promotes privatization, restructuring and downsizing the government and its services, deregulating the economy and emphasizing individual responsibility and choice" (p. 284). Bell (2013) echoes this role of Indigenous self-governance under neoliberalism when she writes

> the brief version of what self-government and land claims look like on the ground, in many cases, is the transformation of newly formed local governments into quasi-capitalist firms while the state withdraws social protections. Responsibility to shareholders is not

merely involved to secure profits. The stakes are much higher. Start-up funds allocated to

groups by the state are meant to generate economic activities to then finance the

provision of basic rights and services that would have previously been provided by the

state (water, housing, health care) (p. 143).

Therefore self-governance while posited as a means for Indigenous communities to exercise

greater autonomy and control over their affairs transforms Indigenous governance into a

microcosm of the Canadian neoliberal governance where good governance is defined through the

ability to create stable investment environments for corporate resource development projects.

Furthermore Kuokannen (2011) notes that economic development based in large-scale

resource extraction conflicts with Indigenous philosophies of land that are "based on close

interactions with the land and emphasize individual and collective responsibilities of taking care

of the land" (p. 286). Kuokannen(2011) also discusses the ways in which Indigenous women pay

a high price for economic development. Large-scale resource development often leads to an

intensification of the erosion of social and familial structures which impact women most directly.

The employment opportunities provided through these projects often recruit men as workers

rather than women, leaving them at a significant economic disadvantage. Also through land

claim agreements negotiated with the state, women's activities and land-based practices are often

not taken into account which means women have less access to practising subsistence based

activities and connections to land. Thus Kuokannen (2011) demonstrates how conditions of

dependency and precarity for Indigenous women deepen under this model of economic

development. She also notes that Indigenous women on reserves face high rates of mortality

owing to violence and suicide and face higher rates of chronic illness.

Returning to the case of Attawapiskat First Nations, Pasternak (2015) provides evidence that rather than alleviate poverty, the IBA and the Victor mine were instrumental in the worsening conditions on the reserve. She writes that "rather than 'modernize' their economy, living conditions deteriorated in the community: the mine contributed to a major sewage problem, destroyed housing stock, and 50,000 kilometers of wilderness have been adversely affected" (p. 14). In terms of revenue payments, De Beers paid Attawapiskat $2 million annually in resource revenues, about 1.5% of their gross revenues generated from the mine (Pasternak, 2015). As noted above, the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa also addressed the range of health issues including "infectious diseases, scabies, lice, respiratory problems and acute depression" that emerged out of the cramped, unsanitary living conditions on the reserve ("Canadian Colonialism: The Attawapiskat Humanitarian Crisis – an Example of Continuing Oppression and Genocide by Canadian Government," December 20, 2011) . They noted that substance abuse and suicide often accompany chronic health issues ("Canadian Colonialism: The Attawapiskat Humanitarian Crisis – an Example of Continuing Oppression and Genocide by Canadian Government," December 20, 2011). Furthermore, in 2016, the Wildlands League, a Canadian environmental group took legal action against De Beers for failing to report toxic levels of mercury and methylmercury in water sources around the mine (Talaga, December 6, 2016). According a news report in *The Nation*, the group alleges that "De Beers failed to report properly on mercury levels from water monitoring stations for creeks next to the open pit Victor Mine between 2009 and 2016, violating a condition of its certificate of approval." (Nicholls, January 20, 2016). Citing Olivier Boucher, a neuropsychologist at Sacré-Coeur Hospital in Montreal, the news report also noted that "prolonged exposure to methylmercury at non-toxic doses is associated with attention, cognitive, motor and sensory impairments, especially in

children exposed in utero or during the first years of life" and that "acute exposure to toxic doses can lead to more severe impairments both in adults and children, including visual loss, ataxia [the loss of full control of bodily movements] and mental retardation." (Nicholls, January 20, 2017). In highlighting the production of unlivable conditions on the reserve as outcomes of the Victor diamond mine, Pasternak (2015) concludes that "the IBA between De Beers and Attawapiskat merely sanitized a new regime of accumulation on Treaty 9 lands" (p. 14), a mechanism that extended the colonial plunder of Indigenous land and subjected the community to "prolonged exposure to violence and deprivation" amounting to "slow death" (p. 6). She notes that the actions of Chief Spence in declaring a state of emergency, condemning colonial state interventions and going on a hunger strike as protests against the state's failure to respond with substantial solutions, not only served to highlight the discrepancy between the wealth of De Beers and the conditions of poverty on the reserve, but also presented a powerful critique of the neoliberal narrative that large-scale capitalist resource extraction and development were solutions to the poverty in First Nations communities. The fiscal assault on Chief Teresa Spence and her community that ensued in the aftermath of the 2011 housing crisis and state of emergency was meted out as punishment for seeking to hold both the Canadian state and De Beers accountable to their roles in worsening conditions in Attawapiskat (Pasternak, 2015).

6.2 Disablement, slow death and premature death at Attawapiskat

An analysis of the political and economic relations at Attawapiskat between the state, corporate sector, and the Attawapiskat governance and community members reveals how the housing crisis emerged as a direct result of the violent inequities and invasive mechanisms of colonial control and exploitation implicit in these relationships. The analyses of Attawapiskat leaders, namely Chief Spence, community members, activists and academics such as Pasternak (2015) locate the installation of third party management and the punitive fiscal measures meted out to Attawapiskat in the aftermath of the housing crisis as continuous with the paternalistic colonial control over Indigenous affairs. At the same time, the state's failure to take financial accountability for the housing crisis reflects its broader divestment from state funding to services and basic needs on reserves like Attawapiskat. Furthermore, Pasternak (2015) theorized the impacts of these measures as a form of fiscal war that postponed indefinitely viable, short-term and long-term strategies of resolution and instead intensified conditions of severe impoverishment and under-housing. This leads her to conclude the state as the perpetrator of the slow death of the peoples of Attawapiskat (Pasternak, 2015). This slow death, coordinated through the neoliberal restructuring of Indigenous economies and relationships to land as well as relationships between the state and First Nations communities, becomes evident in the embodied impacts of harm and distress that manifest as chronic ill-health and disease caused by social conditions on the reserve. Gorman (2016, 2010) theorizes the embodied impacts of harm and distress resulting from settler-colonial and capitalist-imperialist violence as 'disablement.' Disablement provides a way to resist pathologizing frameworks for chronic illness including "psychosocial illnesses" such as suicide and substance abuse (Palmater, 2011) by interrogating how the social relations of inequality and violence produced through through war, settler-

colonial and state violence, genocide, and environmental destruction erode individual and

collective health and wellness in what often amounts to a slow but eventual death (Gorman,

2016). Thus although Pasternak rightly asserts that "at Attawapiskat, fiscal techniques exercise

the power to 'make' Indigenous peoples 'live', not as subjects valued for their intrinsic value as

partners in nation-to-nation treaty agreements with the Crown (as Chief Spence demanded), but

as individual, neo-liberal Canadian subjects who must embrace market citizenship in order to

secure the necessary funds to eat and have shelter" (p. 15), such a statement must be further

complicated. In light of the disablement (Gorman, 2016) and gendered colonial violence

(Kuokannen, 2011) produced on reserves through the neoliberal restructuring on Indigenous

economies and relationships to land as exposed through the case of Attawapiskat, we must ask:

under this model of economic development, what is the proposed quality of life for Indigenous

subjects who are 'made to live' in ways that alienate them from their bodies and lands through a

steady erosion of the relationships that sustain their collective health and wellness? Furthermore,

in what ways does the kind of Indigenous 'life' promoted through this neoliberal model of

economic development require other forms of death?

In an article written for Policy Options entitled "How Canada turned a blind eye to the

suicide crises in First Nations" Pamela Palmater (2016) tackles the topic of the suicide crisis and

subsequent state of emergency in Attawapiskat in 2016 in which she delivers a scathing critique

of the role of the neoliberal Canadian state in structuring the premature deaths of Indigenous

subjects. She writes

> "It is also important to highlight the fact that Canada bears responsibility for these crises
>
> through the theft of indigenous lands and resources, the failure to implement Aboriginal
>
> and treaty rights, and ongoing impacts of discriminatory laws and policies. Overt and

systemic racism by state actors (police, teachers, health care providers, government officials) and society in general have led to high rates of violence against indigenous peoples and a loss of self-worth and hope for the future. The very same root causes of suicide are behind the crisis of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, the over-incarceration of indigenous people in prison and the overrepresentation of indigenous kids in foster care"

Palmater (2016) explicitly implicates the neoliberal state as the perpetrator of the suicides crisis through its policies of institutionalized negligence and decreased social spending on First Nations reserves. Her approach subverts victim-blaming narratives by actively pointing out the failure of Canada to respect the rights (inherent and treaty rights) of First Nations like Attawapiskat. Her contextualization of the suicide crisis as emerging from a violation of treaty rights is thus congruous with Chief Spence framing of the housing crisis. Palmater (2011) has also looked at the ways in which chronic state underfunding of basic needs and social services in First Nations communities/reserves has been engineered through state legislature and policy, resulting in impoverishment, and chronic health issues, including "psychosocial illnesses" such as suicide, depression and substance abuse. She quotes from the 2005 Health Canada report which noted that "suicide was among the leading causes of death in First Nations aged 10-44 and accounted for over 22% of all deaths on Aboriginal youth aged 10-19 (Health Canada). Clearly, Aboriginal status and poverty is linked to the overall poor health and premature deaths of First Nations in Canada (Lemstra et al., 2009)" (Palmater, 2011, p. 115) .

In her discussion of the persistent poverty in Attawapiskat, Palmater (2011) discusses the struggle of the youths in Attawapiskat led youth leader and community organizer Shannen Koostachin to fight for a new elementary school built as the one at the time was "full of mold,

mice, cracked walls, and reeked of diesel fuel." That the Canadian state conceded and provided

funding for the construction of a new school building in 2013 only after the activism of the youth

garnered attention nationally and internationally, provides further evidence of the state's

negligence of these communities. Palmater (2011) shows how the state's persistent negligence

and chronic underfunding of Attawapiskat and other First Nations community has led to high

rates of "lower educational achievement rates, poor health outcomes, and high unemployment

and suicide rates" (p. 122). Furthermore, her framing of the deaths and near-deaths resulting

from suicide as "premature" refuses the constraints of psychiatric diagnoses and the lens of

pathology and instead exposes how Indigenous youth are forced into death or 'made to die' by

the negligence, disregard and 'killing indifference' (Razack, 2013) of the Canadian settler-

colonial state. She echoes the analyses put forth by Indigenous activists who occupied

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada buildings after the state of emergency was declared and

who spoke out against the framings of suicide as solely a mental health problem or accidental

outcome of individual despair and instead as the result of racist colonial policies.

6.3 The sovereign death drive and the manufacturing of pathological/affectable Indigenous 'other' at the horizon of death

In her article "No-Bodies: Law, Raciality and Violence" Da Silva (2014) asks "Where is

that place where what should not 'happen to nobody' happens every day? Why is it that, in so

many places found in every corner of the global space, so many human beings face that which

'no one deserves'?" (p. 120). This line of questioning leads Da Silva (2014) to her theorization of

such places as the 'horizon of death.' Da Silva (2014) explains that sites which constitute the

horizon of death represent the spaces and territories inhabited by racial subaltern subjects where

the state must necessarily deploy racial violence to preserve and reinscribe its authority. She

writes "legitimacy is always/already given...to these deployments of total violence because

raciality renders the decision to kill residents...necessary for the reinscription of the state's

authority" (Da Silva, 2014, p. 160). Thus through the deployment of racial gendered violence,

the state reproduces itself as self-determining in relation to those subjects who absorb the

effects/are affected by its actions and are constituted as the affectable 'I' (Da Silva, 2014) or

"affectable other" (Gorman, 2016). Thus it is through racial violence and the death of racial

subaltern subjects that the sovereignty of the state is held intact.

In her article "The State is A Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of

Settler Sovereignty," Audra Simpson (2016) examines the ways in which Canadian settler-

colonial sovereignty requires the death and disappearance of Indigenous women for its own

survival. This requirement of death is what Simpson (2016) terms "the sovereign death drive."

Simpson discusses that within many Indigenous political orders, Indigenous women were

authorized and empowered through Indigenous law to hold positions of political leadership.

Citing the Haudenosaunee peoples as an example Simpson (2016) writes:

> Iroquois women appointed Chiefs, held property, counseled chiefs and de-horned them if
>
> necessary (removed them from their position of Chief). They divorced their men by
>
> placing their belongings outside of the Longhouse. They were the inverse of the settler
>
> colonial woman, they had legally mandated authority and power, and so, they represented
>
> an alternative political order to that which was in play or was starting to be in play in the
>
> late 19th Century ('Bodies,' para. 4)

Indigenous women scholars have written extensively about the settler-colonial state's

destabilization of Indigenous nations and their polities through the systematic stripping of

political power from Indigenous women through the installation of heteropatriarchal legal

infrastructures, namely the Indian Act (Anderson, 2000; Lawrence, 2003; Million 2013; Maracle, 1996; Sunseri, 2011; Simpson, 2007). Others have examined the ways in which Indigenous bodies, particularly those whose bodies hold the capacity to reproduce and birth new generations of Indigenous nations, have historically been and continue to be sites of genocidal surveillance and management including institutionalized processes of rape and forced sterilization (Perogaro, 2015; Deer, 2015; Smith 2005). Simpson (2016) extends this analysis by examining how Indigenous women's bodies and minds in their signification of the continuation of Indigenous political orders, become targeted for death and disappearance and become the sites of brutal forms of ritualized violence. Simpson (2016) writes "as with all bodies, these bodies were more than just "flesh" – these were and are sign systems and symbols that could effect and affect political life. So they had to be killed, or, at the very least subjected because what they were signaling or symbolizing was a direct threat to settlement" ('Bodies,' para. 4). The killing and disappearing of Indigenous women become forms of killing and attempting to erase the self-determination of Indigenous subjects and the memory of their political orders through which their nations are constituted. That killing quite literally removes Indigenous women from the land demonstrates how the sovereign death drive, materialized through the matrix of ongoing gendered genocidal violence, functions as a strategy of colonial dispossession that attempts to permanently remove and extinguish Indigenous polities from the land.

Through her examination of the intense scrutiny and public discourse on Chief Teresa Spence's body, namely her weight, during her hunger strike, Simpson makes visible the workings of the sovereign death drive. By going on hunger strike as an act of social protest and defiance of the state's punitive actions, Simpson writes that Chief Spence made visible the colonial relations of power through which her community had been steadily impoverished and subjected to slow

death (Pasternak, 2015) and premature death (Palmater, 2011, 2016). In so doing, Chief Spence

exposed the ways in which people in her community were always/already positioned on the

frontlines of a colonial war, their own horizon of death (da Silva, 2009) as indexed by high rates

of suicide and chronic illness and disease (Palmater, 2011). Spence's body became a symbol of

resistance, representative of the integrity and life of her nation as at the same time it drew

attention to how subjects with bodies like hers faced precarious access to life, health and the

resources and practices that sustained their lives. The negative attention garnered around Chief

Spence's body weight during the hunger strike served to distract from her political demands to

hold the state accountable to its disregard for and violation of Aboriginal rights and treaty rights.

Simpson (2016) writes

> Spence's fleshy body was not seen as a sign of resurgent Indigenous life to white Canada,
> it was not seen as a stubborn, resolute, and sovereign refusal to die, staying alive to have
> that conversation about Crown obligations, about housing and about historical obligations
> -- it was read as a failure to do what it was supposed to do – perish ('Flesh and
> Sovereignty,' para. 1).

Simpson (2016) shows how these acts of scrutiny represent attempts to undermine the

sovereignty of Indigenous peoples over their bodies and by extension the living, breathing

sovereignty of their nation bodies by pathologizing her refusal to die through the dissemination

of discursive assaults on the 'excess weight' and 'fatness' of her body. Simpson (2016)

demonstrates further that these pathologized frames emerge out of the same sovereign death

drive that organizes the state-based and state-sanctioned practices that target Indigenous political

orders and peoples, especially Indigenous women, for the death of Indigenous nations.

Through Simpson's analysis of the sovereign death drive (2016), it is possible to understand the bodies and minds of Indigenous subjects as constitutive of the horizon of death insofar as they are sites where the state routinely deploys heteropatriarchal, colonial violence to uphold its authority as a self-determining. Simpson (2016) shows how these bodies are marked for death and relegated to the position of 'affectable other' precisely because the polities they embody/their existences represent the ability to "effect and affect political life," are always/already self-determining and as such threaten to undo the sovereignty of the settler-colonial state. Acts of colonial violence attempt to force Indigenous subjects into the position of affectable other as attempts to deny and erase their collective and individual self-determination. da Silva's (2014) reference to the horizon of death as "affectable or pathological territories" (2014, p. 146) demonstrates that insofar as these are territories are used to confirm the sovereignty of the state, and insofar as these subjects who inhabit or embody the horizon of death exist to be 'affected' by the state, through the process of becoming/being affected, they are rendered pathological. Pathology (often signified through the diagnoses of 'trauma', 'mental illness' and the stigmatization/psychiatrization of Indigenous felt experiences (Million, 2013; Maxwell, 2014; Chrisjohn, Maraun, Young, 1997) thus comes to represent affectability or the negation of self-determination. Thus through the rendering of Indigenous subjects as 'affectable' and therefore 'pathological,' they themselves are represented as the negation of self-determination. Gorman (2016) gestures to the ways in which disability as identity can often function to reinforce this negation of self-determination when she writes "the juridical, ethical, and political processes of folding people into disability does not negate the fundamental dynamics of racial violence- rather, disability can function as a social-embodied characteristic that...renders the affectable 'other' more affected" (Gorman, 2016, p. 256).

Because the horizon of death is always/already constituted through raciality/racial

colonial violence, the enfolding of these subjects who embody or inhabit this horizon of death

into an identity of disability may only serve to reinscribe the relationship between the state and

inhabitants on the horizon of death as self-determining and affectable other respectively.

Disability does not transcend this racial dialectic, it is enmeshed in and reinforces it. Instead,

Gorman's (2016) formulation of disability as "organized by the state in coordination with other

forms of (non)citizenship status [for example Indigeneity]", provides a way to think through how

the enfolding of Indigenous subjects into a disabled identity such as 'trauma' or 'mental illness'

may only further undermine the self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous subjects

through for example the legitimizing of fiscal, psychotherapeutic or corporate

interventions/invasions. However through Gorman's (2016, 2010) own theorization of

disablement as produced through through war, settler-colonial and state violence, genocide, and

environmental destruction, disablement can be understood as an outcome of the sovereign death

drive (Simpson, 2016) as it operates at the horizon of death (Da Silva, 2014) and therefore

disablement (along with slow and premature death) gives view to the horizon of death (Gorman,

2016). In this way we are able to see the horizon of death is at once as a site of disablement and

where "disability itself functions ideologically as a cover for other social relations" (Gorman,

2016, p. 255).

In her monograph, Therapeutic Nations, Dian Million (2013) traces the emergence of

trauma and examines the ways in which the process of folding Indigenous subjects into a

traumatized subjectivity has functioned ideologically to facilitate and obscure the

neoliberalization of relationships between Indigenous communities and the settler-colonial state.

She discusses that through neoliberal restructuring of state allocation of funding, health and

welfare programs on reserves were increasingly defunded, prompting a rise in privately-funded, self-help, psychology-based interventions in Indigenous communities. These interventions implicated communities and individuals in various forms of self-management under an umbrella of psychotherapeutic and human potential techniques and programs which stressed the connection between trauma and community development. This results in the diagnosis of ruptures in social organization of Indigenous nations as the product of 'unresolved trauma' such that the health of Indigenous subjects becomes a site of intense scrutiny and management. Through the logic of the trauma framework, many of the issues confronting Indigenous communities, namely addiction, substance abuse and incest, were subsumed as evidence of the traumatized subjectivities of Indigenous peoples which warranted the need of human potential and psychotherapeutic interventions. Indigenous subjects were therefore located at the heart of communal instability.

In *National Post* media coverage of the suicide crisis in Attawapiskat, the articles represent familial, personal and interpersonal experiences of distress such as substance abuse and addictions as manifestations of inherent dysfunction or 'mental illness', that is inherent to the experience of being First Nations. Parenting, family and caregiver-child relations become sites of intense surveillance in which Indigenous parents and adults are homogeneously represented as addicted, negligent and irresponsible. Such representations reproduce images of damage, deficiency and victimhood as the 'cultural script' of Indigenous peoples. Representation of suicide as a contagious disease and epidemic also construct suicide as pathology, leading to the psychiatrization of social problems, and signalling the need for mental health interventions. Furthermore, youth and adults in Attawapiskat and by extension other First Nations communities who attempt or commit suicide are represented as unstable and a threat unto themselves and

others. By invoking the notion of threat, police as well as psychotherapeutic and mental health interventions are further legitimized as potential methods of resolution. Through this discursive framing of suicide through the lens of pathology, Indigenous people's bodies, minds and behaviours become the site of surveillance, control and intervention. The narrative of suicide as disease enables such interventions to be rationalized as offering help or the possibility of healing rather than as forms of colonial invasion that threaten to strip away the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples' over their own bodies. This reinforces the discursive constructions of Indigeneity as "a problem that "has problems" that now have to be dealt with" (Simpson, 2008).

Million writes that the 'unresolved trauma' of communities has been posited as an obstacle to the development of the Indigenous communities. Million (2013) writes "the bottom line would be whether individuals could achieve at a personal level sufficient psychic integrity (healing, identity) to sustain relations at other concentric level of organization, that is families, communities, or self-determining governing bodies, that is "nations"(p. 110). The persistent destabilization of Indigenous nations through the erosion of forms of social and political organization particular to each of these nations was thus attributed to the impact of 'unresolved trauma' "at the most intimate levels" (Million, 2013, p. 110). Therefore through the body of psychotherapeutically-informed human potential therapies, 'healing' from trauma was established as a prerequisite to re-establishing nationhood and structures of self-governance. But what purpose are these structures of self-governance achieved through 'healing of trauma' meant to serve?

Million investigates the formation of culture in the 'culture as treatment' hypothesis forwarded by theorists whose interests cohere around economic development of Indigenous communities. She exposes how clinical approaches to cultural revitalization that dominate as

strategies for healing trauma are framed as promoting resilience in Indigenous subjects for

coping with accelerated and devastating changes brought on by capitalist development. As

Million explains, the notion of 'culture' mobilized through the 'culture as treatment' thesis is one

which fails to recognize the ways in which Indigenous cultures are derived from and sustain

Indigenous subsistence economies and structures of social production and organization. She

states "The meaning of Indigenous as it is defined by all those cultures who identify themselves

as such has always been in relationship to a "land," that place they were in relationship to

without anthropocentric bias...culture..is not a past but a living, enduring vision for a polity, one

whose values could inform an Indigenous self-determination" (pp. 116-117) This leads Million to

ask "is it that culture is good as individual/community therapeutic practice but unimaginable as

relational practices that inform governments, ways of living in places?" (p. 116). To ask in

another way, if it is not the development and reconstruction of Indigenous economies, systems of

governance and nations that is at stake in the project of collective healing, then to what ends is

healing being justified as a means? Million discusses that when Indigenous communities seek to

revitalize their cultural practices through the re-establishment of land-based practices as acts of

sovereignty over their territories, these actions are pathologized as 'maladaptive.' This discursive

diagnosis of maladaptation exposes the assumption that capitalism is the 'basic reality' to which

Indigenous peoples must adapt.

In *National Post* media coverage of the suicide crisis in Attawapiskat, Attawapiskat First

Nations people's relationship to land is characterized as symptomatic of trauma ('a trauma

bond') in order to justify claims that such relationships must be broken in order for 'healing' to

take place. This technique relies on invoking images of land as unable to sustain livelihoods and

only capable of being put to good use through extractive projects such as the Victor diamond

mine. White supremacist settler-colonial tropes of modernity are mobilized to narrate and naturalize capitalist development as progress and Indigenous peoples and their social economies and traditional ways of living as uncivilized, archaic and indicative of trauma or in the succinct words of one author: "Modernity has washed over all of us, for better or worse, and they must face it just like anyone else" (Robson, April 18, 2016). Refusals of Indigenous peoples to move off of their land or adapt their relationships to land to capitalist models of economic development are framed as evidence of 'a trauma bond', and therefore serve to confirm Indigeneity as pathology. The implicit assumption that land can only be properly put to use and 'developed' through capitalist processes of privatization and resource extraction underlines recommendations about how Indigenous peoples should develop or open up their lands to privatization and resource extraction if they themselves want to heal and develop themselves out of their traumatic state. However as Million's (2013) and Kuokannen's (2011) work each demonstrate, capitalist development has required and continues to require the death and destruction of Indigenous traditional economies and the disruption of their relationships to land through persistent attempts at dispossession. Thus they both point out the paradox of that which is termed as 'development' has steadily eroded the self-sufficiency of Indigenous nations and halted the growth of their land-based economies. However, the discourse of 'unresolved trauma,' as made apparent through rationales such as the 'trauma bond,' circumvents such an understanding from emerging precisely because it locates the bodies and minds of Indigenous subjects as barriers to development, as the problems that must be 'treated'/healed/made to adapt (Million, 2013). Trauma thus serves to conceal the relations through which capitalist projects of development have been complicit in the disablement of Indigenous communities.

7. Conclusion

The representational strategies employed in *National Post* media coverage of the suicide crisis at Attawapiskat collapse Attawapiskat First Nations people specifically and all First Nations people generally into an identity of trauma, disease, 'mental illness' and pathology. This process circumvents their rights to their land as Indigenous peoples and contests their sovereignty over their lands, bodies and minds by rationalizing a slew of state-funded mental health interventions and recommendations for a capitalist model of economic development in the name of progress, modernization and healing. In this way, pathology (coded as trauma, mental illness, victimhood, pathologized affect such as 'aboriginal despair' and hopelessness) holds intact the relation between the settler-colonial state (and its representatives/settlers/actors) and Indigenous peoples, in which settlers are entitled with the political agency to enact/effect action onto those affectable 'others' through which they come to know themselves as self-determining, while Indigenous peoples are confirmed as only able to be acted on and affected.

The disablement that is produced in Attawapiskat as a result of colonial state and capitalist violence is evidence of the necropolitical function of state. As evident in *National Post* media coverage, this necropolitical function of colonial violence is always/already legitimized as necessary for the (racial) project of modernity and concealed through trauma discourse and narratives of pathology that prescribe capitalist models of progress and development with 'healing.' Through the mobilization of these logics, many questions are left unasked and unanswered with respect to how capitalist development projects such as the Victor diamond mine conduct extraction in ways that negatively impact the health and well-being of community members including youth, or how state interventions in past crises have consistently threatened and infringed on the sovereignty of Attawapiskat First Nations peoples over their territories and

intensified crisis conditions, or how the Canadian state has consistently failed to uphold its end of the treaty relationship with Attawapiskat First Nations leading to detrimental consequences. By centring a discussion of disablement in settler-colonial contexts, what is revealed is that the absence of a rigorous interrogation of colonial relations- how they are organized and how they impact First Nations people- facilitates a discursive shift onto Indigenous subjects themselves as inherently predisposed to dysfunction. Knowledge production, research and policymaking at the sites of various settler-colonial institutions- such as the academic industrial complex, media, and INAC- are implicated in and organized through these relations, and are indispensable to the operation of settler-colonial institutions. Thus, damage-centred frameworks developed at the site of academia and policy, alongside national media, routinely reproduces and deploys discursive constructions of Indigeneity as victims and pathological as rational explanations for their experiences of harm, disablement and premature deaths, in order to hold intact the domination of settler-colonial sovereignty.

An analysis of disablement reveals the ways in which these constructions are fictions, that is, they do less to articulate and contextualize the subjectivities and experiences of Indigenous peoples and instead reveal the workings of settler-colonial anxieties, preoccupations and relations at times of crisis when the sovereign death drive as the basis of the Canadian state (Simpson, 2016) is at greater risk of becoming exposed on national and international fronts. Therefore, as researchers, we are compelled to think about how we might resist damage-centred research and the reproduction of pathological representations of Indigeneity at the site of the AIC. As a non-Indigenous racialized researcher, my consideration is also especially concerned with how knowledge production can constitute a practice of solidarity on Turtle Island between differently racialized arrivant, migrant and displaced Indigenous communities, and Indigenous

(to Turtle Island) communities who are fighting for their lives and livelihoods. Through the process of doing this research with an intention and deliberate practice of resisting the methods and lens of damage-centred research, I have learned how significant Indigenous sovereignties and nations are in challenging not only the legitimacy of the entity called Canada that claims itself as sovereign over the lands, resources and peoples who inhabit this land, but also in revealing the logics of empire through which settler-colonial ideas and mobilizations of state power, sovereignty and nation are deployed. That Indigenous sovereignties are embodied in living, breathing nations, engaged in the work of developing alternatives to the sovereignty of empire raises many important questions about how racialized researchers (not Indigenous to Turtle Island) might attend to the pitfalls of "colonial unknowing" in community organizing and knowledge production. For example, how would we develop a framework that engages with the ways in which the violent relations of settler-colonialism in Canada/North America are co-constitutive with Canadian imperialism and militarism beyond its national borders? Another serious consideration could be engaging with class as an analytic in attending to issues concerning land, state sovereignties and Indigenous sovereignties. We might take seriously how and why certain relationships with land have been historically been forced onto differently colonized peoples, how and why different relationships with land have emerged within populations that were once homogenized as 'slaves' or 'indentured workers' in ways that jeopardize Indigenous ways of living and how certain marginalized segments/classes of these populations (formerly enslaved/Black, formerly indentured and Indigenous Caribbean peoples) cultivated relationships to land in resistance to state formations of power.

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