“Other languages, other landscapes, other stories”: Reading Resurgence in the Contemporary Indigenous Novel

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Abstract

As settler and postcolonial countries in North America, Oceania, and South Asia contend with the complexity of reconciliation, sovereignty movements, and the fallout from colonial schools, the relevance of Indigenous resurgence is rising on a global scale. This resurgence responds, in part, to the specific role literature can and has played in disconnecting Indigenous Peoples from their knowledges, communities, and selves. Accordingly, in this dissertation I make connections between seemingly disparate Indigenous novels in an effort at beginning to understand what representations of resurgence—the everyday practices and processes that seek to regenerate and rebuild Indigenous nations—reveal about how diverse Indigenous contexts are (re)imagining Indigenous worlds and what connections across those contexts might mean (Simpson 2017). To perform this investigation, I make a case for further cross-cultural comparative methods within Indigenous literary studies that can interpret resurgence across distinct literary contexts while maintaining a commitment to nation-specific worldviews imparted by relation with land.

Mobilizing the theoretical work of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg), Chadwick Allen, and Molly McGlennen (Anishinaabe), this project contributes a new comparative method called *reading resurgence*. Located at the intersection of global and nationalist approaches to Indigenous literary studies, this method interprets everyday acts of resurgence—specifically: storytelling, language learning, and relationship with land—trans-Indigenously across three respective literary constellations of coresistance that cluster novels from diverse Indigenous nations. The first constellation reads resurgence across David Treuer's (Leech Lake Ojibwe) *The Translation of Dr Apelles* (2006), Patricia Grace's (Māori) *Potiki* (1986), and Rejina Marandi's (Santal) *Becoming Me* (2014). The second clusters Cherie Dimaline's (Métis) *The Marrow Thieves* (2017), Sia Figiel's (Samoan) *Where We Once*

Belonged (1996), and Easterine Kire's (Angami Naga) *Don't Run, My Love* (2017). The third reads across Eden Robinson's (Haisla & Heiltsuk) *Monkey Beach* (2000), Kiana Davenport's (Kanaka Maoli) *Shark Dialogues* (1994), and Mamang Dai's (Adi) *The Black Hill* (2014). Beyond its methodological contribution, this dissertation is also an effort to advance scholarly understandings of how contemporary Indigenous novels are (re)connecting Indigenous Peoples and nations with traditional ways of being and knowing.

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With our complex ways of relating to the plant nations, animal nations, and the spiritual realm, our existence has always been inherently international regardless of how rooted in place we are. We have always been networked. We have always thought of the bush as a networked series of international relationships.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*

Want a different ethic? Tell a different story.

Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*

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Chapter One: Introduction

. . . the way things are is not how they have always been, nor is it how they must be.

Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*

In Cherie Dimaline's (Métis) *The Marrow Thieves*, sixteen-year-old French(ie) lives with a family of eight youth and two Elders who meet while on the run in a post-apocalyptic world where Indigenous Peoples are hunted for their bone marrow—the only antidote to the "plague of madness" impacting the settler population (53). When Frenchie's family joins a larger resistance movement, its community members introduce their Council: "Clarence, Cree from the old prairies territory. Mint, Anishnaabe from south in America. Bullet, she's Inuit. Jo-jo is Salish . . . General is Haudenosaunee and Migmaw. And Rebecca is Ho-Chunk" (169). Frenchie's family, already comprised of people from Métis, Anishinaabeg, and "East Coast" nations (21), is welcomed into a diverse international community that is working across several nations in a united fight for Indigenous futurity.

In its depictions of alliance building, *Marrow Thieves* makes a powerful argument for connection across seemingly disparate nations as a means of bringing new worlds into being. The novel fosters these connections as characters demonstrate and share in their commitment to "real old-timey" ways of being and knowing that are essential to Indigenous life (Dimaline 21, 174).[1] The "old-timey" practices in the novel—storytelling, hunting, homesteading, language

[1] Although "old-timey" can appear to characterize Indigenous ways of being and knowing as part of the past, the use of the term in *Marrow Thieves* asserts the presence of these knowledges in rejection of such characterization. The characters are regenerating Indigenous ways and knowledges in the present that have been a sustained (if challenged) presence for millennia. In depicting this regeneration across generations and in pursuit of Indigenous futures, the "old-timey" comes to describes Indigenous presence across the past, present, and future in a reflection of a spiralic understanding of temporality. As co-author Anah-Jayne Samuelson and I write in our article on *Marrow Thieves* for *Studies in the Novel*, "[o]ld-timey resurgence in *Marrow* is therefore not only speculative of the ways things could be for Indigenous Peoples, but representative of a sustained and ongoing way of being that is an alternative to the iterative, cyclical process of colonialism" (289).

learning—are examples of what Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) calls *Indigenous resurgence*: the "set of practices through which the regeneration and reestablishment of Indigenous nations [can] be achieved" (*As We Have Always Done* 16). Simpson describes resurgence as the practices and processes that make someone Nishnaabeg: "story or theory, language learning, ceremony, hunting, fishing, ricing, sugar making, medicine making, politics, and governance" (19). Jeffrey Corntassel (Cherokee) also suggests that small everyday acts of renewal such as prayer or speaking with ancestors are core "foundations of resurgence" (89). Simpson further notes that in its most radical form, resurgence is "nation building, not nation-state building" (22). The distinction here is important, as this nation building is specifically Indigenous nation building, rather than the reproduction of settler nation states, and as such it requires "significantly re-investing in [Indigenous] ways of being" (*Dancing* 17). My use of resurgence in this dissertation relies most directly on Simpson's theorization but I am also indebted to Aubrey Jean Hanson (Métis), who defines resurgence as "the regrowth of Indigenous communities from strong roots toward strong futures, building upon tradition and heritage through processes of revitalization and reclamation in order to create healthy, vibrant, self-determining Nations" (*Literatures, Communities, and Learning* 23). Like Hanson, I also believe that artistic processes—such as those found through literature—are "integral to community resurgence" (23). Ultimately, resurgence knows there is no Indigenous future in a settler colonial framework and it radically rejects the intentional fractures of settler colonial life by encouraging alliances across diverse and distinct Indigenous nations.

This dissertation makes a similar move by bringing together distant Indigenous novels to create constellations of coresistance where comparisons across forms of resurgence reject the settler project's attempts at separation. Taken together, these comparisons reveal Indigenous

worlds existing as they have always done despite colonizing attempts at their erasure. Consequently, this project's primary contribution is a new comparative method for what I call *reading resurgence* in the contemporary Indigenous novel.[2] This method extends comparative work already being done—described more fully below—by Simpson, Chadwick Allen, and Molly McGlennen (Anishinaabe). Beyond its methodological contribution, this dissertation is also an effort to begin to understand what representations of resurgence in the contemporary Indigenous novel tell literary studies about *how* different Indigenous (con)texts (re)imagine Indigenous worlds and what the connections across those (con)texts might mean. Simpson writes, "[t]he crux of resurgence is that Indigenous peoples have to re-create and regenerate our political systems, education systems, and systems of life from within our own intelligence. We have to create Indigenous worlds" (*As We Have Always Done* 226). One means of creating these worlds is through literature, a form of resurgence itself, that seeks to represent resurgence on the page. Ultimately, it is this dissertation's contention that through representations of everyday acts of resurgence, the contemporary Indigenous novel contributes to the reclamation and recovery of relationships with knowledges, languages, and land.

To ground my analysis, each of my three chapters focuses on one form of resurgence: storytelling, language learning/use, and relationship(s) with land. Storytelling is essential for its ability to carry knowledge that not only unites community members, but also keeps them safe. In this dissertation, storytelling refers to both written and oral storytelling within Indigenous

[2] Aubrey Jean Hanson's (Métis) dissertation, *Reading for Resurgence: Indigenous Literatures, Communities, and Learning* (2016), mobilizes the phrase "reading for resurgence" to consider a core research question: "how do Indigenous literatures matter to the resurgence of healthy Indigenous communities?" (5). Hanson's work investigates the ways that Indigenous literatures matter to Indigenous communities, an investigation that she conducts across conversations with seven Alberta secondary school teachers and seven Indigenous writers. Hanson invokes resurgence as a motive and organizing concept for her research, rather than as a methodological concept (as I do here).

communities. Similarly, Indigenous languages strengthen community and nation-specific bonds while connecting people to the land where they reside. A reciprocal relationship with land is essential for Indigenous continuance and survival because it imparts codes of conduct for living an ethical, accountable life.[3] Each chapter then attends to three regionally diverse novels as it examines resurgence in Indigenous communities around the world. The chapters bring together authors writing in North America (specifically, by Anishinaabe, Métis, and Haisla-Heiltsuk authors), Oceania (by Māori, Samoan, and Hawai'ian authors), and South Asia (by Santal, Adi, and Naga authors). While I analyze these acts of resurgence separately in my body chapters, my conclusion attends to the complexity of their interconnections. In what follows, I clarify the importance of analyzing representations of resurgence in literature, situate my project and its contribution within the relevant streams of criticism, detail my method, address some limitations, and sketch the contours of my body chapters.

The Importance of Resurgence in Literature

This dissertation contributes a new method for reading resurgence in global Indigenous literary studies as part of a wider commitment to bringing together what settler colonialism has sought to separate. As a queer woman and settler who grew up on Treaty 7 territory in what is currently Calgary, Alberta, my primary and secondary public-school education taught me this separation firsthand.[4] The curriculum of the late 'nineties and the early millennium occluded stories of

[3] In this context, "reciprocal" does not just refer to a two-way street, but to a broader ethic of care and recognition that flows throughout Indigenous ways of being and knowing.
[4] The First Nations in Southern Alberta include the Métis Nation, the Tsuut'ina First Nation, the Piikuni Blackfoot Nations, Kainai, Siksika, and the Stoney Nakoda People (made up of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations).

contemporary Indigenous presence. What I do remember being taught were the harmful narratives I discuss in further detail within this section—narratives that cast Indigenous Peoples as existing only in long distant pasts or far off reservations owing to their defeat by a more "advanced" civilization. Now, as an educator and a scholar of Indigenous literatures, I am deeply aware of the relationship between how the stories told in our classrooms are deployed by the settler state to maintain the kinds of separation that safeguard settler futures. I am also concerned with the role that researchers, such as myself, have played in the long extractive and exploitative history between settler institutions of knowledge and Indigenous Peoples. My work as a researcher and PhD candidate at a Canadian university implicates me in a structure that centers and sustains Euroamerican knowledges. One of the ways this dissertation (and my work more broadly) resists this history is by centering a relational ethic of care that recognizes the affective and material power of story by carefully introducing and contextualizing challenging details. Wherever possible, I recognize and reflect on my role in larger structures of colonial violence that play out in the stories told by these novels. In this chapter's Methodology and Key Considerations sections, I address several further limitations pertaining to my subject position and how it has impacted the way I come to this work. In this dissertation's conclusion, I expand on my position's role in decolonization efforts by attending to some the ways my pedagogy contributes to the decolonization of classrooms where Indigenous literatures and theories are taught. With these efforts, it is my hope that non-Indigenous people can begin to better understand our specific relationships to story and consider our response-ability—our ability to

respond—to the stories told by and about Indigenous Peoples (Blaeser 1999; Hanson 2018; King 2003).[5]

As a literary studies scholar, I am specifically concerned with the distinct role literature has played in disconnecting Indigenous Peoples from their knowledge, communities, and selves. When it comes to literatures in English, the Indian simulation—the painful stereotype used to legitimate settler colonialism in North America—is a particularly insidious and harmful outcome. Thomas King (Cherokee) labels this difficult simulation the Dead Indian (*The Inconvenient Indian* 53).[6] Dead Indians manifest in damaging stereotypes as simulations conjured by the colonial imaginary's fear of demise and are, consequently, the least inconvenient of the Indians he details.[7] These simulations are not exclusive to North America and appear around the world. For example, simulations of Samoans cast them as overly sexual or characterize the Adi as incredibly violent (Oinam and Sadokpam 1). These stereotypes are less focused on the death of Indigenous Peoples, but they pursue the same troubling ends: delegitimating access to land. As King points out, "North America no longer *sees* Indians. What it sees are war bonnets, beaded shirts, fringes, deerskin dress, loincloths, headbands, feathered lances, tomahawks, moccasins, face paint, and bone chokers . . . bits of cultural debris—authentic and constructed" (53–54).[8] By sealing the Dead Indian into the past, settler colonialism

[5] See "Currents of Consideration," the first section of this dissertation's conclusion, for a detailed discussion of response-ability as a concept.
[6] As a non-Indigenous person, I recognize my distance from the pain of particular concepts and narratives examined and engaged with in the dissertation can enact further violence. Where possible, I have worked to acknowledge this distance and situate myself in relation to it so I might mitigate some of this unintended harm.
[7] King's Dead Indian is Gerald Vizenor's *indian*, an "occidental invention that became a bankable simulation; the word has no referent in tribal languages or culture" (*Fugitive Poses* 11). Both King and Vizenor draw from Jean Baudrillard's concepts of simulation and simulacrum.
[8] Unless otherwise stated, all emphasis in quotations is original.

seeks to legitimate its claim to land by conjuring a narrative of settler innocence predicated upon Indigenous absence.

To entrench the appearance of settler supremacy, Euroamerican literatures export problematic narratives about Dead Indians around the globe. European literatures historically and contemporarily represent Indigenous Peoples as the "savage" to their "civilized"—a necessary binary if claims of superiority and advancement are to be perceived as legitimate.[9] Romantic renderings of the Dead Indian idealize this dichotomy and maintain its position in the Euroamerican cultural imaginary. For example, the Dead Indian persists in best-selling German novelist Karl May's character Winnetou (*Winnetou I-III* 1893) and contemporary German writer Kerstin Groeper's novels *Die Feder folgt dem Wind—Eine weiße Frau bei den Sioux* (*The Spring Follows the Wind—A White Woman Among the Sioux* 2010), and *Wie ein Funke im Feuer* (*Like a Spark in the Fire* 2012). In the United Kingdom, J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan and Wendy* (1911) introduces readers to Tiger Lily and Lynne Reid Banks conjures Little Bear as the titular character from *The Indian in the Cupboard* (1980). Additionally, the Dead Indian features in the Franco-Belgian comic book series *Yakari* that began in 1973 and continues today.

These troubling simulations also appear in canonical works of Canadian and American literature. For example: James Fenimore Cooper's characters' Chingachgook and Uncas from the *Leather Stocking Tales* (*The Pioneers* 1823; *The Last of the Mohicans* 1826; *The Prairie* 1827; *The Pathfinder* 1840; *The Deerslayer* 1841), Herman Melville's character Queequeg (*Moby Dick* 1851), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's character Hiawatha (*The Song of Hiawatha* 1855), Mark

[9] In *Savage Anxieties: The Invention of Western Civilization* (2012), Robert A. Williams Jr. (Lumbee) considers how the concept of the savage underpins Western civilization. Specifically, Williams traces the concept from its presence in ancient Greece and Rome (where it was used to define who was a citizen and who was the citizen's other), to Christianity, the Enlightenment period, and to the processes by which colonization and exploration were legitimized.

Twain's character Injun Joe (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* 1876), Asa Earl Carter's character Forrest "Little Tree" Carter (*The Education of Little Tree* 1976), and Larry McMurtry's character Blue Duck (*Lonesome Dove* 1985). The Dead Indian also serves an ornamental function in the background of Duncan Campbell Scott's short story "Expiation" from *The Witching of Elspie* (1923), Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* (1935), the children's books of Paul Goble (e.g., *The Girl Who Loved Horses* 1978), Charles de Lint's *Moonheart* (1984), and Kathleen Winter's *Annabel* (2010). As is evident from these brief (and by no means comprehensive) lists, the Dead Indian stereotype in literature contributes to the settler project by presenting European and settler readers (in particular) with representations that seek to affirm the legitimacy of colonialism, of their own disturbing realities, soothing them with imperialist nostalgia (Rosaldo 107–08).

The presence of the Dead Indian in literature has real world consequences. This literary presence perpetuates dangerous stories and stereotypes that directly impact Live Indians—all Indigenous Peoples living in North America today—and Legal Indians—those Live Indians who are *Status* or *recognized*, respectively, having been documented as Indian through government recognition (King 68–69).[10] Among these consequences is the reality that contemporary Indigenous Peoples do not reflect the Dead Indian signifiers and therefore are not conceived as "authentically" Indigenous by the non-Indigenous population (and thus remain inconvenient through this violent act of dismissal). Further, because of the threat they pose to settler futurity,

[10] King importantly points out that Legal Indians are not a clean-cut category for a long list of reasons pertaining to errors in census data and lack of participation in systems of recognition (68). He estimates that about forty percent of Live Indians in North America are Legal Indians (68), a significant overlap but one that also indicates the glaring number of Live Indians who because of the conditions of recognition remain without status. Recognition systems are not isolated to North America. For example, for the Indigenous Peoples living within what is currently India, a comparable recognition process takes place regarding who has Scheduled Tribe status and who does not. Only those who are part of a recognized tribe have access to an affirmative action system that ensures representation in politics, employment, and education, by way of reserved seats.

settler colonialism surveils Live Indians—through the Indian Act,[11] Pass Systems documents,[12] and Certificates of Indian Status—and confines them to colonial spaces: reserves/reservations,[13] settler families (as with the Sixties Scoop and Millennium Scoop),[14] boarding/residential schools,[15] and prisons.[16] Ensuring that Indigenous Peoples disappear through assimilation into the settler way of being and removal from traditional lands "solves" the "Indian Problem." The Dead Indian simulation, then, intentionally contributes to the violent separation of Indigenous Peoples from their traditional knowledge systems and from one another—a separation that underscores the mutually constitutive relationship between literature and life.

Specifically, the relationship between Dead, Legal, and Live Indians results in conflict within Indigenous communities. An example of this conflict appears in the differences, and resultant tensions, between Hereditary Chiefs and Elected Band Council Chiefs within Indigenous nations. For example, when Coastal GasLink (CGL) proposed a 670km pipeline that would transport fracked natural gas from Dawson Creek to Kitimat in northern British Columbia,

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[11] The Indian Act had specific implications regarding Canadian citizenship which until 1960 was only achievable through enfranchised assimilation—the giving up of differentiated citizenship (Indian Status). In this way, Indigenous Peoples "had to become 'civilized' before they could take on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, including the franchise and the ability to own property" (Blackburn 67). Such enfranchisement, as James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw and Cheyenne) writes, "inverts rather that respects the constitutional relationship" (415). This inversion comes through a stripping of the rights that make possible any nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and settler peoples.

[12] The Pass System was a means of segregating, surveilling, and controlling the movement of Indigenous Peoples by requiring that anyone leaving the reserve acquires a pass from an Indian Agent.

[13] In Canada, the legal term is "reserve"; in the US, it is "reservation." In Canada, Indigenous children were taken from their families and placed in "Indian Residential Schools." In the US, these are referred to as "American Indian Boarding Schools" and occasionally "American Indian Residential Schools."

[14] The "Sixties Scoop" refers to a series of decades that, beginning in the 1960s, saw the removal of Indigenous children from their families and the adoption of those children into primarily non-Indigenous, middle-class families in both Canada, the US, and beyond. The "Millennium Scoop" recognizes that this process continues to happen today in Canada.

[15] The residential school system "aimed to detach students from their societies" (Markland 126), by "killing the Indian in the child" (Young 65).

[16] The relationship between the Sixties Scoop, residential school systems, and incarceration is receiving steadily greater attention. It has been argued that the Canadian prison system is an extension of not only the Indian Residential School system, but the child welfare system as well (Chartrand; Finaly; MacDonald; "'Child Welfare to Prison Pipeline'"). Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately represented in Canadian prisons, with Indigenous men and woman making up thirty percent of the federal prison population ("'Child Welfare to Prison Pipeline'").

Wet'suwet'en nation Hereditary Chiefs did not give their consent to the project,[17] while the Elected Band Council and Chief did.[18] At the time of writing, the Canadian government still has not received free, prior, and informed consent from the Hereditary Chiefs. Protests by land defenders and allies are ongoing despite the pipeline being over seventy percent complete.[19] In August 2022, Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs travelled from British Columbia to Ontario for meetings with the Haudenosaunee, Gidimt'en Hereditary Chiefs, Kahnawà:ke leaders, and Hollow Water First Nation members. The purpose of the tour was to cultivate solidarity and build alliances between nations facing challenges similar to that of the Wet'suwet'en.[20] The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs' actions highlight the importance of connections between Indigenous nations when it comes to refuting the harmful assumptions, stereotypes, and fractures perpetuated by the settler project (and its literatures).

My method of reading resurgence makes connections in a similar way by linking seemingly disconnected Indigenous nations to reveal worlds based in shared modes of resistance. These connections, both on and off the page, are just one example of what Simpson calls

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[17] Hereditary Chiefs differ from Elected Band Councils (which also have an elected Chief): Hereditary Chief titles are passed down through generations, pre-dating colonization, and are responsible for overseeing the territory's welfare. The Hereditary Chiefs hold rights and title over their ancestral lands, recognition that was won in Canada's Supreme Court through a case involving the Wet'suwet'en and Gitxsan nations (Delgamuukw v. British Columbia, 1997).

[18] Band Council members and their Chief are elected by status members of their communities and are responsible for reserve lands and infrastructure, a process set up under section 74 of the Indian Act. It is no secret that the Indian Act is responsible for imposing an electoral system on Indigenous nations as a means by which the settler state sought (and seeks) to destroy the hereditary system and separate Indigenous Peoples from their lands.

[19] Land defenders have filed a formal submission to the UN Human Rights Council arguing that Canada is violating key articles from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and requesting a field visit from relevant UN bodies (Woodside).

[20] For example: (i) the 1492 Land Back Lane occupation of unceded Haudenosaunee territory near Caledonia, Ontario, where Foxgate Developments continues to attempt the building of a subdivision without consent from Haudenosaunee hereditary leadership. At the time of writing, 1492 Land Back Lane remains occupied, despite elected council leadership giving consent to the project and the Supreme Court of Ontario granting an injunction barring occupation of the land. (ii) Camp Morningstar on the east side of Lake Winnipeg was erected in response to the proposal of a silica sand mine that would be built on Hollow Water First Nation territory. Canadian Premium Sands received consent from elected council leadership, but many members of the nation do not consent to the decision and fear for the health of the air, water, and wildlife.

Indigenous place-based internationalism (*As We Have Always Done* 24): a concept imparted through the story of the first researcher and intellectual, Nanabush, who walked around the world twice after it was created in order to understand "their place in it, our place in it, to create face-to-face relationships with other nations and beings because Nanabush understood that the Nishnaabeg, that we all, are linked to all of creation in a global community" (57).[21] Indigenous internationalism recognizes the mycelial network in which every being on earth is enmeshed, privileging a perspective that is always already comparative and based on "consent, reciprocity, respect, and empathy" (*As We Have Always Done* 61). Travelling across the country, Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs connected with decolonial pockets of thinking outside their familiar contexts and built alliances dedicated to Indigenous resurgence. In forming literary constellations of coresistance, the diverse novels compared in this project work toward similar ends, demonstrating Indigenous continuance and connection across colonial borders and boundaries. In my next section, I locate my dissertation's contribution—a comparative approach to reading resurgence—within relevant scholarship.

Situating this Study

The way literary study reinforces the colonial project is a key tension I have struggled with throughout my process of research and writing. Of particular concern is the attention and importance afforded to Eurowestern methodologies and theories—owing to literary studies'

[21] I recognize that there is a physicality to the "place-based" element of Indigenous place-based internationalism that cannot be reproduced in this dissertation—that is, the literal being on the land that Simpson invokes. My nation-specific, contextualized readings of the novels in this dissertation work to situate each knowledge system within place but this by no means replicates a "place-based" approach. As Simpson points out, taking story and learning out of the land is to take those stories and their lessons out of context, and context is essential for meaning making within Indigenous knowledge systems (Mishra 112). Consequently, when I invoke Indigenous internationalism, I do so with awareness that my use of the term is not "place-based" as Simpson intends it.

colonial roots—that have excluded and delegitimated Indigenous methodologies, theories, and stories from the wider discipline of literary studies. There is a long history in academic research, and in which I am implicated as a researcher, that seeks to legitimate Indigenous ways of knowing through connections and parallels with Eurowestern knowledges (Gaudry 115). This kind of knowledge translation reifies the colonial interpretation of Indigenous knowledges as somehow illegitimate and indefensible on their own, and in need of affirmation (Gaudry 115). In judging Indigenous worldviews by dominant Euroamerican cultural standards, the colonial power works to silence those knowledges by perpetuating the myth that they are somehow obsolete (Gaudry 115). Given these considerations, my method and analysis are dedicated to engaging appropriate tools that work against this colonial history and its methodological discrimination, by taking Indigenous theoretical interventions to be the interventions that they are (Kovach 13). Although it is my hope that Indigenous methodologies become more widely accepted in both literary studies and wider fields, in centring these methods I also work to maintain a respectful distance which acknowledges that non-Indigenous scholars, such as myself, "can engage with Indigenous analytics but not produce them" (Moreton-Robinson 4).

As a settler scholar studying at a Canadian university, I am necessarily implicated in the long historical relationship between the imperial project, knowledge extraction, and research. One of the ways I work against this grain is through an attentiveness to citation politics and theoretical traditions. In so doing, I take seriously Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (Māori) assertion that "language and the citing of texts are often the clearest markers of the theoretical traditions of a writer" (15). The voices I engage with throughout this dissertation are those of Indigenous and settler scholars working ethically—that is, scholars who centre and sustain Indigenous knowledges—within Indigenous (literary) studies today. Although I work to acknowledge the

limitations most obvious to me here and throughout this work, there are undoubtedly ways in which my understanding and knowledge fall short.

In the coming sections, I situate my dissertation's contribution. I begin broadly by considering the importance of comparative methods within the wider field of literary studies. Then, I briefly turn to the field of Indigenous studies, which has itself been concerned with the value of nation-specific and multinational comparative approaches when analyzing resurgence. Finally, I group relevant critical works within two established currents of debate: Indigenous literary nationalism and global Indigenous literary studies. The former takes a more inward facing approach by centring nation-specific methods of reading, analysis, and interpretation, while the latter engages in a more outward facing mode of critique by comparing between and across diverse Indigenous national contexts.

Comparative and World Literature

This project illuminates the essential value of comparative and cross-cultural frameworks that do not situate themselves specifically within comparative or world literatures. The interdisciplinary field of comparative literature has a long Eurocentric history with roots in the imperial nineteenth-century and ultimately remains irreconcilable with the aims of this dissertation's field.[22] Gayatri Spivak attempts to reconcile some of this tension in *Death of a Discipline* (2003) when she famously calls for a new comparative literature that does not listen to the demands of the market.[23] David Damrosch's *What is World Literature?* (2003) seems to offer a response, but

[22] This history can be extended by centuries if comparative literature is to be embedded in philology and sinology.
[23] The contemporary, market-driven globalized world has brought complications to comparative literature's time-consuming rigor, troubling a field that at the turn of the twenty-first century was deemed in need of reinvention and redefinition not only by Spivak (Saussy).

one that exacerbates Spivak's concerns. As a field, this new world literature reanimates the nineteenth-century *weltliteratur* of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, situating itself as a place where works of literature "take on new life" through reading in translation and new cultural contexts (Damrosch 24). A marked shift from the nationalism of comparative literature, perhaps, but a shift that ultimately reproduces the power dynamics of the Western canon while offering readings that supplant those of postcolonialism.[24] As Amir Mufti notes, "world literature had its origins in the structures of colonial power and in particular the revolution in knowledge practices and humanistic culture more broadly initiated by Orientalist philology in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which developed in varying degrees of proximity to the colonial process" (19). For Mufti, "a genealogy of world literature leads to Orientalism," and as such to a fundamental incompatibility with Indigenous literary studies (20). Indeed, comparative and world literature's methods arise from greatly differing political and geographical localities that remain incommensurable with my project.

For my purposes, comparative and world literature underscore the value of comparison but they ultimately rely too closely on theoretical traditions that, if applied to Indigenous texts, would result in moves akin to colonization. As Kimberley Blaeser (Anishinaabe) has argued, the use of established literary modes, dynamics, or styles in the interpretation of Indigenous texts are colonial in nature as "authority emanating from the mainstream critical center" is used to validate "marginalized native texts" (70). Rather than situating this project within these fields, which would replace or occlude existing Indigenous theory and traditions, I engage the critical voices of Indigenous scholars in the construction of my comparative method for reading resurgence.

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[24] For further reading on the backlash against world literature, see Eric Hayot's *On Literary Worlds* (2012), Emily Apter's *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2013) and *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*' special issue on "World Literature: Perspectives and Debates" (2014).

As this introduction clarifies below, the nascent subfield of global Indigenous literary studies and its methods remain importantly distinct from comparative and world literary traditions where "Great Book from Tradition A is introduced to Great Book from Tradition B so that they can exchange vital statistics, fashion tips, and recipes under the watchful eye of the Objective Scholar" (Allen, *Trans-Indigenous* xv). The Venn diagram of world literature, comparative literature, and global Indigenous literary studies, does, even among so much difference, illuminate an admirable overlap in the ability to think cross culturally. This overlap underscores the sustained value of comparison for literary studies and, I argue, for Indigenous literary studies as well. This dissertation takes seriously Allen's advice:

> . . . projects—less foreordained, less forcibly balanced—are more intellectually stimulating, more aesthetically adventuresome, more politically pressing. Scholarship outside established formulas embraces difficulty and assumes risk, but these projects will be more productive within an academic field that increasingly defines itself as sovereign from the obsessions of orthodox studies of literatures in English. (*Trans-Indigenous* xv)

I embrace the messiness of attempting a new method for global Indigenous literary study in the spirit of Allen's declaration.

As the coming sections clarify, Indigenous studies, and Indigenous literary studies more specifically, have done a great deal of work to address the essential presence of resurgence in building Indigenous worlds. Simpson's theorization of resurgence is fairly new, but a longer history of critical work focusing on how Indigenous Peoples have fought to live as they have always done has been in existence for several decades. Only in the last ten to fifteen years, however, have comparative approaches begun to gain greater momentum. In the next section, I look to the field of Indigenous studies to consider relevant perspectives on the importance of nation-specific and multinational comparative approaches when it comes to reading resurgence.

Indigenous Studies

Indigenous studies has always been interested in resurgence and as such has centred nation-specific knowledges. More recently, the field has begun looking outward to comparative connections between Indigenous nations and what those connections can tell scholars about broader Indigenous worlds. These connections intensify the need for robust methods of comparison. Some of the most impactful contributions have come from scholars who, as the next section explains in more detail, have situated themselves as tribal nationalists. Here I am thinking of Robert Allen Warrior's (Osage) edited collection, *The World of Indigenous North America* (2014) and Jace Weaver's (Cherokee) *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World 1000-1927* (2014). Warrior's collection, while situated here within Indigenous studies, is highly interdisciplinary and pulls from fields such as gender studies, geography, literature, archaeology, and law (to name a few) as it investigates questions around who defines Indigeneity and how, within and beyond North America. Weaver's work speaks back to Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) by reimagining the ocean as a contact zone not just for Black and white people, but for the Indigenous Peoples who were enslaved and shipped across the Atlantic, who became pirates and enterprising traders.

Scholars such as Shari M. Huhndorf, Mita Banerjee, and Tanya Talaga (Ojibwe) also compare diverse points of connection between Indigenous nations. Huhndorf situates *Mapping the Americas: Transnational Politics of Contemporary Native Culture* (2010) as an alternative to nationalist criticism within Native American studies that continually under-represents women writers and scholars. *Mapping the Americas* compares sites of cultural struggle and resistance in Indigenous literatures and visual arts from a variety of Native American nations to interrogate

the limitations of "postnational" American studies. Searching for similar global connections are Banerjee's collection *Comparative Indigenous Studies* (2016) and Talaga's *All Our Relations: Finding the Path Forward* (2018). Banerjee calls for the timely comparative turn in Indigenous studies, in another interdisciplinary collection that links Indigenous communities from North America, Aotearoa, Australia, and Asia to dispel the myth of Indigenous disappearance (6). Differently, Talaga's work sheds light on the importance of speaking about youth suicide in Indigenous communities as a *global* humanitarian crisis. To do so, she focuses on the presence of youth suicide—and how it might be healed—in communities from Northern Ontario, Nunavut, the US, Australia, Norway, and Brazil. Taken together, Warrior's, Weaver's, Huhndorf's, Banerjee's, and Talaga's works underscore the value in comparative approaches to diverse Indigenous contexts when thinking about resurgence—an effort to which my project also contributes. Next, I group relevant critical works within the first of two established streams of debate that are concerned with methods of comparison: Indigenous literary nationalism—a stream with a nation-specific, inward facing approach to methods of interpretation.

Indigenous Literary Nationalism

Indigenous literary nationalism is an approach to Indigenous literary study that argues for the value of nation-specific criticism in the analysis of Indigenous literary texts. Specifically, Indigenous literary nationalism focuses on resurgence in literature as it pertains to how Indigenous Peoples retain their intellectual sovereignty.[25] As a term, sovereignty does the important work of highlighting the complex history of Indigenous self-determination and resistance to settler colonialism. Indigenous Peoples bolster their sovereignty by maintaining

[25] I follow Weaver's theorization of sovereignty as a form of self-determination that has always already been central to Indigenous ways of life (Weaver et al. 6).

control of, and connection with, their land-based knowledges and language(s), their individual and collective bodies. By centring Indigenous knowledge systems and contributing to the theorization of Indigenous literary history, Indigenous literary nationalism works to reconnect Indigenous scholars and people with traditional knowledges and methods.

Of the many important contributions to this subfield, Weaver, Warrior, and Craig Womack's (Muskogee/Cherokee) *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (2006) continues to stand out. This book coalesces their concerns regarding tribally specific criticism and includes a "Foreword" written by Simon Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo). Their book affirms Indigenous methodologies, clarifies that Indigenous literary nationalism sees Native American literatures as "separate and distinct" from other national literatures (American included), and is dedicated to supporting and serving the interests and identities of Native nations with regard to their own separate sovereignties (Weaver et al. 15). In this way, literary nationalism operates with "a pluralist separatism . . . splitting the earth, not dividing up turf" (Weaver et al. 74). Individually, Weaver, Womack, and Warrior have already contributed to this conversation: with *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (1995), Warrior provides a comparative interpretation of Vine Deloria Jr.'s (Standing Rock Sioux) and John Joseph Mathews's (Osage) contributions to American Indian intellectualism, arguing for the importance of using Native traditions when interpreting Indigenous texts; Weaver, with *That The People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community* (1997), clarifies the value of commitment to community for Indigenous Peoples, tracing this thread through Native American literature from 1768 to the 1990s; and Womack's *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (2000) centres issues of intellectual sovereignty and what could be gained by studying a specific Native American intellectual tradition (here, Creek). The same year

American Indian Literary Nationalism appeared, so too did Daniel Heath Justice's *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History* (2006). In the book, Justice specifically situates himself as contributing to Indigenous literary nationalism. More broadly, he inquires into how nationhood, removal, and regeneration are expressed within the Cherokee literary tradition.

Weaver, Womack, Warrior, and Justice serve as touchstones within Indigenous literary nationalism, but, importantly, women scholars also shape this stream of criticism. Mishuana Goeman's (Seneca) *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (2013) re-appropriates the settler technology of cartography, and instead uses Native women's poetry and prose as maps. These literary maps allow for a reimagining of settler geography that prioritizes decolonization and privileges Native knowledges. Jeannette Armstrong's (Okanagan) collection *Looking at the Words of Our People: An Anthology of First Nation Literary Criticism* (1993), which appeared prior to Warrior's *Tribal Secrets*, gathers the voices of Indigenous scholars from across North America to argue for a different understanding of how Indigenous cultures produce literatures (written in English) whose unique characteristics require nation-specific approaches. It is in this collection that Blaeser's influential essay "Native Literature Seeking a Critical Center" first appeared, as well as Janice Acoose's (Cree/Saulteaux) "Post-Halfbreed: Indigenous Writers as Authors of their Own Realities." Armstrong's, Blaeser's, and Acoose's contributions do not end here but continue well into the 2000s and the contemporary moment.[26] A key monograph within this nationalist stream is Penelope Myrtle Kelsey's (Seneca) *Tribal Theory in Native American Literature: Dakota and Haudenosaunee Writing and Indigenous Worldviews* (2008). In this seminal text, Kelsey builds a theoretical framework out of cultural concepts embodied in

[26] See also: Armstrong's "Land Speaking" (1998), Blaeser's "'A Cosmology of Nibi'" (2020), "Wild Rice Rights" (2013) and Acoose's "Honouring Ni'Wahkomakanak" (2008).

the Dakota language, providing an essential perspective on how a non-Dakota scholar can approach such work with sensitivity and respect.

The nation-specific methodologies centred within Indigenous literary nationalism resist hegemonic understandings of settler nationhood that are deeply rooted in colonial logics. The works detailed in the coming section on Indigenous literary criticism's global turn complement this nation-based criticism. It is important to note here that I do not establish this global turn in binary opposition to nationalism but as another part (relevant to this dissertation) of a larger united critical whole. Entrenching a binary here would risk furthering what Weaver has rightly described as the "hierarchical distinction between 'pure' and 'impure' Native expression" (35). Justice also noted the complementary potential of these two currents in creating new avenues for debate and new methods that do not (always) invoke identity politics ("Currents of Trans/National Criticism" 338). As Womack's *Art as Performance, Story as Criticism* (2009) reminds readers, tribal sovereignty is processual and open-ended: it involves constant negotiations between inside and outside (86–87). Therefore, scholars must see nationalism—and literary nationalism—as "central to any mature understanding of globalism and the fluidity of borders" (Womack 88). For me, what is most important is that these critical streams share a commitment to Indigenous resurgence and cultural specificity. In the next, and final, section of the literature review, I turn to the stream most relevant to my project and which sees the value in nation-specific readings that take a more outward facing, comparative approach: global Indigenous literary studies.

Global Indigenous Literary Studies

Global Indigenous literary study unites seemingly disparate Indigenous texts and contexts while simultaneously carrying forward the commitment to nation-specific knowledges present in Indigenous literary nationalism. Consequently, it is with global Indigenous literary studies that I most closely align my work. Although this stream of criticism still shares many of the concerns of literary nationalism, it privileges a comparative approach to thinking about resurgence through a more outward facing engagement between and across Indigenous nations from within and beyond North America. In this way, global Indigenous literary studies emphasizes how resurgence is manifested itself in literature and occurs within communities and nations around the world.

Initially, it may seem that literary nationalism's opposing stream is the transnational. But, as Warrior noted in 2009, many Indigenous scholars have avoided engaging in discourse on the transnational (119). Although Warrior sees this avoidance as a preference for national approaches to Indigenous literatures, he also recognizes that transnationality has potential, especially as Indigenous scholars begin reaching "more and more toward a sense of our field that encompasses not just North America, but the Indigenous world more broadly" (126). Allen engaged—and reframed—the potential of such an approach in his 2012 article for a Special Forum at the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*: "Trans*national* Native American Studies? Why Not Studies That Are Trans-*Indigenous*?" In this piece, Allen troubles the Special Forum's invitation to consider the potential of a Transnational Native American Studies:

> . . . we ought to ask whether a "transnational Native American Studies" will be equipped, conceptually and practically, to illuminate the multiple ways in which historical and contemporary Indigenous works of art and literature possess not only the "real lives" of their Indigenous making and first use but also "afterlives" that are distinctly (though not exclusively) Indigenous. We ought to ask whether the scholarly construct of the "transnational," in its orthodox conceptions and in its typical attachments to dominant

> formations, such as the (US-based) discipline of American Studies, necessarily implies both a binary opposition and a vertical hierarchy of the Indigenous (always) tethered to (and positioned below) the settler-invader. ("A Transnational Native American Studies?")

By questioning the construct of the transnational, particularly its affiliation with American Studies, Allen clarifies the vertical and binary complications of the Forum's proposal, countering it with what he calls the *trans-Indigenous*. For Allen, the trans-Indigenous is not only a method but a response to the "violent histories and destructive legacies of settler colonialisms" that lead scholars in Native American and Indigenous studies to "question whether the 'nation' in 'transnational' can ever mean other than the settler nation-state" ("A Transnational Native American Studies?").

In *Trans-indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies* (2012), Allen fully theorizes the trans-Indigenous toward creating a new method for comparative Indigenous literary study gone global. It is here that Allen observes "[t]wo large, related projects driv[ing] the critical study of contemporary Indigenous literatures written (primarily) in English around the globe. These can be named by broad terms: on the one hand, *recovery*, on the other, *interpretation*" (xv). Allen's analysis thereby recovers and interprets a variety of texts and contexts (from Oceania, North America, and Hawai'i) through what he calls *focused juxtapositions*. Anticipating the pitfalls of comparative recovery and interpretation, Allen is clear about the different approach the trans-Indigenous brings (and upon which I elaborate further in the next section). Allen urges scholars to disregard simple similarity and difference, to embrace moving across contexts to see what those crossings communicate and, for my purposes, how they represent resurgence (Aikau et al. 158). I engage the trans-Indigenous as a key part of my method for this dissertation, and, in so doing, contribute to this burgeoning stream of criticism that observes resurgence as another means of bringing distant (con)texts together.

Alice Te Punga Somerville (Māori) and McGlennen have simultaneously pushed this tide of global Indigenous literary study. With her work *Once Were Pacific: Māori Connections with Oceania* (2012), Te Punga Somerville unsettles assumptions of difference and disconnection between Māori and Oceania Peoples, and underscores the importance of re-remembering that "certainly Māori once were Pacific" (xvi). McGlennen's *Creative Alliances: The Transnational Designs of Indigenous Women's Poetry* (2014) observes the possible limitations of literary nationalism because of what she calls the "*dislocations* experienced and expressed by Indigenous women poets" (4). McGlennen's readings, then, focus on what unites people across "colonial tribal, and hemispheric divides" (183), and I dialogue with her method more directly in the next section.

In this literature review, I gathered voices from Indigenous studies, Indigenous literary nationalism, and global Indigenous literary studies to locate my dissertation. I have observed resurgence in this literature review in the ways Indigenous scholars bring Indigenous teachings, concerns, and solutions into literary studies through critical interventions that themselves focus on how Indigenous literatures already enact resurgence. Not only does Indigenous literary study examine how Indigenous literature represents resurgence, but it enacts Indigenous internationalism by connecting scholars from around the world. These works and mine share a common dedication to the necessity of locating Indigenous voices and contexts at the critical centre of interpretation and understanding while recognizing that these contexts are not isolated. Ultimately, however, no one has yet done what this dissertation does: develop a method for reading resurgence across constellations of Indigenous novels from around the world. My next section on methodology clarifies this statement and responds to the urgent need for more comparative analysis within global Indigenous literary studies.

Methodology

In this section, I turn to my methodology and in so doing shift to a more direct focus on the practices of resurgence that reconnect Indigenous Peoples "with homelands, cultures, and communities" (Corntassel 97). As McGlennen writes, rather than continuing to focus on what separates, it is essential to focus on "what brings people together across colonial, tribal, and hemispheric divides" (183). Articulating my method as a new means of reading resurgence, I thereby narrow my contribution by offering one means by which literary scholars can read trans-Indigenously across diverse Indigenous literatures. I build my method outward in three parts by: (i) detailing its structure through literary constellations of coresistance, (ii) clarifying how reading trans-Indigenously allows for comparison between diverse (con)texts, and (iii) accounting for some of my method's limitations. I aim for this method to remain open and attentive to the complex Indigenous worldviews it engages and for it to remain committed to the processual nature of literary study that asks for further engagement by scholars as interested in these conversations as I am.

Literary Constellations of Coresistance

My method for comparatively reading representations of resurgence comes in part through a broadening of what Simpson, through Jarrett Martineau (nēhiyaw and Dene Suline), calls "constellations of coresistance" (*As We Have Always Done* 9).[27] As Simpson reminds us, when resistance is "defined solely as large-scale political mobilization, we miss much of what has kept

[27] Citing Jarrett Martineau's dissertation "Creative Combat: Art, Resurgence, and Decolonization" (2015) as well as her conversations with him as source and inspiration for her thinking on constellations, Simpson mobilizes Nishnaabeg thought to detail the promise of constellatory thinking.

[Indigenous] language, cultures, and systems of governance alive" (*Dancing* 16). Here, Simpson refers to the actions of Indigenous Peoples to occupy and use their lands as they have always done, making reinvestment in their ways of being a form of resistance in itself (16).[28] When communities connect in these efforts—much like the literary communities that the clustered novels in this dissertation form—they create "constellations of coresistance" (*As We Have Always Done* 9). What I am calling *literary* constellations of coresistance, then, centre the novel's potential as a means by which Indigenous writers can create doorways into other worlds (*As We Have Always Done* 212). Clustering these diverse Indigenous novels and their contexts is just one way to interpret what colonialism and imperialism disconnected, to underscore Indigenous internationalism, and to glimpse the Indigenous futures already being created in the world today.

Each of the constellations that form my chapters tells a particular story about how representations of everyday acts of resurgence—storytelling, language, and connection to land—unify what settler colonialism has sought to keep separate. Taken together, these three constellations demonstrate how Indigenous resurgences between and among diverse Indigenous communities deny settler futurity. As Simpson writes, "[c]onstellations in relationship with other constellations form flight paths out of settler colonial realities into Indigeneity. They become doorways out of the enclosure of settler colonialism and into Indigenous worlds" (*As We Have Always Done* 214). Placing these constellations in conversation with one another in my

[28] By focusing on resurgence, my method rejects the recentring of colonialism that is too often a by-product of conversations about resistance. As Laura Jean Beard notes, resistance can too often emphasize "reacting to the non-Indigenous world, putting the priority or the power back on the settler colonial side" (12). Resurgence, as Simpson imagines it, however, is not a reaction; it is the means by which Indigenous Peoples continue to live as they have always done.

conclusion, I underscore the importance of relationships between Indigenous nations. After all, constellations cannot exist outside the context of relationships (*As We Have Always Done* 215).

Reading Trans-Indigenously

To read my individual constellations, I turn to Allen's work on the trans-Indigenous as a method for global comparative Indigenous literary study. Analogous to terms like *trans*lation, *trans*form, and *trans*national, *trans*-Indigenous may better "bear the complex, contingent asymmetry and the potential risks of unequal encounters borne by the preposition *across*" (*Trans-Indigenous* xiv).[29] This approach means privileging "focused *juxtapositions*" of distinct Indigenous texts without leaving behind essential nation-specific contexts (*Trans-Indigenous* xviii). Allen's method therefore asserts the possibility of comparisons across diverse contexts while preserving the specificity of the comparison's individual parts; it experiments with the possibility of a worldwide Indigenous literary study by turning away from stark comparative moves.

I mobilize Allen's method as a key part of my own for its specific focus on reading across multiple Indigenous contexts while simultaneously preserving nation-specific differences. In so doing, I read depictions of resurgence trans-Indigenously across literary constellations of coresistance. As Allen writes, the trans-Indigenous "locates itself firmly in the specificity of the Indigenous local while remaining always cognizant of the complexity of the relevant Indigenous global" (*Trans-Indigenous* xix). For my purposes, trans more readily signals continuity across

[29] Bernard Perley (Maliseet) also recognizes the potential of the prefix trans with his use of the descriptor *translocal*. Perley theorizes the translocal as a "critical stance of Indigenous emancipatory praxis" and form of survivance (978). The translocal "invoke[s] multiple cartographic conceptualizations and the various boundaries they represent . . . *Translocal* also describes the conditions from which populations invoke their experiential and ideational cosmogonies as a survival strategy while living in a transformed alien landscape" (978).

diverse contexts, rather than the hard lines drawn by blunt comparison, allowing for a focus on resurgence across novels and literary constellations of coresistance. Importantly, the trans-Indigenous also illuminates what would be missed if comparison were absent; it builds connections between and across diverse Indigenous groups through one of the ways they maintain their presence: the novel. Ultimately, my method's goal is to present a means for thinking about and across the global multiplicity of Indigenous resurgence in the novel.

I conceive of the forming of these constellations and the dialogues that emerge within them as a kind of alliance building inspired by McGlennen's work in *Creative Alliances.* For McGlennen, alliance building "facilitates pushback against settler-colonial boundaries, resistance to imposed binaries and identities, and a renewed creativity" (200). Indirectly dialoguing with and building on Simpson's coresistance, McGlennen acknowledges that coalition is necessarily "reminiscent of a kind of nation building, toward a nation both within and beyond one's own tribe" (200). Through the method I have detailed here, I respond to McGlennen's call for contributions from scholars interested in broadening Native American literary criticism by embracing more "flexible and inclusive" frameworks (37). My method builds alliances through literary constellations of coresistance that, when read trans-Indigenously, can offer a new understanding of how the Indigenous novel represents resurgence.

Reading resurgence, as it is used here, means reading trans-Indigenously across literary constellations of coresistance that link diverse Indigenous (con)texts. Although this method can look many ways on the page, in this dissertation I move across each text twice, gathering and carrying forward what I can see differently—what story they tell—when I juxtapose diverse but arguably related novels. A consistent focus on representation of acts of resurgence, specifically storytelling, language use, and relationship with land link these distinctive interpretive

movements. In the next section, I shift from detailing my method to acknowledging some of its core limitations.

Methodological Limitations

This dissertation's method groups a diverse array of Indigenous novels that require reading from contexts distant in both time and space from my own and from one another, presenting this project, and others like it, with particular limitations and concerns. The first limitation is the potential elision that may occur to the context-specific importance of land (and land-based knowledges) for distinct Indigenous nations and their worldviews in a project of such breadth. My work seeks to resist such an elision in a number of ways: first, through its engagement with Allen's trans-Indigenous method which makes nation-specific contextualization a necessity for comparison. After all, trans-Indigenous scholarship must be wary of "global comparative frameworks for Indigenous studies . . . when there is so much work still to be done within specific, distinct traditions and communities" (Allen, *Trans-Indigenous* xiii). Dialogue between texts cannot make a meaningful contribution without centring Indigenous worldviews that impart specific relationships with place. As such, I situate each novel within its relevant context to foreground the importance of connection to land.

The second means of mitigating the concerns emerging from distant observation is through a rejection of the settler assumption that connection to land is entirely external to the body and therefore totally elided when I place diverse contexts in conversation. In the following passage from the "Prologue" for *There There* (2018), Tommy Orange (Cheyenne and Arapaho) speaks against the assumption that living in the city, for example, somehow detaches the "Urban Indian" from land:

> We've been moving for a long time, but the land moves with you like memory. An Urban Indian belongs to the city, and cities belong to the earth. Everything here is formed in relation to every other living and nonliving thing from the earth. All our relations. The process that brings anything to its current form—chemical, synthetic, technological, or otherwise—doesn't make the product not a product of the living earth. Buildings, freeways, cars—are these not of the earth? . . . Were we at one time not something else entirely, Homo sapiens, single-celled organisms, space dust, unidentifiable pre-band quantum theory? Cities form the same way as galaxies . . . reservations aren't traditional, but nothing is original, everything comes from something that came before, which was once nothing. Everything is new and doomed . . . Being Indian has never been about returning to land. The land is everywhere or nowhere. (11)

Orange critiques the assumption that land's significance, meaning, and teachings can ever be completely left behind, for such assumptions seek to play into the colonial project's goal of total erasure. Orange also reminds readers that Indigenous Peoples "have been moving for a long time" and that the "land moves with you." Singularly grounding Indigenous Peoples to specific lands can perpetuate violent hierarchical structures that qualify certain Indigenous Peoples as more "authentically" Indigenous because of their connection to what non-Indigenous people might imagine kinship with land to mean. As Simpson says, "urban Indigenous communities are often sites of tremendous opportunity and action" (*As We Have Always Done* 195). Connection to land takes myriad shapes that can and do shift with the needs of a particular peoples, communities, and nations.

A third concern related to reading from a distance is acknowledging my position and limitations as a settler scholar. As an outsider, I work to defy recruitment of my gaze as that of yet another "neutral," "objective" observer. This work requires recognition of my own "invisible aporia": those unresolvable internal contradictions that lurk, perhaps most distinctively, within the work of those in positions of privilege and power (Wakeham 37). Consequently, two political commitments guide my research. First, that decolonization is not and cannot appear as a hollow metaphor. As Eve Tuck (Unangax̂) and K. Wayne Yang write, the adoption of such

decolonization discourse results in its immediate domestication under "settler moves to innocence": the reconciling of settler guilt to guarantee a settler future (3). This project understands that the absolution of settler guilt props up settler colonial infrastructure by erasing the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples, and entrenching disconnection between diverse Indigenous communities who share similar historical and structural conditions. Consequently, I do not position this project as one dedicated to the work of decolonization. Rather, I am interested in illuminating the planetary presence of resurgence in the contemporary Indigenous novel with a new comparative method that seeks to encourage future work in global Indigenous literary studies.

The second commitment is to be a good reader and listener who lets the texts with which I engage speak for themselves. Jodi Byrd's (Chickasaw) theorization of planetary parallax is a useful heuristic device here, as it expresses how the role of distant observation, and the distant observer, is always incomplete and in parallax. Byrd's concept is built out of her engagement with the interstellar event called *the transit of Venus* which offers a means of interpreting empire's violent occlusion of the "native" and its construction of the American Indian (xxxv). This rare astronomical phenomenon happens in a pair of transits eight years apart that together occur every 120 years. During the transit Venus passes between Earth and the Sun twice, and is visible to the naked eye. The 1761 and 1769 paired transit is particularly notable as it saw hundreds of astronomers and explorers dispatched around the globe in the hope that observing the phenomenon in its entirety would help map the universe and distances between celestial bodies (Byrd xx). More covertly, these transits laid the groundwork for nascent settler colonialism by offering a more palatable argument for exploration.

In trying to view the transit in totality, explorers and astronomers were ultimately unsuccessful because of planetary parallax. Observers watching Venus move across the Sun only see it from their point of view and no matter how many observers you have, you can never glimpse the transit in its entirety. Planetary parallax allows Byrd to expose how settlers have erected the Native American as the American Indian (King's Dead Indian); complete renderings of the real are lost in parallax gaps and prevent the reconciliation of Indigenous subjectivity and Indian simulation. Through the transit of Venus, Byrd models a prime example of how colonialism recruits distant observation to create what Danielle Taschereau Mamers calls "settler colonial ways of seeing": the viewing and apprehending of Indigenous presence in ways that are necessarily "narrow, abstract, and homogenizing" (7–10). Taken together, these concepts share an understanding of the important role seeing and observing play in maintaining settler structures of power, and in the recognition that power is "hidden in 'ways of seeing'" (Landau and Kaspin 12). Just as parallax gaps cannot close, my outsider understanding and knowledge remain incomplete. Literary scholars must also understand that resolving settler complicity in structures of Indigenous dispossession and oppression is an impossibility because of the pasts, presents, and futures such resolution denies and forecloses. Having attended to this project's methodology and some relevant limitations, the next section carries forward this reflection as I review some key considerations informing this dissertation. I begin by thinking about language and orality and conclude by looking at some key terms.

Key Considerations

Language and Orality

In contributing to the comparative turn within Indigenous literary study, this dissertation focuses on late twentieth and early twenty-first century novels written in English. Such a focus stems from two overarching conditions relating to my training in the study and critique of written English literatures. First, that my experience with written literatures does not qualify me to analyze oral or visual literatures. Although some of the novels I constellate—Grace's *Potiki*, for example—represent a written translation of oral and visual storytelling, I do not wish to erode the specificity of those literatures. By focusing on written literatures, however, this research threatens to support existing colonial hierarchies that place the written at the top, as a representative characteristic of so-called "advanced" civilizations. This danger stems from the belief that oral storytelling evolves into the written tradition: a belief that has been described as a "colonial reduction" (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners* 72). Settler colonialism has and still does mobilize such reductions toward legitimizing the colonial project and its racist origins in the savage/civilized binary. In reality, oral and visual literatures and storytelling possess a diversity as alive as the communities from which they emerge. For example, oral literatures, as Justice points out, have "specific relational contexts" conjured in the "context of living, dynamic peoplehood" (*Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* 25). Oral stories possess an animacy that their written counterparts cannot fully replicate.

The second condition shaping the focus of my research is my training in literatures written in English, because I am a primarily monolingual English speaker. At the same time, and owing to complex historical factors, English has made this project and its comparisons of diverse Indigenous literatures possible. Indigenous literatures written in English stand in opposition to a

further "colonial reduction" in the conviction that contemporary use of the colonizer's language—here, English—by Indigenous Peoples, furthers their erasure and impedes decolonization. Such an assumption elides the very real history of the settler "civilizing" process whereby government sanctioned genocide(s) eroded Indigenous languages, rendering English a necessity for many Indigenous Peoples. Consequently, the view that English is not for contemporary Indigenous Peoples occludes the reality that they can reclaim the very language used in their oppression.

This dissertation foregrounds and responds to the fact that English also belongs to Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Englishes are essential to longstanding processes of self-determination and nation building. In "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism," Ortiz tells the story of an Acqumeh ceremony that has become blended with Catholic Christian rituals because of the history of Spanish colonialism in the region. These originally Spanish rituals, brought to the Southwest in the sixteenth century, are no longer Spanish because of the creative development applied to them by local Native Peoples. For Ortiz, "Native American or Indian literature is evidence of this in the very same way" (Ortiz, "Towards a National Indian Literature" 8). Indigenous Peoples bring meaning and meaningfulness to aspects of colonial culture as a way to survive colonization by protecting "the indigenous mind and psyche" (Ortiz, "Towards a National Indian Literature" 9). Speaking about Indigenous authors writing in English, Ortiz gestures at the colonial reduction in the belief that those writers have "succumbed" to English and forgotten or been forced to leave behind their Indigenous subjectivity, a reality that is "simply not true" (10). Ortiz puts this plainly:

> . . . it is entirely possible for a people to retain and maintain their lives through the use of any language. There is not a question of authenticity here; rather it is the way that Indian people have creatively responded to forced colonization. And this response has been one of resistance; there is no clearer word for it than resistance. (10)

According to Womack, Weaver, and Warrior, Ortiz "lays claim to English as an Indian language instead of the omnipresent cliché that Indian people are the victims of English. Claiming English as an Indian language is one of the most important, if not *the* most important step toward insuring Indian survival for future generations" (Weaver et al. xviii). The belief among Native Americans that they are somehow less Indigenous because they only speak English is an unfortunate symptom of internalized colonialism, of following suit with how settlers and the government view many Indigenous Peoples (Weaver et al. xii). My project rejects this thinking entirely.[30]

Terminology

Many of the terms used by settler culture to identify and engage with Indigeneity are deeply fraught. Discussions of whether particular words are appropriate or harmful should be an ongoing process, and one that this work does not aim to arbitrate. Instead, in this dissertation, I listen to the modes of identification that Indigenous scholars and writers who teach, by example, how scholars can best avoid doing harm. As the next few paragraphs will indicate, I owe a great debt to Justice's *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018) and to Gregory Younging (Cree) for his *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples* (2018).

This dissertation uses the adjective *Indigenous* with a capital "I" because of its affirmation of "a distinctive political status of peoplehood" (Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* 6). I additionally employ the noun *Indigenous Peoples* to reflect the term's contemporary

[30] For a more robust discussion of language and acknowledgement of how Indigenous languages are essential to Indigenous knowledge systems, see Chapter Two (especially pages 98–101).

currency and burgeoning use in response to the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"). Indigenous Peoples, then, are "those who belong to a place," with the proper noun affirming "the spiritual, political, territorial, linguistic, and cultural distinctions of those Peoples" (Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* 6). Those specific Peoples take on diverse contexts in my dissertation, and most often referring to those whose relationship with land predates the arrival of colonizing settlers, indentured and enslaved peoples. I follow Younging's use of the plural *Peoples* in order to reflect "cultural integrity and diversity" (65). When I use the term Indigenous People, I refer to a single distinct society, such as Inuit or the Cherokee.

While this dissertation uses the term *Indigenous* because of its broad inclusivity and recognition internationally, I acknowledge the elision that such an umbrella term can cause when the people it describes are as varied in culture, language, and history, as the land upon which they reside. Justice rightly notes that a term this broad is controversial: "Who gets to claim Indigenous status and identity, under what conditions—and who determines the rules?" (*Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* 8). Simultaneously, this breadth enables me to privilege inclusivity over the arbitration of colonial determinants of "authenticity" (Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* 8–9). In this work, I honour how communities and writers self-identify, and I work to invoke specificity wherever possible. In my next and final section, I outline the structure of this dissertation's chapters as well as its conclusion.

Mapping this Dissertation

In this introduction, I have clarified the role and importance of resurgence for contemporary Indigenous literatures written in English, situated my study and its contribution within the relevant critical literatures, detailed the development of my method for reading resurgence, and examined some limitations and key considerations that inform this project. Chapters Two, Three, and Four begin to answer the question of what precisely makes resurgence in these novels so generative for thinking through the ways Indigenous novels contribute to the building of Indigenous worlds. This dissertation's constellations amplify Indigenous literatures from varied regions where resurgence is being represented by Indigenous authors. As I noted earlier, the regions from which this work draws are North America, Oceania, and South Asia. North America has been selected not only because it is the region where I live and have the most familiarity, but because it is a site of intense focus within Indigenous literary study. I depart from North America's context (specifically Canada and the United States) by turning to Oceania, a region that demonstrates the diversity of settler colonial history while also echoing that of North America in familiar ways. Within Oceania, I draw novels from Aotearoa New Zealand, Samoa, and Hawai'i. Thirdly, I look to South Asia where Indigenous literatures of Santal, Adi, and Naga writers are emerging and resisting narratives of deficiency that Hindu hegemony and the caste system propagate. My inclusion of South Asia in this dissertation illuminates key similarities in dialogue across Indigenous nations that do not always share in histories of settler colonialism as we know it today. I have chosen South Asia (rather than Africa, East Asia, etc.) in an attempt to foreground the emerging tide of South Asian Indigenous literatures written in English while also unsettling assumptions about this region as purely postcolonial. Including a novel from South Asia in each cluster, then, underscores the diversity of Indigenous resurgence across varied colonial histories. In total, this dissertation focuses on nine novels, three in each body chapter.

Chapter Two reads resurgence across depictions of storytelling which is essential for its ability to carry knowledge that not only unites community members, but also keeps them safe. Here, I constellate David Treuer's (Leech Lake Ojibwe) *The Translation of Dr Apelles* (2006), Patricia Grace's (Māori) *Potiki* (1986), and Rejina Marandi's (Santal) *Becoming Me* (2014). The third chapter centres language use, which strengthens community and nation-specific bonds while connecting people to the land upon which they reside. This chapter focuses on language as an expression of resurgence in Cherie Dimaline's (Métis) *The Marrow Thieves* (2017), Sia Figiel's (Samoan) *Where We Once Belonged* (1996), and Easterine Kire's (Angami Naga) *Don't Run, My Love* (2017). In Chapter Four, I focus on relationship(s) with land: vital for Indigenous continuance and survival because of the codes of conduct land imparts for living an ethical, accountable life. I read across Eden Robinson's (Haisla & Heiltsuk) *Monkey Beach* (2000), Kiana Davenport's (Kanaka Maoli) *Shark Dialogues* (1994), and Mamang Dai's (Adi) *The Black Hill* (2014). In my conclusion, I revisit my dissertation's three literary constellations of coresistance to view them holistically. In so doing I ask: what do we learn or see differently when we juxtapose literary constellations of coresistance in contemporary Indigenous novels? As Simpson writes, placing constellations in relation to one another encourages theorization of "flight paths" and "doorways" out of settler colonial realities into Indigenous worlds (*As We Have Always Done* 217). In this way, my project addresses the need for further attention to literature's ability to enact resurgence and bring about the "elsewhere that is already here, if hidden from view" (*As We Have Always Done* 213).

Chapter Two: "Any story, all stories, suppose a reader"

> Stories are living beings, they grow, they develop, they remember, they change not in their essence, but sometimes in their dress. They are shared and shaped by the land the culture and the teller, so that one story may be told widely and differently.
>
> Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi), *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Looking Across: Storytelling and Resurgence

Story, or storytelling, is central to the identities and worldviews of Indigenous Peoples and their nations. Story, and oral story in particular, carry knowledge imparted by the land and developed over millennia to form codes of conduct for living a balanced life full of accountability and responsibility (Settee 436). Stories are "about people, about carrying forward relationships and understandings" (Hanson, *Literatures, Communities, and Learning* 91). Within Indigenous communities, the relationship between story and knowing is often inseparable as stories are essential pedagogical tools that empower their audience to become informed about the world in which they live and how they should relate to that world (Iseke and Brennus 245; Kovach 94). In this way, storytelling is often used as a method of teaching that invites its listeners to search for meaning by engaging with the storyteller in reflection and analysis (Dumbrill and Green 492). These teachings are the foundation for Indigenous ways of knowing and impart guidance on how to understand and relate to the environment. Story, then, does more than entertain: it conjures "vessels for passing along teachings, medicines, and practices that can assist members of the collective" (Kovach 95). In the oral tradition, stories cannot be "decontextualized from the teller. They are active agents within a relational world . . . and are thus recounted relationally" (Kovach 94). Storytelling is therefore a relational and reciprocal process that necessitates the presence of more than one participant—the presence of a community.

This chapter brings together stories from Anishinaabe, Māori, and Santal Peoples, broadening the community within which their stories are shared. In reading representations of storytelling across these diverse contexts, I recognize that stories are "not a culturally neutral form of expression," and therefore differ in form and execution from culture to culture (Kovach 18). Still, Indigenous people from different nations can come together to hear one another's stories and relate to them as core narratives of "love, of family, of trouble, of making do when times were tough, of strength of family and friendship ties that keep [them] strong, and stories that tie [them] to the land and to spiritual practices" (Iseke and Brennus 246). Margaret Kovach (Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux) explains that across diverse Indigenous nations, there are typically two forms of stories: (i) those with "mythical elements" such as creation stories and stories intended to teach, and (ii) personal stories of experiences, occurrences, and places that are shared within generations to protect a family's future (95). Both stories remind Indigenous Peoples of who they are and where they belong; they "hold within them knowledges while simultaneously signifying relationships" (Kovach 94). For these reasons, Indigenous Peoples must retain control over their stories so they can resist the deficiency narratives propagated by settler colonialism. If a people can retain control and tell their own stories, they can control the cultural sovereignty and destiny of their communities and nations (Gross 9).

The contemporary Indigenous novel contends with how to both represent and enact this storytelling process within a form that is often engaged individually. The novels in this chapter represent storytelling as a relational, communal practice not typically undertaken alone. This reality underscores the necessity of storyteller and audience coparticipation. The texts thereby invite the reader to take an active role as a participant in the story told by the narrator(s)—a role that necessitates critical engagement and rejects storytelling as an isolated practice. This

invitation also underscores the importance of reciprocal relationships to Indigenous worldviews more broadly.

This chapter's literary constellation of coresistance also considers how storytelling connects contexts that, because of colonial assumptions of difference that perpetuate separation, would not otherwise come together. Here, I consider storytelling's undertheorized role as a form of resurgence and give focus to my reading across Treuer's *Translation*, Grace's *Potiki*, and Marandi's *Becoming Me*. What do we learn or see differently when we juxtapose a series of diverse, but arguably related Indigenous novels? What does focusing these juxtapositions on storytelling tell us about resurgence? These novels and their contexts generate an opportunity for thinking about how storytelling becomes a lens through which Indigenous Peoples continue to envision Indigenous worlds. In the next section, I provide a brief synopsis of each novel before turning to a review of the relevant critical literature on each text.

Synopses

Translation begins with a "Translator's Introduction" that states: "*I was looking for a book. A very particular book in a vast and wonderful library. I found what I was looking for*" (1). Shoved within this book are the loose pages of another text, written in a language the Translator does not understand. Finding someone who could "*make sense of those words*," the Translator listens "*as [they] sp[eak] the story out loud*" (1). Eventually, the Translator tries to "*render that story into English and into a language . . . [that] can be translated into other languages as easily as we shed one set of clothes only to don another. [They] have also tried to paint a portrait of the body underneath those clothes that is beautiful . . . no matter what language it wears*" (1). Here, the

novel's central extended metaphor emerges: the text as a body that can be read and translated as easily as one changes clothes. The novel proceeds to mirror, albeit suggestively, the book found by the Translator containing two separate oscillating metafictional narratives: (i) the story of Native American translator Dr Apelles,[31] his work at the Research Collections and Preservation (Consortium) known as RECAP, his developing relationship with fellow employee Campaspe Bello, and his bimonthly Fridays spent in an archive translating a text written in an Indigenous language only he can speak; and (ii) the story readers are led to believe is being translated by Dr Apelles: a pastoral romantic satire of two Ojibwe foundlings, Bimaadiz and Eta, who grow up and fall in love on Ojibwe lands in the early nineteenth century. As the parallel narratives develop, the meaning of the word translation becomes steadily more ambiguous. Readers of *Translation* work to decipher which of these two stories is Dr Apelles's translation, which is the translation of Dr Apelles, and who amidst all of this is the novel's Translator. Consequently, *Translation* is a work of fiction that calls on readers to actively participate in the storytelling relationship by challenging them with what Colleen Eils calls "metafictional gymnastics" (39).

These "metafictional gymnastics" reveal a layered and dissimulating representation of storytelling as resurgence. In *Translation,* the narrator's identity remains a mystery until the final pages of the novel, and even then, only discerning readers who re-read the text are given the opportunity to "see what few have seen" (2). When the narrator's identity is disclosed in the conclusion, the fictional nature of the stories told across the novel are called into question and readers are encouraged to return to the beginning and start again. *Translation*'s representations of storytelling therefore resist easy understanding, opting instead to defend themselves against readers who are unprepared to actively participate and "hear what few have heard" (2). This

[31] Dr Apelles, rather than Dr. Apelles, is used throughout the novel.

dissimulation underscores the privileged relationship that exists between text/storyteller and reader/audience.

Potiki presents readers with the story of a Māori family living in a coastal community threatened by Eurowestern ideas of progress, land, and development. Although the novel is narrated by several family members, the primary storytellers are Roimata and her youngest son Toko. Roimata introduces herself after the novel's prologue by performing a written version of a whakapapa ("genealogy").[32] This recitation is typically performed at a ceremonial gathering before the whaikorero ("speechmaking") begins (Rask Knudsen, *The Circle and the Spiral* 203). Roimata speaks: "My name is Roimata Kararaina and I'm married to Hemi Tamihana. We have four children, James, Tangimoana, Manu, and Tokowaru-i-te-Marama (Toko). We live by the sea . . . This piece of land is the family land of the Tamihanas" (15).[33] In addition to their immediate family, Mary (Hemi's sister and Toko's biological mother) and Granny Tamihana are also present. *Potiki* centres the family's return to living off the land after unemployment plagues the community and Hemi loses his job.

The novel's primary conflict is the latest iteration in a long history of Pākehā ("New Zealander of European descent") and Māori tensions. This conflict manifests in Mr. Dolman/"Dollarman," a representative from a company hoping to purchase the Tamihana community's ancestral land to build a seaside tourist attraction. Mr. Dolman insists that the community accept the money being offered and that they move their wharenui ("meeting house") and urupa ("burial ground"). After Mr. Dolman's repeated advances are denied, his company

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[32] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of the Māori language are provided by John C. Moorfield's *Māori Dictionary*.

[33] As Vilsoni Hereniko mentions in their Editor's Note, "*Potiki* refers to Maui-Potiki, the demigod Maui-tikitiki-Taranga. It also means the youngest child, who, in this novel, is Tokowaru-i-te-Marama (Toko)" (5).

employees flood the urupa by destroying the structure controlling the land's water flow. When this is not enough to coerce the community, company employees set fire to the wharenui, creating an explosion that tragically kills Toko. Ultimately, members of Roimata's community, who had been working for the developer out of necessity, drive the company's construction vehicles into the sea.

While this dissertation has already delineated terminology relating to the Indigenous Peoples in North America, where the Anishinaabeg have made their home for centuries, in speaking about the Māori and Santal Peoples some clarification of terms is necessary. While I often use the umbrella term "Māori," I do not conceive of the Māori as a single ethnic or cultural group because prior to European arrival, they did not conceive of themselves as such either (Allen, *Blood Narrative* 23). As Grace writes, "Māori people are all different from each other, just as any other group of people are, so you get a variety of backgrounds that are Māori. But these varied backgrounds may have some things in common" (Grace qtd. in Calleja 111–12). Of course, the same can be said for the Anishinaabeg as well as the Santal. Consequently, where possible I distinguish by specific nation and kinship network. Additionally, I follow Allen's example in choosing not to draw attention to Māori words or passages with italics. Doing so "follows the typical practice of contemporary authors in Aotearoa/New Zealand" (*Blood Narrative* 23). I have chosen, however, to mark the long vowels in Māori with a macron (for example, Pākehā), except when the macron is absent as part of a quotation. I have made my decision based on what I most frequently observed in the critical literature with which I engage.

In my reading of *Becoming Me*, I refer to the Indigenous Peoples of both India and Assam as Adivasi Peoples or Adivasis, meaning "original inhabitants" (Heredia 126). Traditionally, the Adivasis in India are known as the "'first peoples' or indigenous people" as they were among the first people to arrive in India, prior to communities such as the Aryans, Dravidians and Mongolians (Ananthanarayanan 291). Outside of the Indian state of Assam, the term Adivasi "refers to tribals in general, in Northeast India, and particularly in Assam, the term is generally used to refer to a specific community of tribes or sub-tribes (the Santhal, Munda, Oraon, etc.)," many of whom were forcibly removed from their traditional lands in central India to work in the tea gardens of Assam (290). The history of this removal has its roots in the British "discovery" of tea in Assam in the 1820s, where it was being brewed by the local Singpho tribe. The first tea gardens were established in the region in 1837 but required massive amounts of labour, inaugurating an indenture system to which all contemporary Adivasis in Assam can trace their origins (293). The Adivasis living in Assam today, then, are predominantly either tea garden workers or those who were able to leave the tea gardens when their contracts finished (having procured land through government programs) (293).

Becoming Me is decidedly less dissimulating than *Potiki* or *Translation*, as Marandi offers a fictional retelling of her early life in an attempt to educate readers about the plight of the Adivasi and, specifically, Santal Peoples of Assam. Readers follow the novel's protagonist, Liya Kisku, from age eight into her twenties and through her years in school. Liya's experiences build an argument for the necessity of education (in school and community) to bettering the lives of Indigenous Peoples in India. Importantly, the education Liya receives from family and tribal

members fills the stark gaps left by her formal education.[34] These contrasting educations reveal inequalities in Indian society regarding Indigenous Peoples but also empower Liya to act. Another education takes place in her personal life as Liya chooses between two romantic interests, each with complicated political views. As she ages and continues to learn, Liya resolves to dedicate her life to helping the Adivasis of Assam as they fight for government recognition through Scheduled Tribe Status which would allow access to state aid and services, as well as formal education.

The novel's events take place during the horrific 1996 ethnic riots in Marandi's home district of Kokrajhar in Assam. During the riots, Santal people were murdered and their homes and villages were burned (Puzari 147). Non-Bodo people living within the Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) areas, such as the Santal, "were targeted by the Bodos as a part of their cleansing operation" that sought to establish a separate Bodo homeland (147). Because "Santhals are one of the marginalized groups in Bodoland," this cleansing sought to erase their presence and further entrench Bodo supremacy (147). When Liya narrowly escapes death in the riots and her family's homes and village are destroyed, Liya and her family spend several months living in a refugee camp. The riots are a traumatic watershed event for nine-year-old Liya as the experience initiates her into the precarious realities of life as an Adivasi in India, and particularly in the state of Assam. As the novel progresses, Liya learns how to exist unnoticed: she speaks English rather than Santali and avoids certain areas of the towns and cities she lives in. Eventually, the novel's central theme of education further asserts itself as the means by which Liya can survive.

[34] The terms tribe and tribal have currency in the US and India among Indigenous Peoples. As a general descriptor of Indigenous Peoples, however, these terms are problematic because "like *band, tribe* describes something looser than *nation, people*, or *society*" (Younging 60). I only use the terms in the contexts where they are accepted.

All three novels in this chapter demonstrate the integral role storytelling plays in resurgence and resistance to oppressive colonial forces across broad contexts by centring the importance of storytelling's relational and communal nature. Story requires an audience, be that audience a viewer, reader, or listener, and this relationship is paramount to story's ability to change reality and enact the process Treuer refers to when he says "the word shapes the world" (Treuer qtd. in Rothman). Ultimately, this constellation demonstrates the importance of storytelling's representation in the contemporary Indigenous novel as means to enact resurgence. In the next section, I turn to the critical reception for each novel.

Literature Reviews

The Translation of Dr Apelles

Translation and Treuer's *Native American Fiction: A User's Manual* were released in 2006 as "companion piece[s]" (Kennedy 57). This semi-synchronous release resulted in an eclipse of *Translation* by *User's Manual* as the latter controversially (re)ignited debates on what Treuer calls "the terrible twins of identity and authenticity" (*Native American Fiction* 4). Much of this controversy stems from *User's Manual*'s central assertion that what we know as Native American literature, written primarily in English, "does not exist," or at least what does exist is not representative of Native culture and language (195). In other words, Native American writers invoke Native culture "as a 'memory,' not 'reality,' or 'the longing for culture, not its presence'—and all of this is not authentic culture" (Fletcher 192). According to Treuer, Native American literature is overshadowed by "a legacy of our imagined presence in American literature" that gets in the way of artistic integrity (Treuer qtd. in Kirwan 76).

Unsurprisingly, responses to *User's Manual* vary. John D. Kalb and Duane Niatum argue that Treuer takes his critique of Native American literature too far (Kalb; Niatum). Matthew L. M. Fletcher (Grand Traverse Band) takes issue with what he sees as an allegation from Treuer that "American Indian novelists claiming to represent American Indian culture are frauds" (95). Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe) and Arnold Krupat find something "strange" in Treuer's assertion that Native American fiction "does not exist" and that the identity of the author should be ignored toward an embrace of "formalism and erstwhile New Criticism" (Krupat 135; Vizenor, *Survivance* 15–16). Vizenor and Krupat find Treuer's approach strange because he openly identifies as Ojibwe from Leech Lake Reservation while asserting that his position should be ignored—a decision that according to Vizenor results in the absence of "native presence and survivance" (*Survivance* 17). Differently, Justice takes issue with *User's Manual*'s "significant disengagement" from decades of scholarship and the highly relevant subfield of Indigenous literary nationalism ("Currents of Trans/National Criticism" 344). This disengagement results in a text that appears "intentionally provocative" and which demonstrates a general disinterest in the "theoretical underpinnings of [its] positions" (Kroeber 389; Krupat 149–155). In this way, Treuer ignores relevant dialogues within nationalist criticism and the "social agendas" of the New Critics, as well as "*any* criticism that takes into account the sociopolitical *function* of Native American fiction" (Krupat 138).

Those critics who did appreciate Treuer's approach, however, noted his incisive argument as a relevant and legitimate engagement with the field (Gillard 155–56). Scott Richard Lyons (Ojibwe/Dakota) praises Treuer's ability to "invoke our anxieties regarding the proper place of tribal nations and cultures in a rapidly globalizing world" where the "sexy" selling points of Native American literature obscure its aesthetic value (S. Lyons). Here, Lyons is

gesturing at the history of formalist concerns relating to aesthetics and identity politics within Indigenous literary study which have more recently mutated into conversations about the ethics of Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodologies (Taylor 27). Justice suggests that critics might find the value in *User's Manual* more readily by embracing its "both/and" potential, rather than a much simpler "either/or" paradigm ("Currents of Trans/National Criticism" 350).

Ultimately, Treuer risked controversy to argue a larger point: Indigenous scholars, writers, and theirs works, should not have to play the role of native informant, no matter the audience.[35] Treuer originally expressed this concern in "Reading Culture," a precursor to *User's Manual*, where he contends that Native American novels have become the new native informants (55). Treuer gestures at the history of anthropology when he accuses authors such as Louise Erdrich (Ojibwe) and Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo) of performing the native informant role by, for example, providing translations of Indigenous languages within their work (Kirwan 86; Treuer, "Reading Culture" 55). Indigenous authors and critics should, instead, embrace dissimulation in their writing and, in so doing, place a greater responsibility on the reader to inform themselves of important cultural and critical contexts, translations, and nuances.

As a result of the backlash to *User's Manual*, *Translation* has received relatively little critical attention. The treatments that do exist tend to focus on the novel's affirmation of the "value of love and self-realization for a Native man torn between cultures and understood through stereotypes" and on decoding the novel's shifting styles and complex intertextuality (Eils 39). Central among critics is the consensus that *Translation* does not reward quick reading, and instead puts the reader through a complex series of "metafictional gymnastics" (39). Colleen

[35] Within anthropology, the "native informant" is the person who translates their culture for the researcher (the outsider). Treuer takes issue with what he sees as Indigenous authors performing this role for the reader by including translations and explanations of culturally specific concepts and contexts.

Eils's work on *Translation* illuminates how the novel resists the role of the native informant by embracing dissimulation as a mode of resistance (41). Much of the scholarship on *Translation*, however, misses this intentional dissimulation. For example, David Yost and William K. Freiert, who advance nuanced close readings of *Translation's* intertexts and note its use of satire, do not meaningfully address how the novel "insists upon its own fictionality," breaking traditional narrative distance in its final pages to reveal Apelles has been the author of his own reality all along (Eils 35). Other critics are distracted by what—in the Bimaadiz and Eta narrative—appear to be preposterous "Disneyesque and Cooperesque" characters and events indicative of bad writing (Kalb 116; D. Robinson 2022). These critics fail to recognize the text's dissimulating nature, as the absurdity is precisely the point: Bimaadiz and Eta's story is a satirical retelling of Longus's second-century Greek novel, *Daphnis and Chloe*.[36] Treuer himself admits that the Bimaadiz and Eta section is a "buyer beware" moment that "loo[ks] like Indian myth" and is therefore seductive to certain "lazy or inattentive readers" who miss out on the "real meaning and real beauty of the book" (Treuer qtd. in Kennedy 58).[37]

In many ways, the critical reception for *Translation* supports Treuer's larger argument about the importance of the storyteller/narrator, audience/reader, relationship. That is, that readers of Native American literature need to take an active, reciprocal role in storytelling and a "decolonizing approach to reading" in which they arrive ready to do additional work to understand and interpret the text (Hanson, "'Through White Man's Eyes'" 15). Often, that work

[36] Additional intertexts noted by Yost and Freiert include James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979), Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (1669), John Lyly's *Campaspe* (1584), Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955).
[37] As a non-Indigenous reader, I feel a responsibility here to admit that I too was trapped and tricked by Treuer's novel across numerous early readings of the text. I demonstrate an understanding of the text here, but that understanding is still very much in process as I continue to learn the ways my own assumptions prevent me seeing the fictionality of Dr Apelles's, Bimaadiz's, and Eta's worlds.

is the process of rereading and reengaging with story so that what may puzzle on a first read can be uncovered with further engagement. Treuer highlights the importance of storytelling's relational nature with *User's Manual* and *Translation*, and he urges his audience to turn away from having Native American authors and their works perform the role of the native informant.

Potiki

Potiki has received the largest critical response of this chapter's three novels. This response has been centred around a confluence of themes: the novel's non-linear form and representation of Māori spiral temporality; ecocritical readings of tourism, development, and the environment; identity politics contending with readership and theoretical concerns; representations of disability; and the novel's portrayal of trauma and violence. Interestingly, the representation of storytelling in the novel runs throughout these critical conversations but never becomes the focus.

Of Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Toa, Te Ai Awa descent, Grace is the first Māori woman writer to be published. Grace's work came to international attention following what scholars call the "Māori Renaissance of the 1970s" (Visser 300). Early scholarship on Grace's work largely focuses on her ability to record Māori oral histories, genealogies, and mythologies, and underscores how her writing resists Western narrative movements (Fuchs 166–71). John Beston writes that *Potiki* attracts readers through a "careful" approach that "allay[s] Pakeha fears by stressing that the Māori do not threaten the privileges the Pakeha have arrogated unto themselves" (43). He goes on to celebrate Grace's "careful" approach and her search for a "common humanity" between Māori and settler peoples (43). Such a reading is easily critiqued

now, particularly around invocations of "universality" that seek to erase difference and fold the Māori into a homogenous New Zealand. Beston's reading oversimplifies Grace's complex assertion of Māori self-determination in resistance to settler colonialism and capitalist development. Miriam Fuchs and Patrice Wilson have both critiqued Beston's readings of the novel: Fuchs expresses concern over his fashioning of *Potiki* into a parable with a moral outcome (172), and Wilson finds Beston's reading to be an oversimplification of *Potiki*'s events (121–22).[38]

Further critical engagement with *Potiki* considers the tension between Eurowestern modes of interpretation and nation-specific readings. Fuchs's work is concerned with the degree to which Western theory is "capable of revealing the indigenous dimensions of a work" (171). Similarly, Irene Visser takes issue with the imposition of Western trauma models on Indigenous or postcolonial texts and addresses "whether cultural trauma theory in its present dominant form in literary studies is adequate for the discussion of trauma in postcolonial writing" (299). For Visser, trauma cannot be divorced from sociohistorical context (299). More recently, Eva Rask Knudsen has asked: "on what legitimate ground may a non-Indigenous reader respond critically to [Indigenous literature]?" ("On Reading Grace's *Potiki*" 2). For Rask Knudsen, non-Indigenous readers can enter Māori stories as guests that "take part in the cross-cultural dialogue that the literary text itself has in fact always invited" (2). Fuchs, Visser, and Rask Knudsen also consider the importance of storytelling in their works. In particular, Rask Knudsen notes that *Potiki*'s translation of oral tradition establishes reciprocal lines of communication between "speaker and audience (writer and reader)" ("On Reading Grace's *Potiki*" 4). Noting the novel's translation of

[38] Beston's reading is an effective example of why reciprocal reading practices are so essential (especially for non-Indigenous readers).

oral story to written, Visser identifies storytelling as a "vital element in Grace's work" while Fuchs observes that "the process of dramatic storytelling, and not plot, is nearly all there is to *Potiki*" (Visser 316; Fuchs 171–73). In this way, Fuchs's, Visser's, and Rask Knudsen's interventions share some focus with my own.

Moving away from storytelling, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, Holly Walker, Justyna Poray-Wybranowska, and Patrick D. Murphy critique settler colonialism's relationship with tourism and development in the novel. Walker argues that *Potiki* rejects "Pakeha-style economic development" and pushes instead for a negotiation-based development paradigm that better serves Māori concerns (216). Murphy mobilizes *Potiki* (among other novels) in ecocritical, environmental, and postcolonial readings primarily concerned with cosmopolitanism's connection with resilience ("Community Resilience"; "The Procession of Identity"). Huggan and Tiffin offer a critique of development through postcolonial and environmental lenses whereby *Potiki* becomes an "ecology of stories in which the delicate balance between embedded ('rooted') and interconnected ('routed') narrative is continually renegotiated by a shifting community of tellers and listeners that is at once profoundly local and inextricably connected to the wider world" (70). As Poray-Wybranowska has observed, the environment is central to the "plot and aesthetic style of the story" (273). As such, readers are driven to "see land as more than simply a setting in which the human-centred plot unfolds" and to imagine the human relationship to the environment otherwise (Porary-Wybranowska 273).

Clare Barker, Briar Wood, and Michaela Moura-Koçoğlu situate the novel within wider social and sovereignty movements, recognizing that conversations about land and the Indigenous body are inextricable from those about Indigenous self-determination. Barker explores the novel's progressive portrayals of disabled characters as integrated, engaged, and "active agents

within the cultural and political negotiations of the texts" ("From Narrative Prosthesis to Disability Counternarrative" 131; *Postcolonial Disability* 60). Wood connects *Potiki*'s events regarding the Te Ope People's fictionalized fight for the return of their land with the Māori land march of 1975, the 1977–78 Bastion Point occupation, and the 1978 Raglan golf course occupation.[39] These resistance efforts "demanded the return of misappropriated Māori land" (114). Ultimately, Moura-Koçoğlu notes that Grace sets "the political discourse of land rights at centre-stage" (115).

Potiki's assertion of Māori sovereignty is centrally concerned with the impossibility of reconciling Indigenous spiralic temporality and "abstracted, Western linear framework[s]" (Deloughrey 59). Spiralic (or spiraling) time, refers to "the varied experiences of time that [Indigenous Peoples] have as participants within living narratives involving [their] ancestors and descendants," where it "makes sense to consider [them]selves as living alongside future and past relatives simultaneously" (Whyte 228–29). Living within spiralic time can be observed by and through practices that demonstrate an understanding of collective responsibility to the land, and connection to relations that came before and are yet to come (De Vos 2). The spiral is therefore place-based but constantly in motion, renewing with each generation and allowing for "recurrence and return but also for transformation" (Brooks 309). Elizabeth Deloughrey investigates *Potiki*'s translation of Māori spiralic time and its incompatibility with Western linear frameworks. For Deloughrey, *Potiki* "disrupts the linear novel, reforming the individualistic narrative into a communal Māori narration of spiral time" (60). Spiralic temporality does not

[39] Bastion Point is a coastal region in Aotearoa (New Zealand) that was central to a land dispute between the Ngati Whatua Māori People. On the 506th day of the 1977–78 occupation, two hundred community members were arrested as over six hundred police moved in. In the late-nineteenth century, the land had been taken by the New Zealand Government for the purposes of a military and was never returned to the Ngati Whatua. Similarly, the 1978 Raglan protest demanded the return of lands confiscated under the Emergency War Act from World War II that were also never returned.

celebrate narratives of individual action or "progress"; rather, it embraces a communal conception of time that does not separate past from future (Deloughrey 60). Joyce Kinnane also examines the significance of the spiral to Grace's work, noting that Roimata's storytelling is a "manifestation of Māori tradition and culture and it is in this light that she incorporates stories that reflect Pākehā influence as part of an inclusive and dynamic process of change represented by the spiral" (81). In this way, the constant change present in the spiral informs the storytelling within the novel and foregrounds renewal as a central theme. Both Deloughrey's and Kinnane's interventions inform my reading of storytelling as resurgence in *Potiki*.

Becoming Me

Currently, scholarship written on *Becoming Me* is limited to just two scholarly interventions. Prashanta Puzari's work investigates how *Becoming Me* performs a historical excavation in resistance to the tide of erasure from dominant narratives that seek to silence Adivasi voices (146). For Puzari, *Becoming Me* is centrally concerned with the complicated fight for recognition and the rights of ethnic minorities to live in peace (153). Differently, Ananya Mishra considers how Indigenous sovereignty and transnational solidarity are established in literature. Mishra considers Marandi's novel a work of Adivasi women's "self-governing literature" wherein "a sovereign literary expression" dedicated to resisting the violence against Adivasi women's bodies and the erasure of their voices takes place (223). Mishra considers Marandi's approach to sovereignty as a kind of "self-talk" that crucially resists "integration into the nation-state, as well as the assimilated Adivasi community (223). Even though neither Puzari nor Mishra focus on the representation of storytelling in the novel, their works illuminate the importance of nation-specific, contextualized approaches to Adivasi literatures.

In this chapter's next section, I briefly situate storytelling within Anishinaabe, Māori, and Santal worldviews. I then turn to my analysis where I read resurgence across *Translation*, *Becoming Me*, and *Potiki*. With these juxtapositions, I consider how storytelling itself can—and is—imagining routes out of settler colonialism through resurgence's return to traditional ways of being and knowing that strengthen Indigenous nations.

Reading Resurgence

Storytelling in Context

The significance of storytelling to Anishinaabe Peoples (Anishinaabeg) cannot be understated. As Lawrence W. Gross (Anishinaabe) writes, "the Anishinaabe are storytellers" and their stories teach "the stock of knowledge and wisdom found in the culture" (155). For Anishinaabeg, understanding the stories imparted by community Elders means understanding yourself, your world, where you come from, and where you are going (Gross 157). Gross underscores storytelling's pedagogical imperative which ultimately manifests in *Translation* and is echoed in *Potiki* and *Becoming Me*. In *Translation*, the reader experiences an education in the politics of good listening and attentive reading as the novel's metafictional form frequently turns back on itself. It is no accident that one of the novel's characters is named Bimaadiz: an overt echo of the Anishinaabemowin noun for "life" and a unifying concept taught through story that "provides instruction for how to live as a human being on this earth" (Gross 156). The teachings connected to bimaadiziwin impart good ways of living in the world which extend to how readers approach and engage with Indigenous stories like those told in *Translation* (Gross 205).

Similarly, within Māori culture, storytelling is the process and practice responsible for imparting worldviews, or Māoritanga (Māori way of being, Māori culture) (Barker, *Postcolonial Fiction* 33). The koru, a coiled loop shape that appears in Māori carvings and is inspired by an unfurling silver leaf frond, grounds the Māori worldview and structures how stories are told (Rask Knudsen, *The Circle and the Spiral* 22). The shape of the koru, a spiral with multiple inner spirals, suggests a continued return to the centre. The spiral is the most important Māori icon and it appears in cosmology, storytelling, and art—always reflecting the existence of more than one centre as well as a sense of perpetual movement and transformation (Rask Knudsen, *The Circle and the Spiral* 22). As Rask Knudsen notes, "Māori cosmogony emphasizes an interrelatedness—a system of spiralling relations—rather than the contrariety of opposites" (*The Circle and the Spiral* 4). The koru's influence on temporality and storytelling can be seen in *Potiki*. Māori characters experience time as a spiral rather than a straight line and this spiralic temporality impacts how stories are told and interpreted. Unlike postmodern Eurowestern novels that play with temporality but ultimately require deference to linearity to "make sense" of events, *Potiki* actively discourages readers from re-ordering its plot. Instead, readers are encouraged to engage with how spiral time is expressed through story.

Adivasi Peoples, including the Santal, know that story is pedagogy *and* archive. Adivasi myths, for example, have distinct ways of storing historical data by blending the historical with the fictional (Mishra 123). Functioning as archive, Adivasi stories in the oral tradition carry "land memories" such as ownership rights over land, gods, and forests, as well as migration histories (Mishra 123–124). In this way, oral stories of the land are read as "customary laws which also serv[e] a purpose for maintaining clan divisions" (Mishra 124). As a result, Adivasi communities refer to stories (e.g., creation myths) as proof of land ownership which demonstrate

a particular People's presence on the land (Mishra 124). Stories therefore archive important information about how to relate to human and non-human kin, and who is beholden to which lands. Ultimately, storytelling—and oral storytelling in particular—is central to Anishinaabe, Māori, and Santal Peoples because story carries, archives, and imparts the teachings learned from the land. In the next section, I begin reading resurgence trans-Indigenously across this chapter's literary constellation of coresistance. Specifically, I move across each text twice, gathering and carrying forward what can be seen differently when diverse but arguably related novels are juxtaposed.

Metafictional Gymnastics

In *Translation*, storytelling is depicted across several metafictional layers that underscore the relational nature of storytelling. On one level, storytelling occurs between Dr Apelles and Campaspe as they fall in love. Here, the novel's core extended metaphor of the body as a text that needs to be translated and read is at its most potent. The narrator refers to Dr Apelles as a text in need of a lover—Campaspe—who can translate and read him. This metaphor is explored through the ambiguity between Dr Apelles's translation (the physical work he has found and is translating) and the translation of Dr Apelles (the process of falling in love and being vulnerable to a lover). When readers meet Dr Apelles in the early pages of *Translation* he is working in an archive and has discovered "a document that only he can translate" (23). In this moment he realizes "he has never been in love" and that there is "a connection between the translation and love" (24). This revelation bonds Dr Apelles to the translation, affirming the presence of the novel's core metaphor and deepening its meaning by comparing the process of translation to that of falling in love. Here, the translation forces Dr Apelles to reckon with the reality that he "has

no reader for his heart. And he never has" (25). Like the translation, Dr Apelles is unread and untranslated, fearful of being mistranslated and misread: "it is one thing to translate a thing, and something else completely to have that thing read. It is one thing to love someone, and something else entirely to be loved in return" (25). Dr Apelles's translation is complicated by his subject position as a Native American. He is reluctant to be read by others, "to give up that *sovereign part of himself,*" because he is always already "measured against the stories that were told about Indians by those who did not know Indians" (204–5). Dr Apelles is written in a language that only he can understand, making falling in love appear an impossible act of translation.

On another metafictional level, the entire novel is told by an omniscient narrator who reveals themselves to also be Apelles—albeit entirely distinct from the character of Dr Apelles—in *Translation*'s final pages.[40] Rather than longing for Campaspe, Apelles pines for a literal reader (whoever is reading the novel) who will participate in a reciprocal storytelling relationship with *Translation* and the narrator. Clues that the omniscient narrator Apelles is telling the novel as a story appear throughout the text and become steadily more obvious as readers revisit and reread *Translation*. Even the "Translator's Introduction" urges the reader to "read it to the end. And then, turn back here and read it again" (2). It is not until a second visit that the reader can see the double meaning in the Translator's words: "I only hope that I can hear what few have heard, see what few have seen, and emerge full, whole, healed, on the other side" (2). Yes, this is the wish of the Translator (Apelles), but it is also a challenge set to the reader that they too should attempt to "hear what few have heard [and] see what few have seen" so that Apelles—

[40] In the novel, references to Dr Apelles slowly use the title "Dr" less and less as Dr Apelles's relationship with Campaspe develops. To avoid confusion, I will refer to the narrator as Apelles and the character as Dr Apelles.

their identity and their role—may "emerge full, whole, healed, on the other side." This process of understanding is not easy, however, as the novel's shifting styles, intertextuality, metafiction, and form work to prevent the novel from performing the role of a native informant. *Translation*'s metafictional and metaphoric representation of storytelling ultimately makes an argument for the importance of the engaged audience and attentive storyteller—a relationship that underscores the communal nature of storytelling.

Focusing first on Dr Apelles and Campaspe's relationship, Dr Apelles is imagined as an unreadable, untranslatable text, in need of a translator and a reader so that his story may be told. The narrator describes him as having "no language" of his own, an absence that renders him unable to articulate the "lush foliage of what he already knows—other languages, other landscapes, other stories" (23–24).[41] Ever since leaving the reservation and arriving in a predominantly English-speaking context where very few speak his first language, Anishinaabemowin, Dr Apelles has had the sensation that he "was leaving himself behind" (26). Even as a child mourning the death of his younger sister, Dr Apelles could not cry because "he had no language for his grief. And no way to translate his sorrow" (28). Speaking literally, of course Dr Apelles has language, but his experience of internalized colonialism de-legitimates Indigenous languages just as it renders English an impossible possession. Dr Apelles finds

[41] The quotation in the title of this dissertation is from this passage. I chose this quotation for a two primary reasons. First, this quote gestures at the dissertation's focus on reading resurgence through storytelling, language, and relationships with land. Second, in this scene, Dr Apelles describes the affective experience of reading a text in a language that only he can speak and the responsibility this experience calls him into. He feels the words "break through the cover of obscurity that has hidden [his dreams] for so long" (24). This moment is significant because it underscores an ethical imperative central to this dissertation: that as readers, we each have a particular responsibility to the stories we read. Here, Dr Apelles *feels* a connection with the story that invites him into a reciprocal engagement with the text. It is this reciprocal engagement, this leap of faith and responsibility, that leads to his eventual—if fictional—translation.

himself in a bind, then, between speaking many languages as a translator, while simultaneously having no language, no way of telling his story.

These complications have left Dr Apelles without a reader for his heart who can engage with him in this storytelling relationship. This realization pushes Dr Apelles to make himself vulnerable to love—a difficult task for a man who has kept to himself "in order to survive" (133). He knows that "[a]s an Indian in the world, he was, as far as most were concerned, a little ghost in living colors, with a reality of his own that was written out in the tenses of the remotest past" (133). Dr Apelles's solitary lifestyle, then, has worked to avoid stereotyping by non-Indigenous people. Upon discovering the translation, however, Dr Apelles realizes that he "had been forced to hide his most subtle and fluent self. He was tempted now to let that self come out" (133). To do so means enacting that essential relational element for story to take place, a relationship that Dr Apelles knows will help him find a language with which he can express himself and in which he can be read. It is in Campaspe, an English speaker and Italian-American, that Dr Apelles finds a possible translator and reader.

Dr Apelles knows one thing for certain: "Any story, all stories, suppose a reader" (24). Reading and being read requires more than one person, and Dr Apelles hopes to find that relationship with Campaspe. Although Dr Apelles's attraction to Campaspe had long been present, it is not until an ice storm cancels train service from RECAP back into the city that the two share conversation over drinks and realize their attraction is mutual. Campaspe asks Dr Apelles where he goes every second Friday. He responds, "'I am a translator of Native American languages.' 'Oh!' she cried. 'So *that's* what you are!' 'A translator or an Indian?' 'Both,' she said" (132). Dr Apelles's disclosure of his subjectivity begins the process of letting his "self come out" (33). Sleeping with Campaspe for the first time later that night, Dr Apelles engages in

a process of recognition wherein he "sees the translation, the meaning available only to him, vulnerable only to him, in a language belonging only to him . . . *I've been waiting to read you* . . . And what a story it is to read" (149). Campaspe also sees him as a text to be read: "she longed to lift his cover and read him, to bring him home and read him immediately and completely . . . to shelve him in her most private and intimate stacks in her warm, cozy, red-hued apartment" (144). This scene tightens the metaphor of text as body, suggesting that if the body is a text to be read, then making love is an act of reading and having your story told. As Campaspe and Dr Apelles read one another, "[h]is translation bec[omes] even more *his* translation, and it beg[ins] to include her—all of it held between the soft cover of his sheets" (207). Together during the ice storm, the two lovers engage in a reciprocal storytelling relationship.

The importance of the text (story/storyteller) and reader (audience) relationship is underscored even further when Dr Apelles reflects: "Stories are meant to be heard and are meant to be read. And translations, no matter what the subject, are like stories in that regard, only more so. Twice the effort has been put into a translated document than has been put into the original" (24). A responsible reader must be willing to put in the work to avoid misreading Dr Apelles's translation and the translation of Dr Apelles. Campaspe approaches both translations with confidence. She loves that Dr Apelles "could not be, or seem to be, anything other than Apelles" (143). He is complete unto himself, entirely whole precisely because of his solitary existence and self-sufficiency. To her, he is "like some kind of animal . . . who needs nothing else, who need not do anything in particular at all for us to recognize him" (144). The politics of recognition brought to bear on Dr Apelles by Campaspe are complicated by her Euroamerican settler subject position. Campaspe could represent the very thing Dr Apelles fears: someone who will only see him as a stereotype, as inauthentic by virtue of his very presence. Instead, she dedicates herself

to reading and understanding Dr Apelles and the translation, and to seeing beyond the settler imaginary's overdeterminations.

Dr Apelles knows the storytelling relationship requires an attentive reader because the stakes of misreading are so high. After beginning his relationship with Campaspe, Dr Apelles senses the people in his life are behaving differently towards him and feels that this is a "disaster" (211). Dr Apelles intuits that his coworkers Jesus and Ms Manger are talking about him and the narrator remarks, "Dr Apelles was not interested in being interesting. He did not want to be noticed" (211). He feels what any text might feel: "scanned, read, and consumed, and he had no control over how they read him or what they told themselves about him. They could be saying anything. They probably were saying anything" (211). He feels "defenseless" against the surveilling eyes of others because "he had no language for his present self, no Indians do" (211). Dr Apelles's life has always been "in relation to, always in conversation with, always gauged by, what everyone thought they knew about Indians" (211). He reflects on the dark undercurrent of what it means to be read by those around him:

> . . . the whole of his adult and very modern world was so strange, so strangely out of his language. The white people haunted him just as he haunted his own past. They excursed into the sanctity of his own self. It was that way for all Indians. Indians were the past that everyone else visited as a way to check on the development of something deep and long dormant. (215)

Dr Apelles knows that revealing his Native American self to Campaspe and the wider world means that his subjectivity can be recruited into white fantasies of how an Indigenous person should or should not appear. In saying that the "modern world" is "out of his language," Dr Apelles is assigning himself to the anterior realm that "white people haun[t]," that "everyone else visit[s]" when they want to confirm their definitions of modernity. What is "deep and long dormant," then, is the belief that Indigenous Peoples are somehow less human and more

"savage," and that they need to be removed in the name of Western progress. Settler people need the concept of the savage to legitimate their continued presence on the land, and to rationalize their alleged superiority. Dr Apelles knows that his presence as a Native American, going about his life and living in the contemporary moment, unsettles people and moves them to project their racist assumptions onto him in service of their own narratives of innocence. Telling his story to an audience unprepared to do the work required to avoid misreading and mistranslating presents a clear threat to Dr Apelles and his ability to confide in Campaspe.

Campaspe's efforts to read the translation ultimately bring the novel to its climax. Since Dr Apelles does not "feel he can tell her about his present or past life because of the fear of being mistranslated," he talks endlessly about the translation instead: "which is to say that he talks about his life because they are the same thing" (206). But it is not enough, and Campaspe must take matters into her own hands by stealing the translation. She "reads and rereads" the text "that Sunday. Once. Twice. Three times" (252). Upon bringing the translation to RECAP so she can return it to Dr Apelles, the translation is stolen by Jesus who, jealous of their love, shoves the translation into a copy of *Daphnis and Chloe* that is shelved "far up the stacks, on a shelf, in a box, in a book, in a place [they] could never find again even if [they] were to try" (308). After all, while RECAP is technically a library it more readily "resembled a prison" for books (58). It was designed in response to a "surplus of books in the world" for books with no current use, but that might someday be important (57–58). What should be the terrible loss of the translation is really the completion of Dr Apelles's story, his translation, as upon being read by Campaspe the text finds its place within the literatures of the world just as Dr Apelles is finding his own place within the stories told by and about Native Americans.

Spiralic Temporality

Potiki can appear unwieldy to readers—particularly those unfamiliar with Māoritanga and Māori spiralic temporality. As with *Translation*, the novel's characters also seek to tell their own story and have it heard by a discerning audience. In this way, the juxtaposition of *Translation* and *Potiki* illuminates a shared understanding of the relational nature of story. Rather than through metaphor and metafiction, *Potiki* explores the storytelling relationship through oral and carved forms shaped by the koru and spiralic temporality. Spiraling time, as Kyle P. Whyte (Potawatomi) notes, refers to "the varied experiences of time that [Indigenous Peoples] have as participants within living narratives involving [their] ancestors and descendants," and where it "makes sense to consider [them]selves as living alongside future and past relatives simultaneously" (228–29). This Indigenous experience of time situates the living in a position of responsibility to their ancestors and the not yet born (De Vos 2).[42] The koru is essential here, as it reiterates that no part of a larger whole is siloed off from any other part, each flowing into the next with characters living alongside their ancestors and the unborn. In spiralic temporality, characters more readily understand the relational nature of their existence so events that were easily relegated to the past, or not of concern because of their distance in the future, become intimate and immediate. Ultimately, *Potiki* rewards those careful readers who work to understand how the koru informs spiralic temporality and manifests in oral and carved forms.

Roimata's decision to homeschool her sons is a key moment that demonstrates the relationship between temporality and storytelling, and the importance of narrative self-determination. The decision comes as a result of her son Manu repeatedly running home from

[42] Spiralic temporality is also reflected in the Māori language where the past is called "nga ra o mua" ("the day in front"), what Rask Knudsen identifies as "the known and the seen" (57). The future, on the other hand, is "kei muri" ("that which is behind"), or "the unknown yet to be seen" (57).

school each morning "trembling and exhausted," claiming "there were cracks in the floor" (37). Toko, however, "is too watchful to allow himself to slip and disappear" (37–38). The fear of falling through the "cracks in the floor" or "slip[ping] and disappear[ing]" refers to the settler education, the settler stories, that erase Māori presence. Manu specifically struggles because he is unable to see himself and his relations, living and otherwise, represented in the stories told at the school. Roimata must take control of the stories that Manu is told: a control that necessitates teaching within a spiralic temporal worldview. Reflecting on her decision to homeschool her children, and consequently on her new role as storyteller, Roimata thinks to herself:

> I had other stories too, known stories from before life and death and remembering, from before the time of the woman lonely in the moon. Given stories. But 'before life and death and remembering' is only what I had always thought. It was a new discovery to find that these stories were, after all, about our own lives, were not distant, that there was no past or future, that all time is a now-time, centred in the being. It was a new realization that the centred being in this now-time simply reaches out in any direction towards the outer circles, these outer circles being name 'past' and 'future' only for our convenience. The being reaches out to grasp those adornments that become part of the self. So the 'now' is a giving and a receiving between the inner and the outer reaches, but the enormous difficulty is to achieve refinement in reciprocity, because the wheel, the spiral, is balanced so exquisitely. These are the things I came to realize as we told and retold our own-centre stories. (39)

This new storyteller role reminds Roimata that a great responsibility lies in existing within the now-time. Like Apelles deciding to find a reader for his heart and to control his own narrative, Roimata takes control of her community's "own-centre stories" in the homeschool she creates. These "[g]iven stories" teach that "there was no past or future, that all time is a now-time." As Deloughrey notes, "[i]t is the *telling* of stories that leads these characters into awareness of the spiral; the spiral 'reaches' in a continual series of movements, incorporating 'stories from different times and places'" (79). Because time is embodied, "centred in the being," it is possible to "reac[h] out" to ancestors and the unborn existing on different circles within the spiral. Time is an "internal process, centred and balanced 'in the being' which is then replicated in narration"

(Deloughrey 61). In teaching Manu and Toko the stories of their people, Roimata comes to understand this embodiment. Too deep of an immersion in settler stories and education without a foundation in Māori story threatens the loss of access to spiralic time. Roimata's intervention resists this potential loss by prioritizing Māoritanga. Story can therefore be understood as one way in which this temporal worldview is imparted and strengthened. Roimata understands the necessity of both storyteller and audience, of keeping Māoritanga strong by carrying and imparting her community's stories.

Roimata's school highlights the relational nature of story by situating it squarely within community. By encouraging the exchange of stories among family members, Roimata's homeschool makes it possible for stories to "bec[o]me, once more, an important part of all our lives" (41). This "train of stories" becomes a major part of the family's life as it "curv[es] out from points on the spiral in ever-widening circles from which neither beginnings nor endings could be defined" (41). The more they exchange stories with one another, the more intimate the Tamihana's understanding of spiralic temporality and responsibility to living and non-living relations becomes.

The novel's central conflict is initiated when spiralic and linear storytelling collide. When Mr. Dolman, nicknamed the Dollarman, presents the community with yet another offer for their land, he weaves a story of capitalist development in linear terms. This scene demonstrates a stark incommensurability between Pākehā and Māori worldviews that plays itself out across two juxtaposed stories that are parried back and forth by Mr. Dolman and Roimata's Uncle Stan (chosen to speak on behalf of the community). Mr. Dolman's story is one of Eurowestern conceptions of progress that would see the land carved into space for "[f]irst class accommodation, top restaurants, night club, recreation centre with its own golf links—

eventually, covered parking facilities . . . and then of course the water amenities . . . launch trips, fishing excursions, jet boating . . .” (88). Where Mr. Dolman sees “endless possibilities,” the Māori community sees the very opposite (88). Uncle Stan responds to each of Mr. Dolman’s attempts to sell the idea to the community with reasoning as to why “none of those things would be of any advantage to our people here” (88). The following exchange demonstrates how divergent understandings of “progress” are depicted as untranslatable:

> “But you see, we already have jobs, we’ve got progress . . .”
>
> “I understand, perhaps I’m wrong, that you’re mostly unemployed?”
>
> “Everything we need is here. This is where our work is.”
>
> “And progress? Well it’s not . . . obvious.”
>
> “Not to you. Not in your eyes. But what we’re doing is important. To us. To us that’s progress.”
>
> “Well maybe our ideas are different. Even so . . . ” (90)

The divergent stories of “progress” exemplified here are untranslatable because of Mr. Dolman’s failure to consider that other worldviews, conceptions, and understandings of “progress,” exist in the first place. The iwi’s (“nation or kinship group”) refusal to sell their land is tied to the responsibility they feel for the land upon which they live—a responsibility that becomes easier to understand when you see the past, present, and future as co-existing within a now-time that has been taught through the reciprocal storytelling process. For Roimata’s iwi, progress is returning to their land and strengthening their relationship with that land.

Mr. Dolman has a linear conception of time that legitimizes his capitalist view of progress as constant movement in a single direction obsessed with accruing and consuming resources to maintain dominance over competitors. When Uncle Stan explains that his community has no desire for development because everything they need already comes from the

land and they have a responsibility to care for it, Mr. Dolman accuses them of being stuck in the past: "'And you're looking back, looking back, all the time'" (93). They counter his attack: "'Wrong. We're looking to the future. If we sold out to you what would be in the future? . . . It's your jumping-off place that tells you where you'll land. The past is the future'" (94). Roimata's community will not move their ancestral buildings and their homes for "what [the Dollarman] call[s] progress, or for money" (94). Staying where they are, staying connected to their lands, is progress because it allows them to recentre their own ways of being, their own traditions, and their own resurgence. This scene serves as a reminder of how the relationships between story and time can impact conceptions of progress that subvert and undermine Indigenous land claims and self-determination. By centring their own stories and telling them within community, as Roimata's family does at home and on their land, an Indigenous understanding of progress emerges.

The relationship between storytelling and now-time can be most clearly observed in Toko's "special knowing" that might remind readers, however differently, of Apelles's omniscience (Grace 43). This special knowing is mentioned throughout the novel as a quality associated with "ancestral knowledge and . . . described by Grace in an interview as matakite . . . foresightedness" (Grace qtd. in Barker, *Postcolonial Fiction* 35–36). Rather than controlling the story as its narrator (like Apelles), "[a]ll stories belong to [Toko]" (Grace 38). Speaking about having a curved spine and often using a wheelchair, Toko notes that he has "been given other gifts from before [he] was born. [He] knows all his stories" (43). Possessing access to all stories suggests that Toko lives more fully within now-time, and is more readily able to see the contours of the spiral than those around him. This special ability makes it possible for Toko to tell stories that no one else knows: stories from before his birth and after his death.

In various scenes across the novel, Toko tells stories of events that have occurred not only before and after he was born, but from moments in childhood that many would struggle to recall. For example, in "big fish story" Hemi was taking Tangimoana and James to catch herring in the lagoon (47). Toko knew there was a big fish waiting for him to catch and he joined their expedition (something he rarely did): "[t]hat's what I remember very clearly about that night. I remember the sureness that I had. I remember clearly that I *knew*. I knew that I would go. I knew that there would be a big fish for me" (47). Predictably, Toko hooks a giant conger eel and with the help of his family brings it to shore. This event brings about Toko's realization that his "knowingness" is different: "[i]t is a before, and a now, and an after knowing, and not like the knowing that other people have. It is a now knowing as if everything is now" (52). Toko's recognition that he has access to all stories is met with an understanding of the interconnected nature of the world around him and the responsibility he has been given in being able to see that "everything is now," and that "all time is a now-time."

Throughout the novel, Toko uses his foresightedness to draw his family's attention to changes that are coming to their communal stories, changes they will need to take control of to survive. Roimata—remembering—tells the story of Toko hurrying in to announce "'[t]he stories are changing'" (70). Out of breath and flustered, Toko asks Roimata a series of questions about the people that are on their way. Roimata, puzzled, tells him she does not know who he is talking about (70). Readers hear the same phrase from Toko later in the novel:

> I have my own story about when the Dollarman came. *Our stories were changing*. It is a story of a feeling and a knowing . . . The first began deep inside me and the redness of it went through me and leapt and scattered against the walls. The wood fathers and wood mothers coloured and writhed, and their eyes were pinkish and flickering. There it was, and then it was gone. I was torched with the meaning of it all. (96; emphasis added)

The story describes not only Toko's death in the explosion set by the developer—"I was torched with the meaning of it all"—but the burning of the wharenui. In linear terms, the fire that burns down the wharenui occurs prior to Toko's death, but because Toko is eventually carved into the newly built wharenui as a memorial that places him among ancestors, he also feels the "wood fathers and wood mothers" burning as the wharenui went up in flames. Toko's special knowing helps his community prepare for the arrival of the developers, but he does not directly tell them what it will mean for his own life.

As pressure from the developers increases and the Tamihana family focuses more on caring for their land, Roimata reflects: "What Toko said was also true—the stories had changed" (103). After the flooding of the urupa by the developers, Toko says "[t]he stories changed. There is a story of water, but there is also a story of colours, and a story of stars. In the water story the gardens were ruined by rain and mud, and one side of the urupa began to slide" (115). Roimata also recalls Toko telling her, after the flood, that "'[t]he stories have changed,' he said. He was weary as he leaned against me, and his words came slowly. 'And there's a night of colours. And also a night of stars'" (133). After the developers burn down the wharenui, Roimata recalls Toko's words once again: "Our stories had changed. It was as Toko had said, the stories had changed. And our lives had changed. We were living under the machines, and under a changing landscape, which can change you, shift the insides of you" (151). The connection between stories and lives changing is hereby made explicit, supporting the ability of storytelling to shift reality.

Throughout the novel, Toko references the specific stories that are changing. He references: the story of water (referring to the flooding of the urupa), the story of colours and the story of sounds (referring to the night of colours and sounds when the wharenui is burned down), and the story of stars. By paying careful attention to the stories told by the other characters, the

reader can infer that the story of stars is about the night Toko is killed. These suspicions are confirmed in the novel's final chapter, entitled "Potiki" and told by the Potiki, Toko, as he recounts the events of his death: "There is one more story to tell but it is a retelling. I tell it to the people and the house. I tell it from the wall, from where yesterday and tomorrow are as now. I know the story of my death. I tell it from the tree. The night was a night of stars" (181). Toko explains how, waking up to find his brother Manu had wandered off while sleepwalking, he follows Manu to the newly rebuilt wharenui. Toko enters from the door built especially for him at the top of a ramp for his wheelchair when he hears "bursting sounds" and, trying to back his chair through the doorway, realizes that the doorway has become "the toothed aperture through which all must pass" (183). Toko then reveals that he is now telling this story from "this place of now, behind, and in, and beyond the tree, from where I have eversight, I watch the people" (183). Readers will know from a previous story narrated by Toko's brother James that Toko the Potiki has died and has become a carving in the wharenui. It is from this place, "the tree," that the Potiki tells his story and watches over his relations.

Warned that their stories are changing, Roimata's iwi prepares to take control of those shifting narratives and dedicate them to memory for future generations. Like Apelles, Roimata's community understands the relational nature of storytelling, and that it must be received by a listener, a viewer, a reader, who participates actively in the storytelling process and carries the story forward with them. In this way, storytelling is clearly situated as an act of resurgence. The link between story's reciprocal nature and its ability to alter the lives of Indigenous Peoples is also observable in *Becoming Me* as Liya becomes aware of the damaging stories told about the Adivasis of Assam.

Incongruous Narratives

While arguably the most divergent from *Translation* and *Potiki* in form, *Becoming Me* still depicts storytelling as a practice grounded in relational and reciprocal engagement. In *Becoming Me*, story is essential to the transmission of knowledge as a means of survival and self-determination for the Adivasis of Assam and more specifically for the Santals. Here, story creates new relationships and strengthens old ones as it works to inscribe Santal presence against the painful assimilationist tide Adivasis face within Assam where they are forced to suppress their identities, their language, and customs in order to survive. In *Becoming Me* story is primarily represented orally, underscoring both the history and contemporaneity of Santal oral culture. Most often when stories are told, they are intended to educate their audience in ways of being and knowing, or with narratives of survival that impart knowledge about the shared struggles between different Adivasi groups. The reciprocal relationship embedded in storytelling deepens solidarity among Adivasis by transmitting knowledge that can strengthen community and tribe.

Story's relational nature is foregrounded across several scenes in *Becoming Me*. Often, the stories focus on Santal ways of being and knowing, and readers are invited to gain an intimate understanding of how sustaining the stories of one's community contributes to its survival and resurgence. Frequently in the novel, story is imparted by Liya's Paa, her grandfather and close confidant. In the novel's first chapter, "Belonging," a young Liya is at home in the village where her parents and grandparents live. After an earthquake, Paa tells Liya the Santal Creation story to explain how Santals interpret earthquakes: "In the beginning there was water and no land" so the supreme being, Thakur Jiv, called upon various animals to try and bring mud to the surface to create land (11–12). The alligator is the first to try, followed by the lobster, the

land fish, and finally the earthworm who is successful because they ask the tortoise to "stand still on the water . . . [with] feet chained to the four corners of the world" (11–12). Now, "when the tortoise wants to move the whole earth shakes and people call it an earthquake" (12). This origin story underscores the importance of connection to land for the Santal People by demonstrating one way that story can contextualize the behaviour of the land. Knowing that sometimes the turtle will move and cause the earth to shake demonstrates a deeper understanding of the agency the land has and the importance of human ability to interpret the land's expressions.

Within the same chapter, the harvest festival Sohrai is taking place and Liya asks her Paa why Santals celebrate this holiday. Paa proceeds to tell Liya the history of the five major Santal festivals, including Sohrai, which is specifically celebrated in December–January as a "harvest festival, where we offer the first fruits to Thakur Jiv, who has helped us and protected our crops" (15). Once again, Paa's stories centre communion with the land and celebrate Santal presence within a vast ecology of being. Liya's education provides her with an early understanding of how Santal people relate to the world around them. Liya's understanding of the responsibility her people have to their community, a broad network that includes the turtle upon which she stands, is complicated by her experiences in the 1996 ethnic riots that occur in the subsequent chapters of the novel.

Prior to the riots, Liya enjoys reciting the National Pledge of India at school every morning because it makes her feel she is "a true Indian" (25). The National Pledge imparts a particular story about India as a nation. Among its lines, the pledge states that "*India is my country and all Indians are my brothers and sisters. I love my country and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage*" (24–25). This statement makes Liya swell with pride for her country's acceptance of diversity. In particular, Liya feels that the "*rich and varied heritage*" celebrated in

India's national anthem, which is always sung after the pledge, symbolizes her country's "strength and unity" (24–25). She believes that this multicultural embrace is inclusive of the Adivasi Peoples of Assam and of the very stories her Paa has told her about the Santal People.

The violence Liya witnesses during the ethic riots undermines the alleged reality of a united, multicultural India. In the refugee camp, however, Liya observes and embraces the solidarity that can be found, and the information that can be shared, when Adivasis from different tribes come together and share story. These scenes are more communal in nature than the intimate storytelling Liya often experiences with Paa, but the information they impart is no less important. In sharing their difficult survival narratives with one another, the Adivasis in the refugee camp recognize the legitimacy of one another's suffering—a recognition not afforded to them by the state.

In the camp, Paa tells the painful story of his personal loss to Liya and those gathered around. Paa has been poor his whole life. As an orphan he was adopted by an old man, but their family could never afford to send him to school, so he has been working ever since he was a child: "I just made up my mind to work as hard as possible to ensure my children study" (38). Paa skipped meals to send money to Liya's father at college and he worked for years, "toiling hard in the rain and the sun," to build four houses (38). The riots took away everything he built "in a flicker," destroying their family compound along with all the Adivasi villages in the neighbouring four districts (38). As Paa gives his testimony, other Adivasis gather around and share similar traumatic stories of loss. Many have lost family members and experienced harrowing journeys to reach the camp (38–39). No doubt motivated by her Paa's story, Liya works hard to study while in the camp and still manages to pass her yearend exams. Liya reflects: "[t]his is perhaps the most suppressed Adivasi people in Assam as we are naïve,

illiterate, weak, empty handed and starving for food . . . [even] the government has failed to secure our peoples lives" (46). One of the takeaways from Paa's story for Liya is the importance of education for Indigenous Peoples so they can change their reality and, subsequently, the stories and assumptions made about them.

Returning to school many months later, Liya is unable to make sense of the pledge and anthem. She wonders, "'[w]hose well-being are these lines talking about? Am I not included in that? Are we not all brothers and sisters? Do we not love our country? Are we striving towards the country's honour or dishonour? Do we have respect and courtesy for teachers, parents, elders and each other? This pledge just remains empty lines for me'" (47). She questions the school's nationalist curriculum and observes the disconnect and hypocrisy between national narratives of belonging and her lived experience. The story told by the pledge and national anthem demonstrate an erasure of the ethical responsibility all people have to one another, the values of which are passed down in stories from her Paa.

At school, Liya and her Adivasi friends counter these national narratives by sharing the stories of their experiences during the riots. Taking turns, they bear witness to each narrative: "all my Adivasi friends started sharing their experiences of the horror we faced. I wonder how many stories have been suppressed or kept untold within and among the Adivasis of Assam" (49). Liya's reflection suggests the importance of sharing story with community and the potential storytelling has to change reality. For Liya, there is an important process of recognition that occurs when stories of similar experience are shared and Adivasis like herself realize they are not alone and that something needs to change. Her friend Nilu states, "[w]e are so naïve dear, that's why we become prey for them. We have no value in this society. Our lives make no difference to our neighbours, this is how others and the government treats us" (48). Nilu's conclusion

highlights the brutal reality faced by the Adivasis of Assam: so long as conditions remain the same, they will continue to be taken advantage of and treated as though they are less than human. It is clear among Liya's friends, however, that education can give your voice—and story—greater value, and so they promise each other that no matter what happens they will continue their studies (49). In this way, the young women could enact a change in the harmful stories told by and about their People.

A Narrator Emerges

Like Liya, Roimata, and Toko, Apelles knows he must take control of his own narrative and carve out a space where he can be read by responsible readers. This control is observable in the metafictional layer that emerges when readers learn that Apelles has been the narrator all along. Revisiting the story with this in mind, the novel's self-referentiality and Dr Apelles's longing for a literal reader for *Translation* becomes visible. Apelles experiments with various narrative styles for Dr Apelles's story and breaks narrative distance on several occasions to reach the novel's reader. These moments effectively highlight the importance of the relationship between the storyteller and audience, and the reality that storytelling is a collective, reciprocal practice.

By literally changing the narrative, Apelles demonstrates control of the translation. Apelles experiments with different narrative styles in search of one that feels comfortably his own and appropriate for his story. As Dr Apelles slowly embraces his feelings for Campaspe, the novel transits "three archetypal Western styles—English, French, and Hemingway-esque" (Yost 70). In an early dream sequence, these styles and the events of the novel are foreshadowed as Dr Apelles finds himself in the Stacks at RECAP. Standing in the Stacks, Dr Apelles senses that in

order to escape, he must sort the texts in front of him. The stress of where to start is overwhelming, but Campaspe appears to tell him it is more important to begin than to worry about which text to choose (Treuer 75). After making his selection, Dr Apelles is confronted by scene after scene from canonical English-language novels, amidst which he begins to glimpse familiar scenes from his past:

> Was that the landscape of his childhood home? Or was it only a copy of the landscapes one finds in books? Dr Apelles couldn't say . . . What he could see and sense, however, was that each episode has its own tone and style—and thus, a different reality. The dream and the scenes of his early affair with the girl at the round dance hall had something French, something simple-hearted about it, while his boyhood had the hard cast of Hemingway. (79)

This dream "literalizes" Dr Apelles's anxiety over the "mélange of styles" he must transit (69–70). As the novel continues to unfold, readers watch Dr Apelles, and the parallel narrative of Bimaadiz and Eta, move through the three archetypal styles in search of one that Apelles can call his own. Slowly, Dr Apelles begins to shift from his previous position as a translator "standing outside *all* stories, written and lived . . . accustomed to the idea that stories happened to other people, not to him," to an active participant in the living and telling of his own story (25–26). Throughout the dream, one thing is clear to Dr Apelles: "[i]t seemed to be very important that he find a way to control those styles" (80). This control means that Dr Apelles can tell his story as he wants it to be told (to Campaspe) while Apelles tells Dr Apelles's story (to an engaged reader).

Apelles breaks narrative distance frequently, demonstrating not only his narrative self-determination, but his awareness of his audience as active participants in the reciprocal storytelling process. Detailing Dr Apelles's daily life, Apelles invokes the collective "we" as he refers to his readerly audience: "[n]ot forgetting for a moment that it is Dr Apelles' working life *we* are here interested in exploring, *we* will, in any event, step into his apartment" (49; emphasis

added). This rare use of "we" in the novel underscores the shared experience of storytelling for storyteller and reader. A similar appearance occurs later after describing Apelles's biweekly visits to a massage parlour: "*[w]e* mention this aspect of Dr Apelles' life not to titillate or tease the reader, and *we* mention it with no small amount of apprehension given the typically high moral standards of the reading public" (69–70; emphasis added). The reader is hereby implicated in the storytelling process as an essential participant in the reciprocal relationship storytelling necessitates.

Narrative distance is also disrupted in select moments within the pastoral. After Eta is kidnapped and taken aboard the Ariel, an old ferry boat turned brothel, Bimaadiz lays down for a restless sleep. In his dream, he is visited by an "ancient" man who tells him, "I have been in charge of your future and Eta's and I will make sure that she will return safe and sound. And I will do so even though you have never made me an offering" (172). Bimaadiz, grateful and confused, promises to always make offerings if Eta is returned safely. Several pages later, the narrator suggests that this godlike figure may be the narrator themself: "[h]e never told anyone, not even Eta, about what he dreamt. And so, one wonders, how do *we* know? And while that is impossible to answer without destroying the dream itself, it is important that *we* do know what he dreamt if *we* are to understand what happened next" (171; emphasis added). Bimaadiz makes the promised sacrifice by burning the tongue of a butchered bull moose on a fire as an offering to "the man in his dream" (187). The narrator says, "*I* can taste it now" (187; emphasis added). The first-person pronoun here operates as a reminder of how being part of the storytelling process—as storyteller or audience—means gaining the ability to shape reality as the "I" is spoken by both Apelles and the reader. Once Eta has safely returned, the two lie together for warmth and the reader is reassured that "if there had been any onlookers (and there wasn't anyone to look except

for *us*) they would have thought that Bimaadiz was the prettiest boy and Eta the handsomest girl they had ever seen" (185; emphasis added). Once again, Apelles and the reader/audience are referred to collectively as engaged participants in a reciprocal storytelling practice.

The novel's ending demonstrates the most overt example of Apelles taking control of *Translation* and demonstrating his ability as a storyteller to his audience. Formal conventions begin to breakdown as Dr Apelles's translation is shelved by Ms Manger in the Stacks at RECAP. This breakdown manifests as fading capitalization, save for the names of characters and the first-person pronoun; the erasure of quotation marks; the departure from long paragraphs to short sentences that "could not be, or seem to be, anything other than" what they are (143). Here, the two metafictional layers fuse as Apelles confesses to both Campaspe and the reader that he is the narrator and he "know[s] everyone here better than they know themselves" (310). The protagonist Dr Apelles is no more, and we are witnessing omniscient Apelles reveal to the reader and characters that everything from the "'Translator's Note' forward has been 'make-believe,' not an actual account [or translation] of [Dr Apelles's] life" (Eils 40–41). Treuer himself confirms this: "there are many 'traps' and 'tricks' in Dr Apelles that continually force the reader to remember that it is made up, constructed, a 'novel universe'" (Treuer qtd. in Kennedy 58).

The realization that her reality is a fiction is a lot for Campaspe to process. When she confesses to losing the translation and to being shocked that the "translation is really [Apelles's] translation. it is [Apelles's] story," Apelles reassures her that he already knew this would take place (*Translation* 309–10). Campaspe reflects, "I was wondering why each section sounded so different," to which Apelles replies, "I did not know yet who I was. I had no language for myself" (312). Reflecting on her own fictionality and the power Apelles has as a narrator, Campaspe initiates the following exchange:

> you make me seem prettier than I really am, she says.
> oh no, he says. no no no, I don't think so, he says. you're as pretty there as you're supposed to be.
>
> and I don't even own a white sweater, she says.
>
> but you do now, he says.
>
> I suppose I do. can I have a red one, too?
>
> sure. there, he says . . .
>
> this all feels like make-believe . . . but everyone is going to think you made all this up. I can't believe it's actually happening.
>
> it is happening, he says, his eyes wild. it *is* happening and what's wrong with make-believe? isn't that how it works: we make belief? besides, happiness is more real than any illusion. (311–312)

By conjuring a white sweater for Campaspe and changing its colour to red at her request, Apelles proves his position and power as author-narrator of their reality, as calculating storyteller. In this moment, Apelles speaks to the crucial role of belief in storytelling as something that must be present if story is to enact resurgence, to change reality and enact its world-making and remaking potential.

Believing that Apelles knows everyone here better than they know themselves, Campaspe asks him: "then who knows you?" (313). Apelles acknowledges that Campaspe knows him "and they do, too, looking up. *they* know me best of all" (313; emphasis added). Apelles refers to the reader and once again highlights the relational nature of story. Speaking to this passage, Eils asserts that "Apelles is not a character-narrator who transparently relates the intimacies of his life or a 'native informant' translating his culture, but a calculating storyteller who confronts his audience with his own fictionality to foreclose any possibility that his story might be mined for cultural truths" (41). Giving his audience a knowing look, Apelles acknowledges his readers who know that everything they have read is a fiction.

Apelles closes the narrative by returning to Dr Apelles, who is standing alone in his apartment. Here, Apelles bookends the novel with a familiar sentence that encourages readers to reread for greater understanding. Looking out the window, Dr Apelles whispers: "I was looking for a book. A very particular book in a vast and wonderful library" (315). These words mirror those of the "Translator's Introduction": "*I was looking for a book. A very particular book in a vast and wonderful library*" (1). These sentences bring the novel's form full circle to underscore the importance of, and potential in, rereading and retelling story. Closing *Translation* with a return to the beginning, Apelles reminds his readers that stories need engaged audiences to perform their communal acts of resurgence.

Oral and Carved Story

The communal nature of the storyteller-audience relationship is differently highlighted in *Potiki* as Roimata's community comes together to tell its story. Storytelling is primarily represented in the novel as oral and carved, and both manifestations of story require a community to bring them to life. Looking first at orality, as a physical novel *Potiki* presents readers with a written translation of oral storytelling practices. In an interview with P. F. Calleja, Grace notes:

> *Potiki* is set out like a whaikorero, a piece of oratory, and a formal piece of oratory has a format to it. It will often have at its beginning a chant, tauparapara it's called, something that brings the attention towards the speaker. And then we have the greetings. Then will come the body or main part of the speech and at the end there will often be 'Ka huri' to turn over to another next speaker or the next storyteller to tell his/her story. (114)

The novel represents a communal experience relayed to readers by multiple narrators as with a whaikorero. Each chapter, titled with the name of its narrator, is a different oral story. This chorus of voices is essential as their varied perspectives and subjectivities stitch together the larger narrative of Roimata's community. As Rask Knudsen explains, "[t]he principles of Māori

storytelling are equally communal, and are obviously inspired by the traditional metaphor of 'making the net world'. A narrative is composed through the sharing of stories, symbolized, for instance, by the traditional 'weaving chants' which are an obvious influence on contemporary Māori literature" (*The Circle and the Spiral* 59). This "communal performance" underscores the reality that the "value of the individual story lies in the degree to which it is also a reflection of the community" (203). Below, I look more closely at the novel's oral storytellers—narrators—to illuminate how orality is mobilized in *Potiki* to tell a communal story.

Recalling my earlier discussion around the koru and Māoritanga, the spiral is an important motif in Māori storytelling practices (Walker 224). Oral stories come into existence in the present and are shaped in and through that present moment (Rask Knudsen, *The Circle and the Spiral* 58). Oral stories are also non-linear, embracing digression and spiraling off in arcs that bob and weave back through the main stream of the narrative. Spiraling progression can therefore be understood as "a major inspiration in contemporary Māori literature—and sometimes even a matrix of the narrative—because it offers a perspective from which Māori culture is seen to carry, intrinsically, the seeds of its own continuing renewal" (5). Glossing Claude Levi-Strauss, Rask Knudsen observes that:

> . . . people in oral cultures 'totalize' and become subsumed into the world that words create; they perceive the world simultaneously as both a diachronic and synchronic totality . . . past and present may coexist because words uttered in the present—as 'presence'—have the power to reiterate past events . . . instead of lending themselves to mere descriptive summary. Writing, on the other hand, turns the past into 'history' and makes it available as a separate linear category deposited in archives. (*The Circle and the Spiral* 42)

This *totalizing* process can be thought of in terms of the embodied nature of oral storytelling. In Māori oral tradition, the story and the storyteller fuse as the teller enacts the story with their voice and bodily gestures: "the story is embodied in the storyteller" (Emberley 213).

Understanding story and temporality as embodied (as I previously mentioned) informs my reading of oral storytelling in *Potiki* by distancing a disembodied relationship with story and time typical of Eurowestern worldviews.

Oral storytelling is present from the very beginning of the novel. Before the narrative begins, the following Māori creation chant opens the Prologue, itself adhering to marae ("hospitality") protocol:

> From the centre,
> From the nothing,
> Of not seen,
> Of not heard,
>
> There comes
> A shifting,
> A stirring,
> And a creeping forward,
>
> There comes
> A standing,
> A springing,
> To an outer circle,
>
> There comes
> An intake
> Of breath –
>
> Tihe Mauriora. (7)

The "centre" to which the chant refers is "that of the first circle in the spiral of human cognition," while the "nothing" is a reference to the "first stage of creation of 'Te Kore' (the Void), an original nothingness of silence and invisibility in which nothing moves and nothing [i]s seen or heard" (3). Te Kore is the source of all things, and this creation chant foreshadows and centres the unlimited potential of what is to come (Wood 117). The "intake/Of breath," the "Tihe Mauriora" is the sneeze (tihe) of the life principle (mauri) (Kinnane 76). The embodiment of oral storytelling—signaled here by the importance of breath—further underscores the novel's

existence as a written translation of oral storytelling. Readers of the novel are invited to join the story in its place on the spiral, an "outer circle" that has sprung "From the centre,/From the nothing." Readers are hereby reminded that the story told in this novel is part of a larger story that has been in process long before they arrived and that will continue long after they have departed.

The novel's multiple parts underscore a holistic worldview that understands the importance of individual parts to the greater whole. After the creation chant, readers are told the story of the master carver of the wharenui and the carver's apprentice—a section which I will return to in my discussion on carving. The chapters appearing after the prologue, in Part One and Two of the novel, are each titled with the name of a character. Twelve of the novel's twenty-nine chapters are narrated by Roimata, nine by Toko, and one by the Potiki. The other six chapters are narrated by an omniscient third person who focuses two chapters on Hemi and one chapter each on Mary, James, the Dollarman, the urupa, and "the stories." The first and third person perspectives demonstrate both the embodied nature of storytelling and the ability for story to be passed on and told by other community members. Taken together, these separate parts communicate the story of Roimata's greater iwi.

Responsible for most of the oral storytelling in the novel, Roimata and Toko's chapters focus on their family and the events surrounding Mr. Dolman's attempts to remove their community from the land. The third-person omniscient chapters take the same focus but are delivered from the outside as if their characters' stories are being told from a more watchful position or by other community members. Considering these third-person chapters as told by someone else supports the communal nature of the text and the reality that these stories belong to everyone in the community. As Roimata notes, "[i]t was good to have others to tell our own

stories to, and to have them there sharing our land and our lives. Good had followed what was not good, on the circle of our days" (145). In moving home, Roimata—formerly a teacher—has become "a teller of stories, a listener of stories, a writer and a reader of stories, an enactor, a collector and a maker of stories" (38). Roimata commits the stories of her family to memory by collecting and passing them on so that her community's library, its archive, is both embodied and written. Eventually, she finds that "what really happened was that we all became all of these things—tellers, listeners, readers, writers, teachers and learners together" (38–39). Centring their own stories, the Tamihanas build an embodied archive carried within each member of their family. *Potiki* itself becomes a reflection of this communal library and of the reality that the stories of this community can be told in the first person by particular people about their experiences or told in the third person about a particular community member (including the ancestors). Storytelling is therefore communal and shared, a reality that is underscored by various narrative positions.

The second to last chapter illuminates the communal, non-linear nature of storytelling in *Potiki*. Entitled "[t]he stories," all the family members shed their names and become "collective characters" only referred to as "man," "woman," etc., but who are discernable to readers. For example, the first person to speak is Roimata because we are told "[a] woman told of how" she returned "after a long time away" (Grace 174). The second speaker is likely Hemi because of his focus on caring for the land, one of his key responsibilities: "A man told of an end that was a beginning . . . His story was of the ground, the earth" (175–76). Readers go on to hear about James and his carving; Tangimoana and her poetry; Toko and his fish; Granny and her songs; and finally about Mary, the "child-woman," who does not have a story to tell, but who sings "along pathways not known" (177–80). As Rask-Knudsen observes, "[w]hat the characters

represent in terms of a Māori consciousness overshadows their individual identities, in the sense that diversity is distilled into unity, individual strengths into collective power" (*The Circle and the Spiral* 212). Readers here become more like listeners, hearing the cycle of voices finally all together at once (211). Oral storytelling is thereby represented as embodied within individuals who themselves are inseparable from the larger whole of their community.

Storytelling in *Potiki* is also depicted in whakairo ("carvings"). The Māori wharenui is one example of "an important cultural site for storytelling" through carving and it plays an important storytelling role in *Potiki* (Rask Knudsen, *The Circle and the Spiral* 187). The carvings present on the inside of the wharenui show one image overlapping with and spiraling into the next, "a particular story [being] attached to each section of the carving" (Rask Knudsen, "On Reading Grace's Potiki" 4). The Māori characters of *Potiki* are all trained readers of these stories, these carvings.

In the Prologue, the story of the wharenui's previous master carver and his apprentice is told by an omniscient third person whose identity is unknown. Upon a second reading, however, readers may recognize this omniscient perspective as the communal voice of Roimata's iwi. When the apprentice has himself become a master, he leaves space on a poupou ("wall pillars and carved wall figures") for a future carving of someone yet to come who he senses will need to be included. The carver calls the iwi into the wharenui to show them his work, and says: "'the lower figure must be left to a future time, for when it is known'" (Grace 11). This poupou is ultimately saved by Mary when the developers set fire to the wharenui. It is not until readers finish the novel and learn of Toko's fate that this scene is imbued with deeper meaning. Readers realize that the space on the poupou was left by the original carver so that James, trained in carving, could add Toko. The saved poupou, then, "was the link from old to new, that's what

everyone said. It was the piece that showed that there had been no real death, or showed perhaps that death is a coiled spring. This piece had been the last one carved for the old house, but had not been completed even then" (154). When readers hear Toko telling his story "from the tree" at the novel's end, it becomes clear that this "tree" is Toko's position on the poupou in the wharenui—a reality foreshadowed in the Prologue (181).

Upon rereading, readers are also privy to the novel's existence as not just a written translation of oral storytelling, but a written translation of the carved wharenui. The chapter immediately before "The stories" focuses on James and sets up "[t]he stories" chapter. The narrator says: "[w]hen most of the visitors had gone, the people whose house it was settled on the mattresses to tell, retell, listen to the stories. The stories were of people and whanaungatanga" (172). Here, a group that has gathered in the wharenui to "tell, retell, listen to the stories," the very stories that appear in the next chapter. Whanaungatanga means "relationship, kinship, sense of family connection – a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging," revealing that these stories are those of the community (Moorfield, "Whanaungatanga"). In this chapter, readers have been invited inside the wharenui to listen to the stories told in the novel.

Invited into the wharenui and knowing Toko is a carved ancestor on its walls, re-readers experience "[t]he stories" chapter differently. Hearing the stories from the now unnamed characters within the walls of the wharenui, it becomes possible to see how the novel is also a translation of the wharenui's carved stories. In "[t]he stories," each character represents part of the wharenui itself as an ancestor on its walls. In this way, the novel's narrative is—and has been—told "from and by the walls of the *wharenui*" (*The Circle and the Spiral* 187). Here, "the voice of the house is the voice of the people; any narrative originating in such a 'text' will have

the community as its protagonist" (*The Circle and the Spiral* 187). "The stories" chapter is therefore intended to reveal where readers have been standing all along: within the wharenui, reading its carved stories. The novel is therefore a communal collection of stories based in and on the lives of a community, which readers enter and visit as they read.

The communal nature of storytelling and the importance of a community controlling its own stories is hereby underscored. As with *Translation* and *Becoming Me*, storytelling's relational nature is central to *Potiki*. Readers who return to *Translation*'s "Translator's Introduction," as with those who return to *Potiki*'s "Prologue," unearth a new interpretive layer for the novel. The importance of retelling story is also highlighted as these are stories to be told and retold by new narrators, shared by and with their communities. Turning back to *Becoming Me*, readers observe Liya as she takes control of her own story and aims to change the stories told about the Adivasis of Assam.

Self-Determination in Storytelling

Remembering her promise to her school friends that they would privilege their education so they might someday change the stories told about Adivasis, Liya remains dedicated to her studies. Attending college, she finds that all her lectures are delivered in Assamese, but she only speaks Santali and English. Liya grew up in Srirampur, Kokrajhar district, Assam, and while she has encountered many Adivasis in Assam who have assimilated and speak Assamese, Liya and her family do not. Non-tribal peoples frequently call her "bagania," a word that Liya must ask her father to explain. In response, he tells her the story of Britain's history in Assam and the creation of the tea gardens. The shortage of labour at the Assam Tea Company meant that "not only Santals [were taken as labourers], there were other indigenous peoples too . . . There were Santal,

Mundas, Oraons and other tribes too. They all worked in the tea gardens" (103–4). Bagania, then, is the name used to refer to tea garden workers, but Liya and her family have never worked in the tea gardens. Liya becomes increasingly frustrated that she is only seen as a bagania, as a member of a Tea or Ex Tea Garden Tribe. Eventually, Liya transfers to a college outside of Assam as the stress of her experience triggers her memories of the riots, causing her to experience symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. Knowing this Santal history, however, helps Liya understand the complex identity politics within Assam—an education that she did not receive at school.

Santal traditional homelands lie primarily in central India, the Ganges Valley and neighbouring areas, but they have since spread across India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and of course, Assam (Chhetri 38–39). As is evident in the novel, Santal people living in Assam have "adopted local life-style and at the same time preserved their own" (40). This preservation involves caring for the lands they live upon so that the land also takes care of them and a balanced ecosystem may be passed to the next generation (43). As Liya's father explains, the Adivasis of Assam are not the only Indigenous Peoples within India. There are many other tribes in both Northeastern India and Assam, such as the Bodo and Naga. These tribes have Scheduled Tribe status and are thereby recognized by the Constitution of India and given access to Reservations: the affirmative action system that provides marginalized peoples with representation in politics, employment, and education, by way of reserved seats. For example, reserved seats in education for those with ST status have lower exam qualification requirements. The Adivasis of Assam do not have ST status and instead are designated as members of the Other Backward Class (OBC). OBC members also receive specific reservations, but none of these account for their histories of indenture or status as Indigenous Peoples. Group such as the

All Adivasi Students' Association of Assam (AASAA) and Assam Tea Tribes Students' Association (ATTSA) agitate for Scheduled Tribe status for Assam's Adivasi Peoples. Such a change in status would go a long way in "ameliorating the historically-oppressed condition of Adivasis in Assam" (Ananthanarayanan 297). Arguments against this shift in status include claims that Adivasis (having come from another region) are not Indigenous, that they face less exploitation than local tribes, that they do not contribute economically, or that they are unwilling to assimilate (298–303). These arguments seek to maintain the exclusion of the Adivasis of Assam from appropriate government recognition so their labour can be continually exploited.

As the novel continues, events involving violence against the Adivasis of Assam steadily increase. Adivasis demand Scheduled Tribe status and Liya becomes interested in finding how she can contribute to the movement. During a visit home, Liya listens to her uncle continue the history her father began:

> Generation after generation have been working in the tea gardens because they don't earn sufficiently to educate their children and ultimately their children become bound to work as tea garden labourers. Adivasis are being exploited in the tea gardens while others who live outside the tea gardens are also victimized, targeted and killed. The British left India in 1947 but yet the Adivasis of Assam are slaves in the tea gardens. They are deprived of their land rights and their identity status, which they deserve being Indians. The Santals, Mundas, Oraons, Kharias and many more are also the sons and daughters of the soil. I have been hearing about our ST status demand since I was still a young boy in the 1960s but till date we have made no headway in Assam. (132)

Despite being in university, this is the first time Liya learns of this history—a reality that demonstrates how deeply Adivasi history is suppressed by hegemonic narratives of India's diversity. In Liya's mind, "[a] tribe is a tribe as long as it maintains its tribal identity, which is strongly upheld by the Adivasis of Assam" (130). Liya is not wrong, but she learns that the structures entrenched by British presence in India persevere in a neocolonial capacity into the

twenty-first century, adversely impacting the Adivasis of Assam and propping up Hindu hegemony.

Liya learns more about the history of her tribe on a visit with her Uncle Karu. Speaking to Liya and her father, Uncle Karu—an educated man who has dedicated his life to recording a written history of the Adivasis of Assam—narrates the history of the Santals, proving that their presence in Assam dates back much further than most know: 150 CE (177). This history contradicts narratives that seek to deny Santal recognition by the state on the basis that the Santals came to Assam only to labour in the Tea Gardens. According to Santal stories, corroborated by Karu's history book (a translation of oral story), Santal people have been on this land for millennia. Karu's dedication to creating a written history of the Santal People seeks to inscribe a written presence alongside the existing oral history. Liya discovers that her father, in a similar effort to strengthen his community, has begun compiling a Santali grammar book in his free time (174). Her father's and uncle's efforts inspire Liya and show her how essential education in Santal ways of being and knowing is to the continuance of Santal culture. Receiving these stories, these histories, and carrying them with her motivates Liya as she prepares to graduate.

Upon completing her post-graduate studies, Liya must decide the direction of her future. She reflects: "It is my dream to work among the Adivasis of Assam. There is no value for their life. It's so inhuman to ignore my own dear ones who are victims of human trafficking" (154). Here, Liya is specifically thinking of the Adivasi women who were being trafficked after the 1996 riots when their lack of options left them vulnerable to victimization. Looking through her old diary, Liya comes across an entry from June 20, 2006, where she wrote "this world is so unsafe for girls" (169). Liya is reminded of a woman who, visiting Liya's home, disclosed the

story of her torture and sexual assault at the hands of non-Adivasis after everyone she knew was killed in the riots (169). It is Liya's hope that there can be fewer stories like this if women are given access to education and if the Adivasis of Assam are recognized as Scheduled Tribes.[43] Ultimately, Liya commits to helping the women who are being trafficked because of the precarious positions the riots put them in.

Storytelling among broader community members also occurs in the novel, demonstrating the importance of story for exchanging information and offering solidarity. On a train with her father and uncle, Liya meets other Adivasis who are travelling to find work after their homes are burned down. Asking them what happened, they explain: "A few days back the local government had asked for their land for building an airport but those people refused because they were living on the land for a long time. So, they indirectly harassed them to make them leave the land" (172–73). This "indirect harass[ment]" results in the death of a young boy who succumbs to burns he sustained from being in one of the huts when it was burnt down (172–73). By listening to these people's stories, Liya and her family offer a form of recognition that affirms Adivasi experiences beyond those that are just Santal. Bearing witness to these experiences of state-sanctioned violence, Liya becomes steadily more aware of how far-reaching Adivasi oppression is within Assam.

As an adult, Liya more fully realizes the bind her people face as they suffer at the hands of the very state they require recognition from. Liya believes that formal education can offer the mobility needed for Adivasis to better advocate for themselves. Liya thinks to herself, "[w]hen I

[43] During his campaign and prior to securing office, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised that if elected he would grant the Adivasis of Assam Scheduled Tribe status within six months. Modi became Prime Minister in May of 2014, the same year *Becoming Me* was published. At the time of writing, the Adivasis of Assam still do not have ST status.

look into the eyes of the youth, they tell me that they long to study and want to live a better life . . . People are not aware of so many things because they are uneducated, they must have knowledge of who they are. Why they are like that and what legal rights do they have according to the Constitution of India? These questions troubled me" (134–35). Liya knows the value of formal—and tribal—education and wonders how she can help her people gain access to it.

Liya eventually decides to dedicate her life to fighting for education for the Adivasis of Assam. Her struggle with this decision is mirrored in the confusion she feels between being both Santal and Indian and loving both Bikas—a family friend who she grows close to—and Kunal—a friend and crush from her childhood. Both men represent different paths for Liya: Bikas, also Santal, is invested in strengthening Indigenous sovereignty, while ambitious Kunal wants Liya to leave Assam to be with him. Ultimately, Liya chooses Bikas because he also believes in changing the stories told about the Adivasis of Assam: "We both believe and agreed that a little bit of sacrifice of joy in two person's lives can build a bigger and better joy for thousands" (198). It is here that the novel ends with Liya reflecting to herself, "[a]nd I came to know that this is not the end of knowing but every moment that I live with my conscious mind is the start of new knowledge" (198). Bikas encourages her to "explore and understand the problems of Santal identity in modern society," and readers are left with a sense of optimism for Liya's future (198).

Readers cannot know what becomes of Liya, but they can assume that Liya is able to help change the stories told about her people as *Becoming Me* is a fictional retelling of Marandi's life. Marandi has written her story in English, no doubt with an eye to a broader reading public that perhaps would never have known about the Santal People or the Adivasis of Assam. Adivaani ("the first voices") Press, that published Marandi's novel, is the first press in India dedicated to printing work by Adivasi writers in English. On its website, adivaani situates itself as an

"archiving, chronicling, publishing and disseminating outfit of and by the 104 million indigenous peoples of India" ("About adivaani").[44] The dissemination of the works published by adivaani are crucial in efforts to make Adivasi voices heard more widely. Additionally, the publishing of *Becoming Me* in English opens up space for cross-cultural connection with other Indigenous novels that centre the essential role of storytelling in Indigenous resurgence.

Constellation of Coresistance

In this chapter, I read resurgence across three Indigenous novels that, while arguably related, have never been placed in conversation. This constellation of coresistance, then, demonstrated one means by which the contemporary Indigenous novel enacts Indigenous resurgence: through representations of storytelling. The juxtaposition of these three novels has therefore illuminated essential elements of story's function as an act of resurgence.

For this dissertation's purpose, the value of constellatory thinking lies in its ability to tell a story that would not exist were its elements separate. As Simpson writes, "[c]onstellations exist only in the context of relationships; otherwise they are just individual stars" (*As We Have Always Done* 215). Each constellation thereby carries specific knowledges that when seen in the night sky, remind the viewer of that knowledge. In Nishnaabeg thought, each constellation appears at a particular time to impart a particular story. Gchi Ojiig ("great fisher"), or the Big Dipper, for example, tells a story that imparts key teachings about "overcoming hardship, struggle, and resolution" in the darkness of winter (214). In this way, it is easy to see how constellations work

[44] I am grateful to Dr. Arun Mukherjee who directed me to adivaani when I expressed interest in Adivasi literatures. I am also grateful to Ruby Hembrom, owner of adivaani, for her knowledge and reading recommendations.

conceptually to reveal "theory, story, and knowledge" to their viewer(s)—and in this case, their reader(s) (212). This chapter, with its focus on storytelling, has its own story to impart.

This constellation of coresistance tells a story about the importance of responsible readership to the reciprocal process of reading. In *Translation*, the need for responsible readers is underscored by the novel's dissimulating metafictional layers, metaphors, intertexts, and styles. Moreover, Dr Apelles's anxiety over finding a reader and translator for his heart whom he can trust to not misinterpret him gestures toward the novel's reader in this reciprocal process. Similarly, Apelles requires a careful reader who will do the work of rereading—as requested by the Translator's Note—so that Apelles and Dr Apelles never perform the role of the native informant. *Potiki* also asks that readers honor the reciprocal relationship between storyteller(s) and audience with its complex translation of oral and carved storytelling told in spiral time. Readers willing to return to the Prologue and reread are rewarded for their coparticipation in the act of storytelling when they learn they have been standing in the wharenui and reading its walls all along. For *Becoming Me*, coparticipation in reciprocal storytelling is also essential to Liya's survival and the endurance of her tribe's knowledges. Additionally, engaged readers of *Becoming Me* who may have been unfamiliar with the struggles facing the Adivasis of Assam gain a better understanding of why the publication of Marandi's novel in English is so vitally important.

Further contributing to this story about the importance of active engagement, this constellation demonstrates how the reciprocal storytelling process supports and makes possible the self-determination of the storyteller. Specifically, the storyteller's ability to control the stories told by and about their People. *Translation* asserts the importance of self-determination through the revelation that Apelles has been the narrator of Dr Apelles's reality all along. Breaking

narrative distance and appearing on several occasions throughout the novel, Apelles attempts to reach attentive readers and show them the fictionality of Dr Apelles's reality so that it cannot be mined for cultural truths. In *Potiki*, self-determination manifests in the iwi's embrace of spiralic temporality. Roimata and her iwi reject linear reality—which is bound up in settler colonialism—by homeschooling her children, refusing to sell their lands, and sharing oral and carved communal story. Liya's desire to learn from her community in *Becoming Me* also contributes to this constellation's story as she can play a role in determining what stories are told about her People. Specifically, Liya's community education teaches her that the stories she learned about multicultural India at school are part of a more sinister project and that the Adivasis have not been able to control the narrative about their history in Assam. Liya's community education makes it possible for her to critique, and begin to change, the stories told about the Adivasis of Assam.

Finally, this constellation's story considers how self-determination—having emerged from an ethical, reciprocal relationship between audience and storyteller—can change reality. By including omniscient narrators—Apelles and Toko—*Translation* and *Potiki* assert how Indigenous characters who rely on reciprocal storytelling for self-determination can begin to alter their realities. Apelles demonstrates this ability in his conversation with Campaspe when he not only changes what she is wearing but shows her how her world has been fiction from the start. Toko's eversight—made possible through an understanding spiral time—grants him a similar understanding of how story changes reality and he warns his family members that the "stories were changing" (Grace 96). Even though Liya does not possess omniscience, she comes to understand, however, that both formal and community education are necessary if she is to change the narrative about the Adivasis of Assam. Her understanding that education needs to be

grounded in community storytelling, and her decision to dedicate her life to helping the Adivasi women of Assam, exhibits how story can enact meaningful change.

The story at the center of this constellation of coresistance is, ultimately, about how a reciprocal relationship between reader/narrator, storyteller/audience can bolster Indigenous self-determination and change reality by changing story. In telling this constellation's story across seemingly disparate Indigenous nations, this chapter reveals a shared vision of Indigenous futurity despite contextual and nation-specific differences. By bringing these novels together, this chapter has sought to create a type of coalition that, as McGlennen would remind us, is necessarily "reminiscent of a kind of nation building, toward a nation both within and beyond one's own tribe" (200). This coalition resists disconnection and underscores how story can unite distant places and Peoples, illuminating Indigenous worlds existing as they have always done despite colonizing attempts at their erasure.

Reading resurgence in storytelling across these Anishinaabe, Māori, and Santal novels also demonstrates the importance of Indigenous internationalism to global Indigenous literary studies. This internationalist perspective foregrounds the "existing ecological networks of relational, empathetic, consensual, and reciprocal connections in which every being is enmeshed," and encourages literary study scholars to invest in cross-cultural perspectives (Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* 24). This internationalism signals the comparative ethics always already present in Indigenous ways of being and knowing, reminding Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers that distant contexts and people are connected and responsible to one another—within and beyond the page. Through representations of resurgence in storytelling, then, these contemporary Indigenous novels contribute to the reclamation and recovery of

relationships with nation-specific knowledges. In the next chapter, I turn my focus to representations of Indigenous languages in the work of Kire, Dimaline, and Figiel.

Chapter Three: Listening to the Language's Stories

Through my language I understand I am being spoken to, I'm not the one speaking.

Jeannette Armstrong (Okanagan), "Land Speaking"

Looking Across: Language and Resurgence

As with storytelling in my previous chapter, language is fundamental to the identities, cultures, and worldviews of Indigenous Peoples. In "Land Speaking," Jeannette Armstrong (Okanagan) details the interdependent relationship between land and language from the perspective of a native Okanagan speaker for whom English is a second language. Armstrong explains that the land the Okanagan People live upon gave them their language: N'silxchn. In this way, the land changes the language and there is "special knowledge in each different place" (146). Armstrong asserts that all Indigenous Peoples' languages emerge from interaction with a "precise geography" that shapes language and worldview (148). Through the presence of Indigenous languages and the indigenization of English—a process that differs by nation, community, and land—Indigenous literatures written primarily in English play important roles in sustaining Indigenous languages.

For Armstrong, the complexity and challenge of indigenizing English from an Okanagan (syilx) perspective lies in the disembodied nature of English. N'silxchn is an embodied, vocally based language—never written down and devised solely for the human voice and body. Armstrong speaks of the difficulty she finds when writing in English:

> I have found a serious lack of fluidity in English grammatical structure. Perhaps here may be found the root of the phenomenon that gives rise to the discussion about linear and nonlinear reality. My writing in English is a continuous battle against the rigidity in English, and I revel in the discoveries I make in constructing new ways to circumvent such invasive imperialism upon my tongue. (159)

Reading Armstrong's words, it is easy to imagine how expression through a language that the land imparts and the body carries would feel incommensurable with English, whose culture of origin ascribes to the belief that the oral advances to the written. Armstrong's answer comes in the form of "Rez English," a colloquial English closer in structure to N'silxchn that facilitates the building of bridges between English and N'silxchn (158–59). Rez English appears throughout Canada and the US, displaying the syntax and sound patterns—the "sounds that the landscape speaks"—of the Indigenous language in that place (Armstrong 158–59).

Indigenous scholars who grew up speaking English and who as adults have dedicated themselves to learning their Indigenous language also feel this "continuous battle." Describing her experience learning Potawatomi, Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi) is transfixed by the way language carries her worldview. For example: "[e]nglish is a noun-based language, somehow appropriate to a culture so obsessed with things. Only 30 percent of English words are verbs, but in Potawatomi that proportion is 70 percent. Which means that 70 percent of the words have to be conjugated, and 70 percent have different tenses and cases" (Kimmerer 53). A language full of verbs is a language, a worldview, that sees the animacy in its surroundings. Instead of "a bay" being a noun that sees water as dead, as inanimately held between shores, a bay in Potawatomi is "to be a bay," a difference that gives life to the water between those shores, to water that could choose to be otherwise (Kimmerer 55). Kimmerer calls this vibrancy *the grammar of animacy*: the way that in "Potawatomi and most other Indigenous languages, we use the same words to address the living world as we use for our family. Because they are our family" (55). This grammar reveals the arrogance existing in English: that to be worthy of respect and moral concern is to be human (Kimmerer 57).

But, as Kimmerer notes, English does not provide much space for respecting this grammar: you are a human or you are a thing. There is some room, however, to incorporate the grammar of animacy into non-Indigenous languages. In English, this distinction might look like seeing an owl in a tree and saying "some*one* is watching us" rather than some*thing.* For Kimmerer, the grammar of animacy is ultimately about becoming native to place by learning how to be at home with all our neighbours (58). Importantly, Armstrong and Kimmerer both underscore the fundamental relationship between worldviews and languages, both non-Indigenous and Indigenous.

Armstrong and Kimmerer also share a dedication to what Joy Harjo (Muscogee) and Gloria Bird (Spokane) call *reinventing the enemy's language* (Harjo and Bird). Through the transformation of enemy languages, a hope exists that reinvention may contribute to the longer process of decolonization through literature (Harjo and Bird). Justice, Vizenor, and Ortiz share a similar understanding. Justice notes that when you begin creating with a new language, you are naming it yours and making it useful (*Our Fire Survives the Storm* 12). English was "indigenized because it had to be . . . Cherokee literature in English is deeply rooted in Indigenousness, by the sheer act of Cherokees asserting their nationhood and cultural continuity through whatever means have been available at the time" (*Our Fire Survives the Storm* 12–13). Here, Justice reminds readers that European culture does not necessarily subsume Indigenous Peoples—that the opposite also occurs. For Vizenor, it is possible for the English language to simultaneously be the language of colonial violence while also being a language of "imagination and liberation" that carries stories of survivance and endurance (106). As I mentioned in my Introduction, Ortiz sees this reinvention as part of the process of protecting "the indigenous mind and psyche" in order to survive colonization (9). Indigenous authors writing in English have not "succumbed" to

English and forgotten or been forced to abandon their Indigeneity, as the colonial project would have them believe (Ortiz 10). Rather, they are and have been able to maintain their ways of being and knowing through the use of any language (Ortiz 10). This both/and approach to English, and colonial languages more broadly, embraces the complexity and dynamic nature of Indigenous experience.[45]

Ultimately, what these scholars underscore is the key role language plays in sustaining Indigenous ways of knowing and being. In this chapter, I carry their perspectives forward as I consider how Dimaline's, Figiel's, and Kire's novels represent Anishinaabemowin, Gagana Samoa, Tenyidie, and indigenized Englishes as modes of resurgence capable of building connections across colonial borders and boundaries. By representing language as everyday acts of resurgence, the contemporary Indigenous novel thereby reclaims and recovers relationships with traditional ways of knowing and being. Reading resurgence across these diverse contexts resists the disconnection so necessary to settler futurity, underscoring how language sustains Indigenous worlds continuing to exist as they have always done. Before turning to a focused review of the literature on each novel, the next section provides a brief synopsis of each text.

[45] The relationship between language and culture is also highlighted by a famous debate in postcolonialism between Chinua Achebe (Igbo) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Kikuyu) regarding the language of African literature. Wa Thiong'o argues that African literature should be written in African languages (his native Kikuyu, e.g.) and then translated where necessary precisely because language is the carrier of culture and the key to the decolonization of native African minds (wa Thiong'o). Differently, Achebe argues that African literature could be written in foreign (e.g., English, French) and native languages (e.g., Igbo, Kikuyu): "I have been given this language and I intend to use it" (348). For Achebe, the English language has the capacity to support his African experience but only if it becomes a "new English" that has been altered and infused with elements of the relevant Indigenous culture (349).

Synopses

In *Marrow Thieves*, settler people suffer from "a plague of madness" that emerges when they lose the ability to dream after a settler-induced ecological apocalypse (Dimaline 53). Upon discovering the disturbing reality that the bone marrow of Indigenous Peoples provides an antidote, settlers begin hunting, imprisoning, and forcing Indigenous Peoples to undergo lethal bone marrow extraction. Former residential schools provide the troubling infrastructure for this system, brought back with a new, uncanny application. Sixteen-year-old Frenchie, the novel's protagonist, lives with a family of two Elders and eight youth who meet while on the run from neo-Indian Agents called Recruiters. As they travel, the Elders—Miigwans (Miig) and Minerva—teach the youth "old-timey" traditional stories, skills, and pieces of "the language," Anishinaabemowin that Minerva imparts to them (39).

Organized around Hunting and Homesteading, Miig and Minerva swap groups of youth characters every three months to ensure an even distribution of knowledge. Miig focuses on Hunting: teaching the youth trapping, shelter preparation, weapon-building and use. When focused on Homesteading, they learn how to cook, (un)pack camp, skin and prepare animals (33–39). Homesteading also brings with it the privilege of language learning. During the time in which most of the novel's events take place, the women and girls focus on Homesteading and learning Anishinaabemowin from Minerva. Sharing story is also an essential part of the family's broader teachings. When gathered together, Miig tells Story (communal oral history), and the family members share their own coming-to stories (a form of genealogy). When French's family eventually joins a larger resistance movement composed of Indigenous Peoples from across North America, they observe similar "old-timey" practices: sweat lodge (168), growing sweetgrass (168), hunting and checking traplines (185, 194), and round dance drumming and

singing (189–91). After merging with the resistance, French's family learns that speaking the language can disrupt the marrow extraction process. *Marrow Thieves* ends with the resistance movement possessing the tools needed to protect themselves as they move into an uncertain future.[46]

Where We Once Belonged is semi-autobiographical and focuses on Alofa Filiga—Alofa being the word for love in the Samoan language—a thirteen-year-old girl coming-of-age in a fictional Western Samoan village called Malaefou in the 1970s.[47] The novel follows Alofa as she moves from adolescence into young adulthood, splitting her time between school, home, and the intrigues of village life. She is often in the company of her closest friends: Lili (Ma'alili), who is seventeen years old, and Moa (Moamoalulu), who is sixteen. The three young women refer to themselves as the Charlie's Angels, with most of the townspeople also calling them by their TV names: Kelly (Lili), Jill (Alofa), and Sabrina (Moa).

Alofa and her friends are both witness to and victims of the omnipresent patriarchal, sexist culture in neocolonial Western Samoa. The novel progresses across three discernable (albeit unmarked) sections: (i) the first is narrated by Alofa as a young girl, (ii) the second is told by a third-person omniscient narrator who looks back on Alofa's teen years and specific events in her family and community, and (iii) the third returns to Alofa's perspective as she narrates two key events that came to define her youth. Among the core events of the novel, two painful and traumatic discoveries emerge: Lili's father, Iosua, has raped her and she miscarries the child; and Alofa's father, Filiga, has been having an affair with her teacher, Mrs Samasoni. When Alofa

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[46] *Hunting By Stars,* a sequel to *Marrow Thieves,* was published in 2021 and follows a seventeen-year-old Frenchie as his community continues their fight for survival.

[47] Alofa's age is important because, as Figiel explains, "within the social hierarchy [in Samoa] young girls are the ultimate bottom of things. I wanted to prioritize their voices. No one asks for an opinion from a child . . . there is a sense that children are seen and not heard" (Figiel qtd. in Ellis 75).

discovers Filiga's indiscretion, Filiga psychologically tortures her in retribution. When Filiga finds Alofa at the beach having her first sexual experience with a boy, her father channels all his frustration into Alofa. He beats her and shaves her head so she can publicly carry both her shame and his.

The relationship between Alofa and her Aunt Siniva is at the core of the novel's final section. Siniva is Alofa's "alter ego," the village "madwoman," who returns from the promised land of metropolitan New Zealand with great potential to change and improve her home village of Malaefou (Sinavaiana-Gabbard 484). Siniva has a master's degree in history which has opened her eyes to the history of her home island and its fraught worship of its colonizer. Siniva rejects a "good" government job along with all things Western and Christian to return to traditional ways. She becomes a recluse, sadly losing her vision and living alone among the animals on the outer border of the village. She spends her days listening to the messages from the ancestors who communicate with her through the animals, instructing her to spread the stories of the old gods to the new generation. The people of Malaefou cannot understand Siniva and wonder how such a bright woman could throw away such an allegedly promising future. They fail to take seriously Siniva's unpopular truths, her critiques of Western influence, problematically labelling her the "village idiot." Ultimately, Siniva commits suicide by drowning.[48]

Kire's *Don't Run, My Love* is a folk narrative, or "people story," which carries traditional knowledge (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'" 30). The novel centres a young widowed mother,

[48] Siniva is reminiscent of the "been-to" character so often found in postcolonial literature. Been-to characters leave home to study in the colonial metropole and return to their home country unable to fit back in as expected. For example: Baako from Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (1983), Modin from Ayi Kwei Armah's *Why Are We So Blest?* (1972), Ato from Ama Ata Aidoo's *Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965), Samba from Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure* (1961), and Mustafa and the narrator in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966).

Visenuo (Azuo, Viseu), and her daughter "of marriageable age," Atuonuo (Tuonuo), during the rice harvesting season in the village of Kija—an ancient village of the Angami tribe of Naga People (43).[49] When the women meet Kevi, a mysterious and handsome man who offers to help with their labours through the harvest, the women cautiously accept. Kevi continues to help the women through the season and his frequent hunting provides them with additional food. As a small village, Kija is a place where the villagers search for and trade gossip, where the villagers must carefully manage the optics of everyday behaviour to maintain respect and social standing. When family and villagers see Kevi helping Visenua and Atuonuo, they commit to figuring out the identity of the strange man. After all, it is highly uncommon for anyone to enter their lives who they could not locate within the greater genealogy of the village. Town Elders warn the women to heed the customs of the community and be careful who they socialize with if they want Atuonuo to have a chance at obtaining a good marriage.

Events reach a climax when Kevi proposes to Atuonuo and she rejects him, uncertain about the decision to marry the strange outsider. Eventually, she changes her mind and sneaks out of the village to find him and deliver the news. Women are taught to never be alone in public, especially with strange men, but Atuonuo risks her reputation to accept his proposal. Upon accepting, an overjoyed Kevi convinces Atuonuo to stay the night with him in her family's field hut as a storm makes returning to the village impossible. After realizing where her daughter has gone and worrying for her safety, Visenua makes her way to the field hut. Atuonuo bursts out the trees, covered in blood and screaming that they need to run, that Kevi revealed himself to be a *tekhumevi*—a "were-tiger" (Kire 78). Knowing that they cannot return to Kija because Kevi

[49] The Angami are one of the major Naga ethnic groups and tribes Indigenous to Nagaland: a Northeast state in what is currently India.

will find them, the two women travel to the Village of Seers, the cradle of ancient Naga spiritual knowledge, in search of help (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'" 43). When they finally meet the old seer, he advises them to seek out the woodsman, Keyo, a hunter their society designated to kill tekhumevi. As soon as they find Keyo, Kevi attacks Atuonuo. The woodsman sees the attack and quickly kills the were-tiger, ensuring the safety of the two women. In conclusion, my reading of this chapter's three novels will demonstrate the essential role Indigenous languages and indigenized Englishes have in resurgence. In the next section, I focus on the critical reception for each novel.

Literature Reviews

The Marrow Thieves

Since its publication in 2017, *Marrow Thieves* has continued to receive steady critical attention. Scholars have attended to the novel's engagement with storytelling as it relates to kinship, temporality, and resurgence (Zanella; De Vos; Samuelson and Evans); the text's critical take on resource extraction, climate change, racism, and the impacts of the anthropocene (Amanolahi; Ingwersen; Xausa); its unique approaches to transgenerational and transnational concerns (Brydon; Cannella; Heise-von der Lippe); the connection between grounded normativity (connection to land and community) and coming of age (Rose); and its didactic functions (Ketcheson). Most recently, Emily Childers and Hannah Menendez consider how collective memory and storytelling in both *Marrow Thieves* and Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God* challenge the role of linear reality under scientific progress (Childers and Menendez). Differently, Christina Turner's work interprets water through the Cree and Métis concept for kinship, family, or relation: *wahkohtowin* (Turner). Taken together, these interventions highlight

the timely nature of Dimaline's novel as one that understands the inextricable relationship between the climate crisis and colonialism.

Relatively little of the work written by scholars on *Marrow Thieves* engages with the role of language in the text. I am indebted to Petra Fachinger's article on Anishinaabemowin in Lesley Belleau's (Anishinaabe) *Indianland*, Karen McBride's (Algonquin Anishinaabe) *Crow Winter*, and Dimaline's *Marrow Thieves*. Fachinger argues that these authors, whose first languages are English, infuse their texts with Anishinaabemowin as a means to connect with literary predecessors and ancestors, affirming the rights of Indigenous Peoples to live without colonial violence on their own lands (128). For Fachinger, Dimaline's text "disrupts the flow of English" with Anishinaabemowin to address the ongoing harm of settler colonialism and to emphasize Indigenous resilience and futurity (128). Ultimately, Fachinger argues that the presence of Anishinaabemowin not only emphasizes cultural distinctions but contributes to the revitalization of the language, the healing of the land, and the building of community (130). In an article with co-author Anah-Jayne Samuelson, I focus on how both storytelling and language empower youth characters through connection with what the novel calls the "real old-timey": Indigenous ways of knowing that were present long before the novel's settler apocalypse and that will continue long after it (Dimaline 21, 174). This empowerment through reconnection to knowledge systems and ways of being begins to account for what has been lost to colonization. At the same time, this empowerment creates the conditions for a collective resurgence that complements the diversity of Indigenous nations represented in the broader community the youth characters come to live within (Samuelson and Evans). Our piece and Fachinger's article dialogue most closely with my reading of resurgence in this chapter.

Where We Once Belonged

After its publication in 1996, early reviewers praise *Where We Once Belonged* for its promise and humorous touches (Sullivan), its "distinctive sensibility" and "gifted sense of language" (Yamamoto 386), and its uncompromising critique of violence (S. Hunter; Shaw). Critical reception is also dynamic, with much of the work taking a postcolonial approach. Specifically, scholars consider the text through the lens of feminism and double colonization (Ahmed; Labacanne); the refusal of both Samoans, Americans, and Europeans to change their perspectives on the source of contemporary Samoa's cultural tensions (Raiskin); the means by which Figiel counters colonial violence by speaking out against western constructions of Samoans via the likes of Margaret Meade and Paul Gauguin (Ramsay); and shifting literary representations of belonging and home through an analysis of the various "returns" in the novel (J. M. Wilson). My intervention does not leave important postcolonial and neocolonial contexts and their considerations behind but, rather, thinks critically about what it might mean to consider *Where We Once Belonged* as a work of Indigenous rather than postcolonial literature.

Don't Run, My Love

Published in 2017, popular reviews praise *Don't Run* for its description of Naga culture. Specifically, reviewers appreciate the novel's clear differentiation of Naga from Indian culture (Basu), its exploration of important behavioural and social issues such as consent (Krithika; Shekhar), and its inclusion of local vernacular (Ningshen). Scholarly work on *Don't Run* is limited, but critics are steadily beginning to pay attention to Kire's other works, particularly in the last five years. For example, in his work on memory, Payal Ghosh focuses on *Bitter Wormwood* and *The Sky is My Father*, considering both novels to be a form of memory narrative

dedicated to writing down what might otherwise be lost (Ghosh). Differently, Barasha Lahkar argues that *When the River Sleeps* revitalizes the Naga oral tradition by representing the spiritual life of Naga people (Lahkar). Watitula Longkumer's work, while focused on *When the River Sleeps*, shares this chapter's interest in language. Specifically, their article focuses on problems of linguistic representation as they pertain to new Englishes emerging in the work of Indigenous writers from Northeast India (Longkumer 74). Differently, Sanatan Mandal and Smriti Singh consider how the Angami tribe in *The Sky is My Father* tolerate the effects of the white man's burden while working to dismantle the colonial system through resistance to Christianity and encroachment on their lands (203). Nilanjana Chatterjee considers Kire's work, and Naga Anglophone literature more broadly, as a new location for Indigenous ecological knowledge systems that have survived multiple forms of slow violence. By applying a lens of eco-alterity—where narratives cast those destroying the environment as ecological others—Kire's novels reveal one means by which a liberation from slow violence may occur (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'"). Writing specifically on *Don't Run*, Chatterjee reads the text through the lens of natural resource management—food sovereignty—and women's roles in Naga society (Chatterjee, "Women and Natural Resource Management"). Taken together, these scholars underscore the importance and relevance of Naga Anglophone literatures while illuminating how much work remains to be done.

Most of the existing conversations about Kire's work also place it firmly within a postcolonial context. My engagement with *Don't Run* troubles this assumption. Although the Naga People certainly share in the broad experience of British imperialism in South Asia, they also contend with ongoing occupation by the Indian state. The Naga People declared their own independence from British India one day before India did:

> . . . declaration of this independence was announced after the submission of six memorandums to the British government which was leaving the nation, and ten memorandums to the Indian government . . . in all of [these] the Nagas proclaimed their right to sovereignty based on political as well as historical backdrop . . . the fact that the Naga Hills had been inhabited from 150 AD by the Naga tribes. (Ghosh 152)

The Naga People were never brought under British control and yet the British ceded the Naga Hills to India after partition, "creating an atmosphere of hostility" between India and the Naga People for decades to come (Ghosh 152). This context shifts the colonial reality of the Naga People who continue to advocate for self-determination against a neocolonial Indian state that still views them as "savage" and violent (Srikanth and Thomas). Responding to this historical and contemporary reality, I take seriously R. Bhumika's assertion that scholars should not only read Naga literature in English (broadly), and Kire's work (specifically), through postcolonial perspectives but through more nation-specific approaches that attend to Naga Indigeneity (Bhumika). This approach decentres the Indian nation state and creates space for a more meaningful consideration of Indigeneity in the Northeast.

In this chapter's next section, I offer specific context for the languages in *Marrow Thieves*, *Where We Once Belonged*, and *Don't Run* before reading resurgence across these novels. Reading resurgence in these novels, I consider how language itself can—and does—imagine Indigenous worlds and futures away from those rooted in settler colonialism through a renewed relationship with language, imparted by the land, that strengthens and connects Indigenous nations. I also consider what critics and readers can see differently through the juxtapositions of texts that have not yet been placed in conversation.

Reading Resurgence

Language in Context

As this chapter's introduction and review of the relevant literature suggests, the indigenization of English has received surprisingly limited engagement within Indigenous literary studies. Scholars such as Kimmerer and Armstrong attend to English indigenization more broadly, but there remains a great deal of work to be done on what this process looks like on the page, particularly for and across diverse nations. At the core of these considerations is how writers create an "oral voice" in their written work, as oral literatures, histories, and traditions often inform Indigenous literatures (King, "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial" 42). How can Indigenous literatures infuse written English with "the patterns, metaphors, structures . . . themes and characters" from oral literature (King, "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial" 41–42)? For Thomas King, the answer to this question lies in the form of an "oral syntax" that makes it impossible for readers to read these stories silently to themselves (42). Oral syntax "encourages readers to read the stories out loud" such that the written becomes the oral, the reader the speaker (King, "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial 42). *Marrow Thieves, Where We Once Belonged,* and *Don't Run* certainly elicit this reaction from readers, but these texts also seek to make indigenized Englishes function in ways that do not necessarily reproduce or replicate the oral experience of language. Dimaline's, Figiel's, and Kire's novels indigenize and reinvigorate English by infusing it with Anishinaabemowin, Gagana Samoa, and Tenyidie, demonstrating how this indigenized English can strengthen and build community by manifesting a relational worldview. Before moving into my analysis, this section situates each novel's use of language within its specific cultural context.

Dimaline is a Métis writer and activist from the Georgian Bay Métis Nation in what is currently Ontario, Canada. In *Marrow Thieves*, the learning and speaking of Indigenous

languages, of weaving them into the support structure of English, becomes a powerful means of resistance to settler futurity grown out of Dimaline's personal experience with language. Dimaline grew up around Elders speaking Michif, which where she lived was a blend of French Canadian, Anishinaabemowin, and Cree (Kiwanuka). This context informs the role of language in the novel, as the languages that the characters most frequently speak outside of English are French, Anishinaabemowin, and Cree.[50] When Dimaline's Elders died and she had not learned to speak Michif, she lost more than a language (Kiwanuka). In an interview, she reflects on what this greater loss means: "when we say those [Michif] words it's not identifying the thing, it's identifying the relationship of that thing to everything around it, so how it connects or doesn't connect" to the wider world (Dimaline qtd. in Kiwanuka). As a result, sometimes there are no translations from Michif to English: "really I'm losing the understanding of how, in our worldview, we connect to the things around us" (Dimaline qtd. in Kiwanuka). As Simpson reminds readers, "Indigenous languages carry rich meanings, theory and philosophies within their structures. Our languages house our teachings and bring the practice of those teachings to life in our daily existence" (*Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* 38). Just as with Michif, speaking Anishinaabemowin inherently communicates values and ideas that are central to what it means to be Nishnaabeg (*Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* 38). The relationship between language and culture, language and worldview, is therefore understandably central to *Marrow Thieves.* The characters in *Marrow Thieves* must reshape English, indigenizing it to accommodate and better carry a relational Indigenous worldview. Dimaline's novel makes language learning central to the characters' rebellion and survival but also to how they build community—human and non-

[50] My analysis of *Marrow Thieves* relies heavily on Anishinaabe teachings and scholarship reflecting the strong presence of Anishinaabe knowledge and language in the novel. With this focus, however, I do not intend to elide the Cree and Métis worldviews included in *Marrow Thieves* and I recognize that they also play key roles in community resurgence within this text.

human. The presence of multiple Indigenous languages in *Marrow Thieves*, then, reflects the multiple nations present within the community that Frenchie's family commits themselves to joining and building.

Figiel is from Upolu, Samoa's second largest island. Figiel is Samoa's first woman novelist and *Where We Once Belonged* is the first novel by a Samoan woman to be published in the US. Despite being initially cast as a New Zealand writer owing to the novel's original publication in New Zealand, Figiel sees herself as a Pacific Islands writer (Ellis 70). Even though Figiel writes from a Samoan background about Samoa, in speaking to other Pacific Islanders she finds that her writings "could be happening on their islands as well. And this is very important for [her] to hear. It is important to know that the work is recognized on a regional basis" (Ellis 70). It remains significant to Figiel, still, that Samoa operates as a kind of centre because Samoan culture, and Polynesian culture more broadly, originated in the central Pacific islands—specifically, Samoa, Tonga, Uvea and Futuna—with migrations moving east, north, and south-west (Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 6). Unlike other Pacific Islanders who travelled to their current locations, Samoans are of Samoa in a distinct way (Ellis 71).[51] The context of an independent Western Samoa is also essential to interpretations of the text as many of the issues Alofa contends with and must navigate stem from the neocolonial tensions between Eurowestern and Samoan ways of life.

This tension also contributed to the controversy around *Where We Once Belonged* when it first appeared in Samoa. Figiel's friends, family, and community members struggled with the novel's transparent confrontation of the harsher realities of neocolonial Samoan life: poverty,

[51] One meaning of the word Samoa is "sacred centre" (Ellis 79).

sexual and physical violence, patriarchal expectations, and poor education (Kaske; Sinavaiana-Gabbard 483). Adult Samoan women in particular "reacted violently" against the novel, burning it and rebuking Figiel at any opportunity.

Where We Once Belonged also underscores the complicated relationship between Eurowestern individualism and Samoan relational collectivity through both its structure and language. The novel's style and structure represents a traditional Samoan form of oral storytelling called *su'ifefiloi* ("garland of song"; Sinavaiana-Gabbard 484) in which composers interweave diverse song types to create one very long song or medley. Su'ifefiloi is "a combination of the words *su'i*, meaning to sew or to weave and *fefiloi*, a descriptive word that means mixed" (Galea'i xv). Su'ifefiloi is also a material storytelling form employed when weaving or sewing a tapestry or a string of flowers. Reserved for special occasions, su'ifefiloi results in a tapestry—oral or material—reflecting different styles and elements that express important "Samoan themes, culture, history, perspectives and voices—especially voices—in an American Samoan context" (Galea'i iv). At the core of su'ifefiloi is its ability to dismantle Western storytelling conventions that can assert a rigid focus on setting, plot, specific characters and points of view, style, and grammar (Galea'i iv). In this way, scholars can interpret *Where We Once Belonged* as a written translation of a traditionally oral and material storytelling form (not unlike Grace's oral and carved forms in *Potiki*). Critics can also interpret the hybridization of Samoan and English as a linguistic su'ifefiloi that indigenizes English, creating a text that is greater than the sum of its parts.

By blending songs, prose, myth, and poetry, in a written su'ifefiloi, *Where We Once Belonged* reflects the unique voices and perspectives of adolescent girls coming of age in a

traditional village. According to Figiel, *Where We Once Belonged* is less of a novel and more of a book that she sees as a reflection of ceremony:

> We have a last dance that sums everything up in a ceremony, what everybody's been doing. They'll have this thing called taualuga at the end of it all, where a ceremonial virgin will be dancing. And as she dances, people sing a song, and in the dance people are supposed to go up and show their alofa, their love, to this person or to this cause, by giving money . . . they'll go from one song and they'll hook that up to another one and another one, stringing all these songs together, and these songs are absolutely independent songs that are just stuck together so that more people come up. And that's the exact thing that I was doing . . . (Figiel qtd. in Ellis 74)

In this way, each section of the book can stand on its own but also connect with the others. Each story has its own separate title and series of events but does not exist as a short story collection. Figiel acknowledges this holistic approach, noting that it manifests through the Samoan concept of *va*, meaning the space between people, the space of relationship (Ellis 75). In this way, the book reminds the reader of the individual's place (and responsibility) within a broader community as well as the world beyond that community.

Just as the koru informs Māoritanga and Grace's writing in *Potiki*, the circle is a core metaphor in Samoan oral traditions and one that informs the structure of *Where We Once Belonged*. Figiel explains that as an organizing principle behind patterns of narration, the circle "exists both physically and metaphysically in Samoan culture. It is a philosophical concept that is the 'centre' of our being as Samoans and as Pacific Islanders. It is in our architecture, our social structure, our traditional calendar, our poetic and musical compositions" (Figiel qtd. in Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 41). The influence of the circle emerges, for example, in the storytelling circles Alofa and her friends participate in. Here, the young girls and women "(re)enac[t] the circulation of gossip" taking place among the adults with their adolescent peers (Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 42). It is similarly significant that the novel's title—its first words—are also the last words of the novel, a decision that closes the circle of the book, of

the woven su'ifefiloi. In addition to su'ifefiloi, this closure of a narrative circle also echoes what Figiel describes as her decision to experiment "with the idea of the ula or lei or flower necklace as a working metaphor for the composition" (Figield qtd. in Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 41).

Important to the novel's use of language is how to represent the rhythmic and lyrical nature of Gagana Samoa (the Samoan language/Samoan). As with Kimmerer and Armstrong, Figiel says: "[t]he same aspects that we have of the language in Samoa, I try to 'Englishise', to convey in English" (Figiel qtd. in Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 72). In this way, Figiel infuses English with elements of Samoan: "I'm just trying to make English make sense to the Samoan or the Pacific Islander, which is why there's so much Samoan in the book" (Figiel qtd. in Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 73). Figiel provides readers with a brief glossary of sixty-three words but does not translate many of the phrases, words, songs, and poetry that make up the su'ifefiloi. Figiel created the untranslated songs and chants in the novel; the mythological characters—Pili, Tagaloa/Tagaloalagi—are present in all Pacific Island cultures, enhancing the applicability of the text to its intended readership (Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 73). For Figiel, it is important that there "is no absolute truth in mythology. People have their own truths according to their village, their district. Whereas in English, there is just one. You know, William the Conqueror, 1066, this is the date. Well, what is truth in an oral tradition? . . . There are different ways of telling stories according to people's memories" (Figiel qtd. in Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 74). This perspective further underscores a relational Samoan worldview that understands how individual interpretation and difference function as part of a greater narrative whole.

Kire is from Kohima, Nagaland, and is the first Anglophone Naga novelist. Her immense body of work—novels, short stories, criticism, children's books, poetry—centres the everyday practices of Naga people as they assert their traditional "eco-sensible" ways of being in response to ongoing forces of colonization (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'" 30). More broadly, Naga Anglophone literature is committed to representing eco-ethical survival stories precisely because imperialistic suppression silenced Naga folktales for so long (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'" 33).

Don't Run indigenizes English by incorporating elements of orality in addition to words in Tenyidie (the language spoken by the Angami tribe in the novel, a major Naga ethnic group). As with much Naga Anglophone writing, *Don't Run* uses English as "a linguistic tool to assert indigenous territorial, historical, and cultural claims with perhaps a protective (but crucial) relationship to indigenous people stories and folk culture" (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'" 30). In this way, Kire's text archives Naga culture as it simultaneously restores unique Naga knowledge systems (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'" 30). Engaging with these knowledges means understanding Naga roots in the oral tradition as "the first and only primary source of [Naga] original literature" (Patton). The Naga oral tradition is community-centred, meaning that the community always supersedes the individual. British and American outsiders, appearing in the region as early as the 1860s, enforced the trade of centuries-old traditions for "civilization" (Patton).[52] Kire herself acknowledges that her novels "chronologise the socio-cultural and historical life" of her People with information she collects from the oral narrators of her community ("Opening up the Physical and the Spiritual Universe of the Angamis" 54). In this

[52] American missionaries appeared in the 1860s; the British occupation came in 1919, and again in the 1950s after Indian Independence (Patton).

way, *Don't Run* (based on wider Naga mythology) functions as a written adaptation of oral story resulting in a necessary indigenization of English.

These written adaptations see the English language shift to incorporate Naga worldviews and language. Contemporary Naga writers like Kire infuse the global language of English with nation-specific, local nuance. In this way, Naga writers need not translate local realities to fit English. Rather, they can transform English so that it can attend to and articulate the local realities of Naga life (Bhumika 584). Ghosh sees in Kire's work a version of King's "interfusional literature": "narratives that are written in English but preserve the archetypal indigenous voice of the storyteller as well as traditional themes and oral discursive devices (King 13)" (165). Kire translates oral formations into written English, "replicating the narrative voices of the indigenous Naga storyteller" (Ghosh 165). Part of this translation process involves infusing the text with words in Tenyidie, requiring readers to be familiar with the land from which the language emerges or to learn more about it. Speaking to the challenges of bringing her own language into English, Kire says:

> I was very inspired by the African writers Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, more so Achebe, in the way both these writers brought over their oral narratives to the written tradition . . . By using their own form of nativized English, they manage to do this. They unapologetically presented their cultural worldview and did not water it down to make it more understandable to the non-African reader. They uncompromisingly wrote their stories in such a way that the reader had to make the effort to get into the culture. (Kire qtd. in Longkumer and Menon 393)

This effort adds a new dimension to the narrative in *Don't Run*, one already intended to communicate the importance of consent and careful decision making to its audience. In aligning herself with Achebe, Kire believes that English can carry her Angami Naga experience by undergoing indigenization. Just because outsiders forcibly brought English to Nagaland and the Northeast does not mean it cannot and does not belong to the Indigenous Peoples of this region.

Through their depictions of Indigenous languages and use of English, Dimaline's, Figiel's, and Kire's novels demonstrate how language functions as a mode of resurgence both for their characters and for their communities more broadly. In her work on Adivasi Anglophone writing, Ruby Hembrom (Santal) underscores how Indigenous writing in English is a practice of "resistance and resurgence" (1464). Hembrom insists that Adivasis must "use the master's tool to further our cause . . . challenging ourselves to push those limits" because doing otherwise, not writing, would be "self-destructive—a process of erasure" (1465). From her perspective—Hembrom created adivaani Press, publisher of Marandi's *Becoming Me*—she recognizes the diversity of Indigenous Englishes. For example, Hembrom defends those Adivasi writers who learned English in adulthood and who often receive criticism for their simple use of the English language, a use that critics have likened to that of a blog (1477). From Hembrom's perspective, this "simplicity" should not take away from the impact of the narratives: "I am often ambushed by this arrogance in language syndrome. And it is no easy experience" (1477). Adivasi Peoples are producing and reproducing themselves, in their own ways, by "co-habiting a textualized world, through orality" (1480). Such hierarchies of "good" and "bad" English only serve to reassert white supremacist colonial futures that seek to erase Indigenous Peoples in pursuit of their land as resources. By focusing on Indigenous Englishes in this chapter, I assert the presence of English as not only a language belonging to Indigenous Peoples but also a means of resurgence that can "recreate and regenerate Indigenous political systems, education systems, and systems of life" (Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* 226).

This chapter's coming sections read resurgence through language across *Marrow Thieves*, *Where We Once Belonged*, and *Don't Run*, illuminating just one of the many ways by which the contemporary Indigenous novel imagines new Indigenous worlds. As with the

previous chapter, this section moves across each novel twice to consider what can be seen differently when diverse and distinct novels are juxtaposed. Closing this chapter, I consider what story this constellation of coresistance is trying to tell about how language functions as an act of resurgence.

Intergenerational Linguistic Futures

Intergenerational Indigenous language learning and use is at the very centre of *Marrow Thieves* as youth characters are integral to the passing of language from one generation to the next.[53] As a Young Adult (YA) novel, *Marrow Thieves* focuses on youth characters learning from their Elders so that they can build Indigenous futures. These youth characters pose an immense threat to the broader settler project as they represent a continued Indigenous presence. Speaking about the decision to situate *Marrow Thieves* as a young adult novel, Dimaline reflects: "I was working with youth who didn't even have the language of seeing themselves in the future and I thought, well, if you don't see a world where you exist, then I'm gonna build one and I'm gonna put you there" (Dimaline qtd. in Kiwanuka). *Marrow Thieves* shows Indigenous youth this future, where their presence and embrace of "old-timey" ways is integral to resisting erasure so they can bring about a better world.

What separates YA literature from other genres, especially literature intended for children, is arguably its emphasis on power negotiations between adolescent characters and the social institutions that organize their world (Trites 20). Roberta Seelinger Trites argues that "adolescents do not achieve maturity in a YA novel until they have reconciled themselves to the

[53] Parts of this chapter focusing on *Marrow Thieves* were previously published in *Studies in the Novel*, 2022, vol. 54, no. 3, pp. 274–92.

power entailed in the social institutions with which they must interact to survive" (20). The novels Trites discusses predominantly feature the experiences of white settlers and typically begin with adolescent characters feeling repressed by their society's power structures and institutions; however, as Trites argues, adults often quell rebellion against those structures and institutions and youth characters are assimilated into the very communities they sought to resist. Even in instances where youth characters tear down old institutions and create new ones, what is new tends to reproduce a version of the white settler-centred institutions that came before. For example, in Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974), the novel concludes with the protagonist being brutally beaten and warning others they should not disturb the universe as he did. Further, in Suzanne Collins's *Mockingjay* (2010), Katniss overthrows the oppressive structures of Panem but shows limited trust in the new government. Non-white characters, however, have much more to lose in assimilating themselves to dominant settler institutions and structures because conformity guarantees some level of erasure. As such, non-white characters are forced to sustain what others may perceive as rebellion under settler colonialism. This perceived rebellion can manifest actively, as with organized forms of resistance, and passively, as merely existing in a settler colonial world presents a threat to white supremacy. This reinstallation of settler colonial infrastructure makes resistance and rebellion necessary to survival for the Indigenous characters as survival itself will always already be a rejection of, and resistance to, the settler state.

Marrow Thieves disrupts settler narratives of supremacy that rely on the suppression of rebellious young adults and more specifically on the absence of Indigenous young adults who threaten the settler project by representing the possibility of Indigenous futures. One of the ways these futures can manifest is through the learning of Indigenous languages that impart ways of

being and knowing, thereby strengthening Indigenous communities in the process. Unlike non-Indigenous YA novels where defiance might look like refusing to sell chocolates in a school sale or running away from school (Cormier, Salinger), rebellion in *Marrow Thieves* is understood as part of a wider continuum and long history of Indigenous resistance. As such, it is an important part of belonging within an Indigenous community. The threat presented by Indigenous youth hinges on their importance in processes of resurgence that make intergenerational forms of caretaking and knowledge transmission possible. The passing on of story and language enacts this participation in the novel: what the characters call the "old-timey" teachings and knowledge that the youth characters "lon[g] for" (Dimaline 21).

In reconnecting with the "old-timey," youth characters not only learn to live in a world predicated upon their problematic disappearance, but they reimagine and re-create their world anew. One of the means by which they perform this reconnection is with everyday acts of resurgence—Indigenous language learning, use, and sharing—that indigenizes their use of English. By dedicating themselves to learning "the language" (Anishinaabemowin), youth characters participate in Indigenous nation and community building while preserving the presence of distinct nation-specific knowledge systems. In this way, resurgence through language in *Marrow Thieves* subverts the often-repeated non-Indigenous YA narrative that depicts young adults as crushed and reshaped into docile settler citizens within nation states rather than as active participants who resist existing ways of life. As Mandy Suhr-Sytsma argues, in Indigenous YA literature, rather than depicting individuals' agency as diminished or limited when they integrate into community, Indigenous YA texts represent coming-of-age as a communal event in which characters "experience an increase rather than a decrease in personal agency" (xvii). This situation is very much the case in *Marrow Thieves*, as the ways of being and

knowing imparted by Elders, Minerva and Miig, increasingly empowers youth characters through storytelling and teaching Anishinaabemowin. Within Indigenous YA texts, once characters turn to a collective and integrate themselves within their communities, their rebellion against the colonizing power does not fade but rather grows as the narrative progresses (Suhr-Sytsma xvii). When the youth characters in *Marrow Thieves* join their new community, their self-determination increases through reconnection with Indigenous knowledges, cultures, and values.

Within YA, the genre of *Marrow Thieves* is even more precisely characterized as dystopian speculative fiction; however, it also importantly diverges from this subgenre to fit more fully within Grace Dillon's (Anishinaabe) Indigenous futurism and Justice's Indigenous wonderworks. Dillon defines Indigenous futurism as literature that mobilizes the tropes and trends of science and speculative fiction to envision a future from an Indigenous perspective and in turn creates a "way to renew, recover, and extend First Nations peoples' voices and traditions" (1–2). Justice has similarly resisted labelling Indigenous literatures as being fantastical or speculative "given that so much of what people think they know about Indigeneity is self-serving colonial fantasy" (*Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* 141). This troubling colonial fantasy is insidious in that, as Justice notes, it defends the continued theft of Indigenous resources and violence against Indigenous bodies. Justice argues that the boundaries between the real and the imaginary should blur: "the fantastic is an extension of the possible, not the impossible; it opens up and expands the range of options for Indigenous characters (and readers); it challenges our assumptions and expectations of 'the real'" (149). To meet this vision, Justice offers an alternative generic label: wonderworks. As a concept, a wonderwork safeguards Indigenous "epistemologies, politics, and relationships" (Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* 152).

Justice argues that a "good" wonderwork offers "hopeful alternatives" to the damaging structures of settler colonialism that "we're continually told are inevitable, material 'reality'" (155). *Marrow Thieves*, then, echoes other wonderworks of Indigenous futurism written by Waubgeshig Rice (Anishinaabe), Stephen Graham Jones (Blackfoot), or Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki) that resist canonical dystopian, horror, and speculative tropes (Stewart). Ultimately, these subgenres support the novel's focus on empowering youth characters to imagine futures where their existence is not an inconvenience to a violent settler state but, rather, where their role within community places them at the centre of Indigenous futurity.

In the novel, speaking an Indigenous language, even a few words, is an "old-timey" practice of resurgence that denies the intended silence of the settler project. Miig is the source of Story for the youth characters in *Marrow Thieves*, but it is Minerva who quietly holds the knowledge of "old-timey" Anishinaabemowin and who teaches it to the youth characters. Initially, Frenchie finds it easier to comprehend the value of Miig's lessons and is slower to understand the importance of Minerva's role in the family. Frenchie sees that she "ha[s] old-timey ways," but Minerva is more difficult for him to connect with as she "didn't talk, and when she did it was in bursts accompanied by laughter and maybe a scream or two" as she passively "watche[s] . . . everything" (Dimaline 20). Frenchie believes Minerva's "odd" behaviour and distance to be a side effect of her age; he perceives her as an old woman with little to offer the group. Frenchie infantilizes Minerva, describing how she braids her hair "like a little girl" (20) and needs "babys[itting]" back at camp (34). Initially, Frenchie sees himself as "lucky" to be learning in Miig's Hunting group and not "stuck" learning "useless" Homesteading skills with Minerva (38). Frenchie's early dismissal of Minerva reflects Eurocentric, ageist beliefs that

privilege youth over experience and do not imagine these groups reciprocally engaging with one another, nor that Elders could be active members in resurgence and community building.

The novel challenges this dichotomy of youth/rebellion and adulthood/docility by revealing that Minerva, as the source of the language, holds a powerful tool of resistance—a tool that she employs to destroy the marrow extraction devices. Many non-Indigenous, Eurowestern belief systems view adolescence as a time of turmoil, making young adulthood a time of revolt and opposition; leaving this time behind is usually a marker of having reached adulthood and maturity. Frenchie employs these same stereotypes in his inability to consider Minerva's role in their survival, dissent, and community building. Although Minerva acts differently from the young members of Miig's family, her knowledge of Anishinaabemowin situates her as an active and key member of their community and she demonstrates that maturity is compatible with rebellion when she destroys one of the new residential schools by reciting words in "the language."

Not all members of Miig's family are unaware of Minerva's ability to speak Anishinaabemowin so fluently or of the power language holds for their community. Rose, the most recent addition to the family, informs Frenchie that he has "no idea" of the knowledge and wisdom Minerva embodies, demonstrating this knowledge by using "a little of the language" learned from Minerva: "As a matter of fact, being with Minerva is pretty *nishin*" (38; emphasis added).[54] Frenchie's reaction to hearing Rose use the language is telling: "'How do you have language?' My voice broke on the last syllable. My chest tightened. How could she have the language? She was the same age as me, and I deserved it more. I don't know why, but I felt

[54] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Anishinaabemowin and Cree used here are provided by *Marrow Thieves.*

certain that I did" (38). Frenchie's response demonstrates jealousy rooted in his perception of language as an age-based rite of passage. This jealousy is also indicative of a broader insecurity around the authenticity of his own Indigeneity. Settler culture has instilled this insecurity, a culture whose history of government policies has sought to arbitrate Indigeneity through blood quantum and the Indian Act to erase Indigenous languages and land-based knowledge systems. The settler state thereby makes Indigenous Peoples who cannot, or do not, perform the appropriate signifiers of Indigeneity as codified by settler colonialism—namely, the Indian stereotype—invisible. In this scene, Frenchie's jealousy is a symptom inherited through this problematic arbitration. He immediately "yank[s his] braid out of the back of [his] shirt and let[s] it fall over [his] shoulder" as "some kind of proof" (38). Here, his braid provides the "proof" of his Indigeneity regardless of what he may "lack" in terms of language. Despite being mired in a complex moment of signification, there is truth to Frenchie's action as he does not need to speak the language to be Indigenous (just as Rose does not need a braid); Indigeneity is not a series of settler-sanctioned boxes that need checking. Speaking and indigenizing English to fit the needs of an individual and community does not detract from one's Indigeneity. Frenchie's desire is an honest one as he longs for a strong connection to his identity, one that his community affirms as powerful and essential. Through the young characters' desire and reverence for the language, *Marrow Thieves* emphasizes the importance of Indigenous languages in strengthening everyday resurgence.

In *Marrow Thieves*, language and its connection to the "old-timey" cultivates belonging within community that allows the characters to imagine diverse Indigenous futures. This feeling of belonging manifests as a reverence for the language, felt acutely by the youth characters. The novel underscores Frenchie's veneration when he devours that first bit of the language, nishin

("good"): "I turned the word over in my throat like a stone; a prayer I couldn't add breath to, a world I wasn't willing to release" (39). Later, Frenchie learns the word abwaad ("cooking on a fire") from Minerva, and again he "repeated it over and over . . . hoarding something precious" (109). In these examples, the "magic words" hold within themselves a world with an Indigenous future (32), the reclaiming of which deserves to be revered by the characters. For Frenchie and others who learn the language, their refusal to "release" these words, to "hoard" them, is an act of dissent against settler colonial silencing that simultaneously makes them feel that they belong. For Miig's family and community, Minerva is the wellspring of these words, and her knowledge of the language transforms her (in Frenchie's eyes) from an infantilized old woman whose position as a community leader is unwarranted to a respected Elder who holds the wisdom that fuels resurgence and rebellion.

Minerva's knowledge of Anishinaabemowin and respected position as an Elder place her in a leadership role within the family. Miig's family and community demonstrate their belief in the legitimacy of this leadership, acknowledging her vulnerability and importance by carrying her when she cannot run, braiding her hair, comforting her when she grieves, and searching for her when Recruiters abduct her. The reality that part of Minerva's role hinges on her language fluency risks privileging the role of Indigenous language speakers over those who only speak English, thereby threatening to reproduce a colonial language hierarchy that supports and arbitrates false boundaries of Indigenous authenticity along the lines of language. However, Minerva's contribution to Indigenous futurity through her role as Elder, language keeper, and teacher does not foreclose the participation and contribution of other community members in also leading and creating the same future. Old-timey practices in the novel are deliberately capacious and inviting of those invested in resurgence. This ecological vision of Indigenous

leadership understands the essential, holistic role all human and non-human kin must play in caring for each other.

Anishinaabemowin and English are not the only languages that Minerva speaks, nor are they the only traditions with which she engages. On occasion, she uses French words and phrases as gestures to Michif and her Métis nationality. When the family stops for a few nights at the abandoned Four Winds hotel, Minera tells the "old-timey "Métis story of the Rogarou, a shapeshifting predator who appears in several Métis stories and who is also at the centre of Dimaline's novel *Empire of Wild* (2019). Minerva describes the Rogarou as a dog-like creature "that haunts the half-breeds but keeps the girls from going on the roads at night where the men travel" (66). The story has been passed down to her by her grand-mère, who told it to her and her sisters as they were turning into women (66). As she narrates the oral story, Minerva's English is short and staccato, building suspense as she describes meeting the Rogarou: "'I know it when I see it. Too big to be a dog, black as pitch, eyes yellow as new ragweed'" (66). All she has to defend herself is the dipper made from birch she carries for gathering water. She hits the beast on the nose with the dipper: "'[o]h mon Dieu! The noise, the terrible 'crack' like a buffalo gun'" (67). The Rogarou transforms back into the body of a naked man with a "hunger" in his eyes that she sees "in the men sometimes" (67). Even this brief use of the French phrase for "oh my God" further underscores the distinct Métis nature of the Rogarou story. In sharing this cautionary tale with the youth, Minerva imparts a valuable lesson about how they can stay safe at night and ensure their presence in building a new future. In the next section, I continue to consider how indigenized English imparts knowledge and culture in *Where We Once Belonged*.

"We were in-betweens"

The essential role youth characters play in carrying language and culture into future generations is at the core of *Where We Once Belonged.* Rather than working to learn and cultivate language, however, Alofa and her friends already speak an indigenized English filled with Samoan words and colloquialisms that reflect a long history of cultural hybridization. Alofa, Moa, and Lili do not face the direct violence of the colonizer but, rather, find themselves caught between societal expectations and means of repression that are specific to a formerly colonized, now neocolonial, Western Samoa. The girls rebel against the power structures and institutions that surround them, but their Elders do not perceive their rebellion as a means to strengthen community and resist colonial ways of life (as with *Marrow Thieves*). Rather, any resistance against neocolonial expectations by Alofa and her friends results in their punishment and suppression by the adults around them who, having lived under colonial New Zealand rule, have worked to exist under a now hybridized Samoan culture. Alofa and her friends thereby face the task of redefining their country as they are part of the first generation who did not live through the colonial period.

The way *Where We Once Belonged* expresses everyday acts of linguistic resurgence is a direct result of the historical context from which the novel emerges. In the novel, the characters live in a sovereign Western Samoa that recently gained independence in 1962 after decades-long agitation by the independence effort; this effort made Western Samoa the first small island country with independence in the Pacific.[55] Samoa's colonizer—New Zealand (and by extension Britain)—intended to control land for the benefit of the British metropole through an imperialism that differently shaped the Territory of Western Samoa in comparison to Britain's settler

[55] Prior to Britain and New Zealand, Samoa was a German colony (1899–1915).

colonies.[56] The post-war decolonization period saw countries such as Western Samoa (which became Samoa in 1997), Fiji, and the Cook Islands freed from the "direct European hegemony" which describes the current situation in settler colonial New Zealand (Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 3). In this context, and with many novels typically characterized as postcolonial, characters privilege all things Western as proximity to them means an elevation in status within the larger community.[57] This reality gestures at the continuing power countries like New Zealand, Britain, and the US have over their sphere of influence in the Pacific Islands and defines a core contextual difference between these novels (Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 3).

While *Where We Once Belonged* offers a critique of Western values, and of New Zealand in particular, it also demonstrates how Indigenous Samoans have made Western culture their own. As the first generation of newly independent Western Samoans, the youth characters navigate a complicated environment where the "West is still best" but where Samoan culture can make a new emergence and redefine itself on its own terms. The novel's context differently tasks Alofa and her friends with carrying the Samoan language and culture forward to future generations by carefully negotiating a balance between Western and Pacific Islander cultures. The adults in the novel, who believe themselves best attuned to shape their children into young adults that can navigate complex societal expectations, arbitrate this balance. Alofa and her friends repeatedly challenge this reality, however, revealing in key moments how the adult characters struggle to embrace Western Samoa's new independence, the changes that come with it, and the potential it presents for Samoan resurgence.

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[56] New Zealand had colonial jurisdiction over Samoa from 1914–1962.
[57] For example, neocolonial Ghana in Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones are Not Yet Born* (1968) and neocolonial Rhodesia in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988).

Alofa, Moa, and Lili occupy a transitional space as adolescents and as foils of a young Western Samoa. In the novel's first chapter, Alofa describes her frustration at how adults always cast the Charlie's Angels as bad girls in comparison to Makaoleafi (Afi), the "goodest girl in the whole of Malaefou, but also the meanest and strongest" (2). Because the adults perceive Afi as "*such* a good girl," she gets away with bad behaviour constantly (2). Alofa, Moa, and Lili whisper about Afi being a "'faipepea ("someone who stinks like a bat")! Pa'uelo ("someone who stinks")! Le kaelea ("someone who doesn't shower")!'" (3).[58] Of course, the girls know that they are actually "envious and jealous . . . Why did she have to be so-so sure of herself? So-so good. And so-so strong? And so-so *smelly*?" (4). Alofa concludes:

> We were in-betweens…that is to say we were not completely good and we were not completely bad. To be in-betweens meant that we went to church: twice on Sundays and once during the fogo a kiakogo ("deacons' meeting") on Wednesdays . . . followed immediately by prayers at the fale o le faifeau ("pastor's house") in the evenings. We never missed a meeting of the Aufaipese ("choir"), or of the Aukalavou ("church youth group"), or of the Au a Keine ("girl guides"). We were *always* at the Aoga a le Faifeau *and* the Augo Aso Sa, passed sewing tests, learned our lines for White Sunday, helped the faletua a le faifeau ("pastor's wife") weed the garden around their house, helped the Women's Committee dry pandanus leaves . . . cooked saka . . . Yet despite all this goodness we were not good—in-betweens only. (5)

Like the language that they use, Alofa, Lili, and Moa are in-betweens, caught between trying to appease Samoan expectations of what it means to be "good" (obedient, quiet, hard working) and avoiding falling into what it means to be "bad" (rebellious, loud, lazy). In this scene, good girls attend and contribute to events that exist because of Samoa's colonization, such as the church youth group and girl guides. Alofa does not understand why they cannot do these "good" girl activities while also laughing when something funny happens: "We were in-betweens because we loved laughing, and laughed and laughed at the slightest things" (6). She wonders, "What

[58] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Gagana Samoa are provided by the novel's glossary.

were we supposed to do to reverse the verdict that we were only in-betweens? And why was it so important for us to be 'good'?" (6).

The colonial Christian influence over what it means to "good" seeks to shape the youth, and especially the young women, into docile citizens. In Malaefou, everyone under sixteen attends the pastor's school at three in the afternoon. Here, they are taught to read the Bible "correctly" with "meek and humble voices" (140). The pastor's "faletua" ("wife") teaches the girls "how to sew, how to dress, how to behave" (140). She instructs:

> Never laugh at blind people or deaf people…or palagis ("white people").
> Never walk around alone at night—only bad girls and teine o le po walk around that late.
> Never wear anything exposing your knees.
> Never wear pants on the malae or at the pastor's house.
> Never wear high heels.
> Never wear makeup.
> Never go to church without a hat.
> Never go bra-less to church.
> Never speak with the 'k' in your mouth.
> Never pray for yourself—you should pray for the whole village and for the whole of Samoa. (141)

The anaphoric use of "Never" in the faletua's instructions draws a hard and fast set of rules with no space for in-betweenness. The values imparted here suggest that the most important rules of good behaviour require that young women respect white people, behave like a Madonna (i.e., not a "whore"), and put the community before themselves—all rules that ultimately uphold Western patriarchal white supremacy. Falling in-between the binaries of good and bad behaviour also means that you will never be enough of one or the other. Alofa's belief that she, Lili, and Moa are "in-betweens," then, does not just speak to their "in-betweenness" when it comes to never satisfying the expectations of their parents or the pastor's wife. Being in-between is also to be caught between the old generation and the new, in the space shortly after Western Samoan

independence where cultural expectations are a moving target and what it means to be Samoan is undergoing (re)definition.

These rigid expectations suggest that colonial culture continues to maintain a troubling and strong presence in Western Samoa—and this is true—but at the same time it demonstrates how Samoan People have survived colonization by integrating the colonizer's culture into their own. This integration clearly emerges through a focus on language in these moments. The legacy of this complicated colonial inheritance manifests in the deacons' meeting, choir, church youth group, and girl guides, but, importantly, each of the words that describe these events appears in Gagana Samoa. These activities may be Western inheritances, but Alofa's language suggests that these practices have been somewhat indigenized such that they now appear in Samoan terms: fogo a kiakogo, Aufaipese, Aukalavou, Au a Keine. As I mentioned in my Introduction, Ortiz tells a story of a similar situation with an Acqumeh ceremony that has become blended with Catholic Christian rituals because of the history of Spanish colonialism in the region. These originally Spanish rituals are no longer Spanish because of the creative changes made to them by local Native Peoples. For Ortiz, "Native American or Indian literature is evidence of this in the very same way" ("Towards a National Indian Literature" 8). Indigenous Peoples bring their own sets of meaning to aspects of colonial culture to survive colonization by protecting "the indigenous mind and psyche" (9). Although Alofa does not provide the audience with further detail about what church or youth group looks like, interpretations should move from the assumption that these Western rituals have been indigenized; the Samoan People have not "succumbed" to Christianity and forgotten or been forced to abandon their Indigeneity as the colonial project would have everyone believe (10). Instead, it is entirely possible for them to "retain and maintain their lives" by using the colonizer's culture (10). In this way, the country's

new name—Western Samoa—takes on a symbolic meaning beyond that of its geographical location (west of American Samoa). By being "in-betweens," Alofa and her friends push the boundaries of their inherited, hybrid Samoan culture.

This hybridity, manifested in the novel's indigenized English, further demonstrates the rejection of formal written practices that prop up a problematic and violent Western linguistic hierarchy where the written sits at the top. One of the ways the novel manifests this rejection is by employing the Samoan spoken "k" (as opposed to the formal written "t") in indigenized English where appropriate. Explaining this decision, Figiel says "a character who would speak the vernacular is given that chance to do so instead of constantly formalising his or her speech patterns because 'it's the right and proper thing to do.' In a way it's furthering the indigenization of English" (Figiel qtd. in Ellis 73). Figiel, then, writes how Samoans speak, a decision that rejects what she learned in school: "the first rule we are taught, never write with a 'k'. Write everything with a 't'. But I say, no, everyday life is with the *'k'*" (73). For example, the formal word for "old" or "elder" is matua, but Figiel's glossary and use of the word in the book appears as makua. This embrace of colloquial speech in writing more closely portrays how Samoan people—and youth in particular—speak and find further ways to indigenize their English by rejecting formality (Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* 41). The novel underscores this distinction in the second section, where the third-person narrator describes the capital city of Apia at noon. Here, the locals discuss the events of the week along with "the occasional peacecorps worker who speaks near-perfect Samoan…near-perfect because he speaks only the *t* and not the *k*" (76). This reference to the Peace Corps worker's Samoan notes a key difference between their use of the language and the vernacular version of the youth characters. The narrator describes the Peace Corps worker's Samoan as "near-perfect," implying that "perfect"

Samoan would use the "k" of everyday life (directly contradicting the pastor's wife's rule to "Never speak with the 'k' in your mouth"). In noting the Peace Corps worker's error, the narrator highlights the importance of Gagana Samoa as an oral language that does not privilege the written form; privileging the written will always prevent perfect use of Gagana Samoa.

The novel also demonstrates a resistance to rigid English use in how the youth characters employ colloquial phrases and words, expletives in particular, to further embrace their in-betweenness. These colloquialisms reject the formality of the "proper" English expected of "good" girls and docile neocolonial citizens: "they needed to take a dump" (124); "'[m]aybe they're going to jerk themselves off in broad daylight'" (127); "'[y]our Mama can't even fit into a bra, you pig! . . . They don't make bras for whales!'" (127); "'you chicken shit fools!'" (130); "[h]e was a pig, a Judas-bum pig" (200); and "you little shits" (62). The girls throw most of these insults at the "Five Boys of Samoa," a gang of local boys. The Charlie's Angels know better than to throw such insults at the adults, who would beat them if they knew how they were using English.

This "improper" English also extends to the way both Alofa and the anonymous narrator use repetition to add emphasis. Examples of this repetition appear throughout the novel: "'Your titties are growing-growing'" (127); "clean-clean always" (4); blue eyes (big-big), breasts (big-big) (6); "fucking-fucking-Jesus-Christ" (14); "[t]ried to forget-forget-forget" (14); "floating-floating above clouds . . . floating-floating into death" (17); "[l]aughing-laughing about the bus driver" (19); "she bragged-bragged-bragged" (31); "selling-selling her handmade cricket balls" (71); "small-small feet" (71); "big-big falepapalagi" (76); and "[t]axis zoom-zoom. Vans zoom-zoom. Lorries zoom-zoom. Bicycles zoom-zoom. Motorcycles zoom-zoom. Tour buses zoom-zoom. A limousine zoom-zooms" (79). This doubling, and occasional tripling, of words always

uses a hyphen, merging the words and increasing the pace at which they are read or spoken. This means of creating emphasis does not adhere to formal colonial spoken or written English conventions and therefore indigenizes the language by reshaping it to better express the meaning of its Samoan speaker.

Alofa's vernacular English also demonstrates how she has introduced new words and figures of speech that better account for and integrate her Samoan experience. For example, rather than saying that she has yet to start menstruating, Alofa mentions being concerned that the moon will forget her (120–22). She refers to nervously waiting for the "moon sickness" (120), waiting to be "recognized" by the moon (121), and waiting for the moon to "remembe[r]" her (122). Other words and phrases further exemplify how the Charlie's Angels make English their own. For example, "the enthusiasm of a stuffed dog" (133), "'[s]he wants to taste Filiga's talking stick'" (16), "'[y]ou need to be *completely* sour to be a woman'" (12), "'[e]i!'" (8, 9), "'Amelika'" (30), and "tala" (44). The characters never clarify the meaning of these words and phrases but through their context and usage the reader can discern what the girls mean, at least to a degree: Amelika is America, just as tala is dollar.

A further way the youth characters indigenize Western culture through language, enacting resurgence, occurs when the girls in Alofa's village have nothing to do so they participate in a favorite pastime: counting possessions and relatives. In Samoan culture, having a big family and being able to name all its members is an undeniable show of power. Seated in a circle with the other village girls, Salala—the "biggest" and "serious-est" girl in Malaefou—reminds them that "'[n]othing is better than counting relatives…and their whereabouts, and belongings. *Nothing*'" (27). They all agree: "[w]e loved counting relatives. We loved doing it the

most. And we did it over and over" (27). A big family means influence and power in the community, an influence that the presence of Western possessions could only strengthen.

No one's family is larger or has more possessions than Mulimuli, or Mu, whose family of fifty-four members lives on a large plantation. Even though Mu is a faikakala ("gossiper") and mikamika vale ("boasts excessively"), the Charlie's Angels "wanted to be seen with Mu" and were "envious," trying "desperately by association to be her friend" or at least "be seen with her" (29). Seated in a circle with other young girls, Alofa counts Mu's possessions to herself:

> . . . a falepapalagi ("western-style house") with real chairs from Folasi in New Zealand . . . they were used only by Lafoga the pastor, visiting matai ("chiefs"), or lost palagis ("white person") . . . Mu's family had two coloured TVs—one on the first floor of the fale ("house"), and the other on the second floor . . . Plus a video machine, too…with *Rambo,* and Mickey Mouse . . . an electric fan . . . pictures of Jesus Christ . . . the large poster of Elvis . . . A refrigerator where all the food was kept, and where all the ice-water bottles of Malaefou were kept, too . . . A gas stove, too . . . A pick-up truck. A taxi. . . . two lawn mowers and weedkiller. (29)

Here, Alofa describes Mu's home in English but frequently uses untranslated Samoan words such as falepapalagi ("western-style house") and palagi ("white person"). Although the Glossary gives the translations for the words, they almost always appear untranslated in the text, as they are in *Marrow Thieves*. The effort of translating thereby falls on the reader and releases the text and storyteller from having to perform the role of (cultural) translator for their audience. This element also places non-Samoan readers within the cultural space of the story, as if they are on the inside with existing knowledge of Gagana Samoa, rather than learning language as they do with Frenchie's family. Mu interrupts Alofa's counting and asks Alofa to count all of Mu's relatives. Alofa "loved [the counting] and hated it, but loved it more" because she could "pretend through [her] knowledge that they were [her] uncles, [her] aunties, [her] cousins…[her] 'aiga" (33). Although the worship of Western goods and capitalist values adds complexity to Samoan resurgence in the novel, Alofa's use of language in this scene provides a meaningful glimpse at

how Samoan people have used the English language to preserve and strengthen their own culture. The girls review these indicators of status—Western possessions and a large family—in their indigenized English, further demonstrating how Samoan people have incorporated particular Western ideals into their value system as a means to strengthen Samoan culture. In the coming section, I consider the relationship between language and knowledge transmission in *Don't Run.*

An Anglophone People Story

Don't Run is a folk narrative, or *people story*, which carries traditional knowledge passed from generation to generation (Chatterjee, "Women and Natural Resource Management" 107). This particular people story is a cautionary tale about trusting outsiders, which also imparts traditional Angami Naga knowledge and concepts while teaching its audience Tenyidie words. The story itself warns against the dangers that women face when on their own, the importance of consent, and how to guard against manipulation. Interestingly for a youth character, Atuonuo does not struggle against dominant power structures and hardly rebels against Visenuo or her wider community. Rather, she wants to be a valued and respected member of her community who earns a place as a *thehou nuo* ("child of the communal house") by learning the ways of the village.[59] By imagining Angami Naga as it once was, *Don't Run* enacts resurgence by representing everyday language use. By focusing on the relationship between a young mother and daughter, Kire's novel asserts the key role younger generations play in carrying knowledge systems forward and works to pass that knowledge to the audience.

[59] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Tenyidie are provided in text by the characters or narrator.

When *Don't Run* begins, Visenuo and Atuonuo are bringing the harvest back from the field to their village. The work is a lot for the two women, but Visenuo uses the challenge as an opportunity to teach Atuonuo about caring for the land and preparing effectively for winter. A third-person omniscient storyteller narrates the entire novel and begins by explaining that this particular year the harvest is late by a week because the "*liedepfu,* the ritual initiator of the harvest, had laid sick in her bed for a week" (2). This delay meant that a "race against time and the elements had begun" as the women needed to bring all the rice from the field to the village where it could be safely stowed "before unseasonal rain came and destroyed the hard work of several months" (2).

The narrator frequently imparts knowledge to the audience by telling the story with the use of Tenyidie words or concepts and explanations of their meaning. For example, the narrator describes how the women use "the *kephou*, a sturdy woven band which can be used for carrying both baskets and grain bags. One end of the band is placed under the bottom of the bag and tied in a firm knot. The other end, which is the wider bit, rests on the carrier's head" (10–11). Once the narrator defines a Tenyidie word or concept, they often integrate this word into the story and leave any further usage undefined so the reader can apply and practice their understanding: "[s]he then knelt down, put the *kephou* on her head, and leaned forward" (11); "[s]he put the strap of the *kephou* on her forehead and heaved the load of paddy up" (13). A few chapters later when Kevi is helping the women bring rice back to their village, the narrator uses the word again: "Visenuo found an extra *kephou* that Kevi could use. Together, both women lifted the load of grain on his back, making sure that the wide end of the *kephou* was resting on the middle of his head" (40). The repetition of key terms illuminates the importance of the kephou for transporting rice as it allows an individual to carry much more than they would otherwise be

able, therefore saving them trips from town to the fields. Additionally, this repetition contributes to resurgence by assisting the reader as they work to learn a new term and commit it to memory.

The story further underscores its didactic nature when the narrator explains how Atuonuo built a fire. She "began to pile up bamboo shavings and slivers of wood in the hearth. The matches were a little damp but she finally managed to spark a tiny flame. She carefully fed the flame with slices of dry bamboo and twigs. The fire grew until she felt confident about placing bigger pieces of wood over the flame" (17). Here, the reader learns the basic details of how to prepare a fire: the need for bamboo shavings and slivers of wood, dry matches, and cautiously feeding the flame with bamboo and twigs before adding larger amounts of wood. Complimenting her daughter on the well-built fire, Visenuo tells Atuonuo what her grandfather used to say: "'a house needs a fire. The smoke from the fire strengthens the walls and helps it stay in place for a longer time. When a house is abandoned, it falls apart very soon. *The house was missing its owner*, that is what we say when that happens'" (19). The grandfather's words indicate a reciprocal relationship between a house and its inhabitants, that one needs the other to survive. Here, Visenuo passes important understanding from one generation to the next within and beyond the narrative told on the page.

Gathered around the fire and noticing her daughter's willingness to learn, Visenuo continues the lesson with another new concept. She explains why some people in the village are called *thehou nuo*:

> 'Since the *thehou* is the communal house where men spend their nights, *thehuo nuo* means child of the *thehou.* The boys who have been brought up in that tradition learn things about our culture. They use it to guide them through life, and when people see them behaving in a certain way, people refer to them as *thehou nuo.* A girl can also earn such a title when people see that she knows the ways of the village.' (19)

Atuonuo immediately expresses her desire to become a thehuo nuo, a child of the communal house. She wishes to grow up in the traditions of the tribe so she can protect its communal knowledge (19). Atuonuo worries, however, that she is too afraid of spirits and dark places to ever become thehuo nuo. Visenuo assures her that you do not need to be free of fear, as warriors are also afraid, but "'the *thehuo* teaches them to set their fears aside when they go into battle . . . [the victors] are the ones who have learned to ignore their fears completely'" (19). Later, when Atuonuo has discovered that Kevi is a were-tiger and she is trapped with him in the field hut, she remembers that it is acceptable to be afraid so long as you can control it. Atuonuo manages her fear long enough to think clearly about making an escape: "'I was very frightened but I tried to think about what to do next. I pretended to sleep and he fell fast asleep beside me . . . Finally, at one point, he was sleeping so soundly that his hand fell away. I saw that as my only chance and I crept to the door without making any noise'" (91). Visenuo's lesson about thehuo nuo and the tribe's warriors provides her daughter with information that ultimately saves her life.

Having safely made the trip from the field to their home in the village, the women begin to cook the meat that Kevi leaves for them as a gift. Step by step, the cutting of the meat is detailed, followed by how it is simmered; the women explain the essential use of an earthenware pot along with the necessary ingredients for seasoning the meat (27). Every household in the village has a small garden space that supplies their kitchen needs and Atuonuo digs up some "country ginger," preparing it accordingly. In an aside, the narrator explains that Visenuo and Atuonuo's garden has grown a bit wild because of how busy they have been in the field. Importantly, however, "a large patch of *japan nha,* Crofton weed" had grown in the corner (27). They never remove the weed because it is medicinal, "it was said to be effective against malaria and stomach aches" (27). Here, the reader learns about the importance of japan nha in addition to

how they can prepare a simple meal with meat according to Angami Naga knowledge. Visenuo remarks, "'[t]hat gravy is so rich in flavour. I may not be able to open my eyes tomorrow'" (28). Asked what she means by this, Visenuo shares an idiom: "'[w]ell, we say that when you have enjoyed a meal so thoroughly, your eyes become swollen the next day, and everyone can see it, and they can tell you had been feasting the night before'" (28–29). This moment highlights Atuonuo's desire to learn from her mother, imparting to the reader the importance of asking questions and remaining curious. This scene is full of teachings for its audience about traditional Angami Naga ways of knowing that the British, American, and Indian incursion have eroded.

Atuonuo's curiosity is present throughout the novel and her questions are often met with a story. For instance, when Visenuo's aunts, Abau and Khonuo, see Atuonuo and Visenuo receiving help with their rice from Kevi, they express their concern over the optics of a handsome young man helping a widow and her unmarried daughter. Visenuo and her aunts argue over the politics of receiving help and later Atuonuo asks her mother about the tension between the three women: "'[d]idn't you tell me their family was once the most powerful in the village? And we are a part of that family, aren't we? Perhaps that is why she is so anxious that we should not do anything to spoil the family name'" (48). Visenuo tells Atuonuo about her wealthy grandfather, Kezharuokuo, who famously hosted four feasts of merit, which fed about five hundred people every time. Because Abau and Khonuo are women, when Kezharuokuo died they did not inherit any of his property and the lands passed to Visenuo's husband, Apuo. Rather than hosting yet another feast, Visenuo and Apuo decides to focus on starting their lives and building up their stores of rice. Abau threatens Visenuo, saying that "the person who opposes cultural practices will meet with tragedy" (50). When Atuonuo is seven, Apuo dies of swamp fever and Abau blames his death on Visenuo who "forced" her to curse their family. This story

imparts family history to Atuonuo while also arguing for the importance of planning for the future, of caring for the next generation rather than privileging the current moment and prioritizing prestige.

Another moment that strengthens the didactic nature of the text by imparting knowledge in English follows the above story. The rush to bring the rice into town continues as the Harvest Festival, the Kevakete, is only days away. Atuonuo asks, "'that is the time when you are not allowed to eat rice, isn't it Azuo? Why do we do that?'" (52). Visenuo explains the rituals of the festival: the mother refrains from eating rice for one day, eating only lentils; the other family members must wait to eat only after the mother has eaten; the adults send the children to catch hibernating frogs and cook them in even numbers (52). These rituals "transfer blessings upon our harvest . . . Since the frogs slept for months without food, they were taken as a symbol that food in the house would last very long" (52). The list of Kevakete taboos is long, but each intends to gain the favor of the spirits and safeguard the grain that had been placed in granaries (52). For example, the taboo against eating grasshoppers and dragonflies exists because "these were insects that destroyed crops—it would not do to anger them" (52–53). Visenuo's simultaneous lessons and information in response to Atuonuo's questions exemplify a mother-daughter relationship that values Indigenous futurity and the futurity of their Angami Naga tribe. *Don't Run* describes Angami Naga life as it once was, enacting resurgence by representing everyday language use in English and Tenyidie. Kire's novel also asserts the importance of younger generations carrying this resurgence into the future with its focus on Atuonuo and Visenuo. This community building across time can also transit diverse Indigenous nations, as exemplified by my next section.

Trans-Indigenous Community Resistance

As everyday acts of resurgence, language learning and use in *Marrow Thieves* centrally involves building and strengthening community. Language is just one of the means by which the youth characters further integrate themselves within community and establish a sense of belonging that encourages rebellion against settler ways of being. The youth characters play an essential role in building their community precisely because they represent and demonstrate that a different future is possible.

Conceiving of the community that Frenchie's family joins as trans-Indigenous (rather than transnational or pan-Indigenous) effectively underscores the importance of the distinct nations and languages that make this community possible. When Miig's family meets the resistance movement's Council—a moment I reference at the opening of this dissertation—its members give their names and nations: "Clarence, Cree from the old prairies territory. Mint, Anishnaabe from south in America. Bullet, she's Inuit. Jo-jo is Salish . . . General is Haudenosaunee and Migmaw. And Rebecca is Ho-Chunk . . ." (169). Frenchie's family itself consists of people from different nations: Frenchie, Minerva, and RiRi are Métis; Miig and Rose are Anishinaabeg; Chi-Boy is "from Cree lands" (20), and Slopper's "family came from the East coast" (21). Frenchie does not disclose Wab, Tree, and Zheegwon's nations. While the people in Frenchie's family and their new community belong to a variety of nations, they come together to learn the languages available to them—in this case Anishinaabemowin and Cree. Throughout the novel, however, Frenchie's narration never explicitly names Anishinaabemowin. Rather, he refers to it as "the language"—a phrase that can initially appear to lack specificity. However, the words Minerva teaches are Anishinaabemowin words. Cree also appears on several occasions: Tansi ("hello") (120); Kinana'skomitin ("thank you") (225); and Nehiyawok ("Cree") (228).

Christina Turner's recent work on *Marrow Thieves* argues that "the language" is intended to underscore that "it is the language's ability to resonate across time and space, rather than its name, that lends Minerva the ability to destroy the residential schools" (121). Taken in the context of the Anishinaabe lands where Miig's family and community reside throughout the novel, "the language" also becomes a direct reference to Anishinaabemowin. The fact that Indigenous characters from a diverse array of nations dedicate themselves to learning Anishinaabemowin reflects a respectful inhabitation of the traditional lands upon which Frenchie's family and new trans-Indigenous community resides.

Frenchie's new community looks across its diverse and distinct national identities, preserving them while working toward shared goals. This preservation emerges in deliberate references to specific languages and national identities throughout the novel. For instance, alongside Minerva speaking Anishinaabemowin, the characters explicitly name and speak Cree on several occasions (100, 120, 225–28). The novel also discloses and recognizes national identities at several points in the novel: when Miig's family meets the "Other Indians" (120–21), when they meet the resistance movement's Council (169), and when Clarence initially speaks with Miig's husband, Isaac (227). This specificity indicates the care taken by characters to honour national identity and look across Inuit, Cree, Métis, Anishinaabeg, Salish, Haudensosaunee, Ho-Chunk, and Mi'kmaq presence toward a shared vision for the future that makes use of English as an Indigenous language. This continuity centres reconnection with the "old-timey," encouraging community members to learn from diverse knowledge systems to enact mutual resurgence.

To enhance resurgence off the page and with the reader, the novel almost always directly or indirectly translates non-English languages—Anishinaabemowin, Cree, Michif, French—

either through repetition in English or through assumptions the reader can make based on the context. For example, when the resistance movement ambushes Frenchie's family, Miig responds to their questions about his identity with "'Miigwans Kiwenzie, anish de kaz.' Miig spoke first, giving him his full name" (164). Even though readers may interpret this phrase through context, Frenchie describes the situation in English. Later in the novel, Isaac tells Rose "'Kinana'skomitin'"; Frenchie provides no immediate translation, but given that Rose has just helped Isaac to his feet the reader might assume the Cree word means "thank you" in English (225). On the following page, Frenchie confirms this assumption when he describes Clarence's "conversation with the shirtless man who'd thanked Rose in Cree" (226). In the same scene, however, Clarence tells one of the men in the group "'Boy, astum'" (225). Frenchie provides no direct translation, but Clarence does appear to repeat himself in English: "Enough now" (225). Providing these translations helps teach important words and concepts both within the novel between its characters and beyond the novel with its readers. Here, Dimaline shows her Indigenous youth readers the roles they can play in bolstering community and bringing about Indigenous resurgence, equipping them with the language to do just that.

Minerva communicates the importance of creating a future built upon love and care with the first word she teaches the women: nishin ("good"). Writing about the regeneration of Indigenous languages, Simpson recognizes the necessity for Elders and fluent speakers to "teach us through the language, using specific words as windows into a deeper, layered understanding" (*Dancing* 55). By taking these words and their layered meanings with them, the characters can continue to invest in and enact resurgence (55). For example, nishin is not a noun and therefore works in this context (and placement within the novel) to directly refute the wastefulness that brought about this most recent settler-induced apocalypse (Fachinger 141). The beginning of this

language transmission between community members across generations is particularly important because it empowers youth characters to participate in community building.

Languages also play a key role in the disclosure and recognition of national identities which help the characters decide who they can trust and welcome into their community. The difficult chapter titled "The Other Indians" explores the limits of this process of recognition. When Miig's family comes across the remains of a recently inhabited camp, they decide to follow its trail. After three days of tracking, they close in on a group of two men. Miig tells his family that they have an obligation to see "who they are and if they need help. Or if maybe one of us knows one of them from before" (119). If they are true strangers, he warns, the family needs to keep moving, to take care of each other first. When one of the men hears them approaching and asks who is there, Miig cautiously initiates introductions:

> "Ahneen?"
>
> Silence.
>
> "Aandi Wenjibaayan?" Miig asked where they were from. Playing Indian geography meant you could figure out who was who before you even saw them. And for Miig, I could see why it was doubly important to establish nationhood.
>
> Silence. Then the reply came from a second voice. "Boozhoo. Anishinaabe?"
>
> "Mmmm. Niin Miigwans nindizhinikaaz." Miig moved slowly forward, introducing himself and asking for a name in return. "Aaniin ezhinikaazoyan?"
>
> "Niin Travis nindizhinikaaz."
>
> Mumbling from their end and then another voice: "Lincoln, from Hobemma Nation, out west. Tansi." The second man, the one who had called out to us at first, answered in English and then greeted Miig in Cree. (120)

This exchange, particularly the use of Anishinaabemowin in establishing genealogy, creates a sense of security that results in the family cautiously trusting Lincoln and Travis enough to set up camp with them. Sharing one's lineage or nation is a form of what Dimaline describes as "Indian geography . . . how we figure out who we're related to and where we're from" (Dimaline qtd. in

Kiwanuka). These geographical genealogies detail how someone belongs by placing "individuals and families in relation to one another, and locating them in—by connecting to—the earth (Whitt et al. 706). This process of situating oneself through story, of aligning oneself with an Indigenous nation and kinship network, is an act of resurgence that acknowledges a shared system of ethics (Whitt et al. 734). This style of introduction helps keep Miig's family and community safe by vetting new people who could be working for Recruiters and schools.

This sense of security proves false when events take a violent turn during the night. The men reveal themselves to be Recruiters and Lincoln, grabbing Riri, runs off with her. In a traumatic scene, Lincoln and RiRi fall to their deaths off one of the very "sharp hills," "craggy cliffs," and "shifting rocks" grafted from "[p]recambrian rock" that the family has worked so hard to avoid as they travelled (113). Discovering RiRi's "single pink boot" at the edge of the cliff, Frenchie runs back to the camp and kills Travis in retaliation for RiRi's death (135–37). In taking advantage of the language's ability to create a sense of security and shared community, this scene suggests the limitations of "Indian geography" and the importance of its use alongside other modes of observation to ensure community safety. This scene also underscores the shortcomings of language as an indicator of trustworthiness. Miig's initial exchange with Travis takes place in Anishinaabemowin. In searching for other trustworthy Indigenous Peoples, Miig believes in shared linguistic knowledge as a potential indicator of safety, but he also knows that "[n]ot every Indian is an Indian"—a cryptic statement that gestures at the lengths Recruiters and their allies will go to capture Indigenous People (55). In reality, of course, both English and Anishinaabemowin prove insufficient as colonial power structures have obscured the ability of either language to fully indicate safety.

The power of language as a mode of resurgence—and Indigenous languages in particular—is demonstrated most overtly by Minerva when she destroys a neo-residential school by speaking Anishinaabemowin. To protect her family, Minerva allows the Recruiters to capture her and fills her time in captivity with language: "[s]he hummed on the five-hour drive in and began singing in increasing volume as they processed her: cutting her hair, shaving her skin, scrubbing her body, and preparing her to be hooked up to the conductor. Sensible words—English words—could not be made out" (171). Here, English as the Recruiters would speak it—that is, "sensibly"—appears as the only coherent means of expression. Minerva's "ramblings" unnerve Recruiter #2 so much that he must leave halfway through the preparation, the old woman having been so frightening that a nervous twitching spreads to his bowels (171–72). As the Headmistress and Cardinal prepare to begin the procedure, Minerva "hum[s] and drum[s] out an old song on her flannel thighs" (172). Once connected to the device that will extract her bone marrow,

> she called on her blood memory, her teachings, her ancestors. That's when she brought the whole thing down. She sang. She sang with volume and pitch and a heartbreaking wail that echoed through her relatives' bones, rattling them in the ground under the school itself. Wave after wave, changing her heartbeat to drum, morphing her singular voice to many, pulling every dream from her own marrow and into her song. And there were words: words in a language that the conductor couldn't process, words the Cardinals couldn't bear, words the wires couldn't transfer. As it turns out, every dream Minerva had ever dreamed was in the language. It was her gift, her secret, her plan. She'd collected the dreams like bright beads on a string of nights that wound around her each day, every day until this one. (172–73)

The language literally destroys the Recruiters' machines and levels an entire school intended for the purpose of once again erasing Indigenous culture and killing Indigenous people. Here, the language's ability to destroy the bone marrow extraction machines demonstrates an immediate and literal manifestation of the power language has to impart, shift, and create new realities. This kind of change does not necessarily have to occur by reducing a residential school to rubble,

however; it can also occur through the slow and dedicated teaching of a language that imparts a responsible and ethical way of being in, and relating to, the world.

This scene imparts an essential lesson—that the ability to dream in the language is the "key" to Frenchie's community's survival and continued resurgence (227). Simpson also underscores the importance of dreams within the context of resurgence: "dreams and visions propel resurgence because they provide Nishnaabeg with both knowledge from the spiritual world and processes for realizing those visions. Dreams and visions provide glimpses of decolonized spaces and transformed realities that we have collectively yet to imagine" (*Dancing* 34–35). Dreaming in the language is dreaming of a decolonized space and of Indigenous futures that acts of resurgence, which settler society perceive as rebellion, are slowly making a reality. At the end of the novel, Frenchie reflects: "as long as there are dreamers left, there will never be want for a dream...I understood just what we would do for each other, just what we would do for the ebb and pull of the dream, the bigger dream that held us all. Anything. Everything" (231). Pursuing that future, Miig's family does all they can to rescue Minerva, meeting up with the growing resistance movement stationed outside what remains of Espanola, Ontario. It is here that a spy for the Council reveals what Minerva did at School #47E, now reduced to rubble. If this school could be "torn down by the words of a dreaming old lady" (173), it is possible that others could meet the same fate.

When the resistance movement's informant delivers information about Minerva's location, the resistance movement resolves to rescue her by attempting a dangerous ambush of the transport convoy. They arrive at the decision communally, affirming a lesson Miig teaches Frenchie earlier in the novel: "[n]o one is more important than anyone else . . . No one should be sacrificed for anyone else" (58). The resistance manages to stop the convoy, but Minerva is

killed in the fight that ensues. In her final moments she whispers "words in the language" to Miig that "f[a]ll softly on his face. They must have been real nice words because he smiled then and closed his eyes" (210). Speaking to Miig, Minerva says, "'Kiiwen. Kiiwen, promise?'" to which he nods as she begins to sing a travelling song in "low, sweet words depleting breath that wasn't being replaced" (210). Miig picks up the song and sings "a new sound into the wind, to make sure she left with the dreams so she'd have all the magic she needed" (211). Rose, having learned language from Minerva, turns to Frenchie and translates: "'Kiiwen. She says, go home'" (211). Here, the word for "go home" looms in the air, its sound reminding the group of the key they have lost in their beloved Elder, of the reality that going home is more than a physical return, it is also a return to "old-timey" ways that strengthen community.

Minerva's death shakes morale as she was the only community member who could dream in the language. The next chapter, "Kiiwen," sees the community moving north and away from their former settlement. Depending on how far north the community travels, the Anishinaabe territory can overlap with traditional Cree territory (*Native Land Digital*), making it possible for characters to learn, teach, and speak both of the novel's primary languages on the lands from which they emerged. Fortunately, the community can learn to dream in Indigenous languages and they begin the "hard, desperate work" of "craft[ing] more keys, to give shape to the kind of Indians who could not be robbed" (214). In this way, resistance does not culminate with Minerva, but is fueled by her. The resistance Council spends time piecing together the bits of language and story they know: "hello and goodbye in Cree, a story about a girl named Sedna whose fingers made all the animals of the North. They wrote what they could, drew pictures, and made the camp recite what was known for sure" (215). Bullet suggests that the community start a youth council to immediately pass on what they learn, so the whole community can share the

responsibility of language keeping. Slopper, tasked with putting the council together, gives it the name "Miigwanang—feathers" (214). With this youth council, plus prior examples of youth entering leadership positions and assuming caretaking responsibilities, "the novel's primary message to Indigenous youth is that they are indispensable" (Zanella 186). The work is hard, exhausting, and Frenchie reflects on the community's feelings of inadequacy: "[w]e felt hollow in places and at certain hours we didn't even have names for in our language" (214). Even with the Council's initiatives, the community feels the lack of a fluent speaker who can teach the youth and secure the future through this form of resurgence.

The only other person with fluent knowledge of the language is Isaac, Miig's husband. Miig only discloses the full story of what happened to Isaac to Frenchie after he kills Travis. Miig and Isaac had been hiding from Recruiters in Isaac's grandfather's hunting camp. A group of undercover Recruiters reveal Isaac and Miig's location when they gain access to the cottage by pretending to be Indigenous people in need of food and shelter, which Isaac insists that he and Miig should provide. Recruiters descend upon the cabin in the night and take Miig and Isaac to one of the neo-residential schools, where they are separated. Miig manages to escape, but when he is finally able to go back for Isaac, he learns the difficult and disturbing reality that the schools were killing Indigenous people for their marrow and he believes Isaac could not have survived. This devastating news drives Miig to shoot the truck driver who gives him this information, leaving him to die. According to Miig, Isaac had been the language expert and he was also a poet: "Isaac had his words, both English and Cree" (100). When Frenchie's family searches for the resistance movement, Miig mentions Isaac's language fluency as he and Frenchie look at some carvings on a tree:

"What is it?"

> Miig ran his fingers over the marks and gave a short laugh. "Huh. I think they're syllabics."
>
> "What's that?"
>
> "That is our written language."
>
> I reach out to feel the language on my skin for the first time since Minerva had breathed her words over my forehead when she thought I was sleeping during her nightly check-ins. An arrow, a line, a couple of dots.
>
> "What does it mean?"
> "I don't know syllabics. Isaac was the linguist. But I do know it means there are Nish close by who do." (155)

The Anishinaabemowin word "Nish" refers to any Indigenous person and the syllabics could refer to the written form of Cree or Anishinaabemowin. This scene stresses the importance of Indigenous language fluency, making Isaac's loss all the more devastating for the knowledge he carried.

When the resistance finds a group of Unknowns near the camp in the novel's final chapters, it is the youth characters (Derrick, Rose, Tree, Zheegwon, and Frenchie) along with a couple adults (Clarence and Bullet) who go investigate. Miig stays back with Frenchie's father: "'[y]ou're just as good with that gun as I am. And Clarence and Bullet can track. I'm getting too old for this kind of thing . . . There's no adventure out there left for me anymore. I'm done'" (221). This decision gestures at a shift in responsibility and the affirmation that Frenchie has learned enough to move into a new role in his community. Although the stated purpose of their trek is to investigate the new group, everyone feels a deeper hope that Tree and Zheegwon express: "'I hope we find an Elder' . . . 'Someone who can help against the schools'" (222). After ambushing and corralling the Unknowns, Clarence tells Rose, Frenchie, and Bullet that one of the group's men is Cree: "'I'm certain. He's speaking an old Cree I don't even fully know. He's way more fluent than me or anyone else I've met. And walked his lineage back'" (227).

Trusting Clarence's evaluation, Frenchie asks the man what language he dreams in, to which he responds: "'Nehiyawok, big man . . . I dream in Cree'" (228). The shift in the group's energy is palpable as they acutely know the importance of this statement. Walking back to camp, Frenchie pieces together that the man who dreams in Cree is Miig's husband, Isaac. Frenchie runs ahead to alert the camp and a heartfelt, emotional reunion between the two men takes place moments later.

Marrow Thieves also demonstrates how English can carry Indigenous ways of being and knowing that impart knowledge of survival across generations by depicting oral storytelling taking place in English. Here, English works across diverse and distinct Indigenous nations, connecting them in their shared fight for Indigenous futurity. In this way, English permits the strengthening and further building of existing kinship networks. "Story" is one of two dominant forms of storytelling present in *Marrow Thieves* and appears as a series of narrative oral history lessons. This trans-Indigenous oral history of Turtle Island spans Indigenous Peoples' lives before colonization, residential schools, and treaties, to the sequence of natural disasters that contributed to settlers' inability to dream. Miig underscores Story's relationship with resurgence and community building as a form of resistance to settler reality and futurity when he explains the importance of youth characters learning Story: it is "the only way to make the kinds of changes that were necessary to really survive" (25).

Marrow Thieves has two formal Story chapters ("Story: Part One," "Story: Part 2") where Miig details the oral history of the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island to the youth characters in English.[60] These stories situate Frenchie's family within the history of the land, establishing a

[60] "Part One" and "Part 2" is true to the original.

relationship with the land that does not see it as resource but as kin. In “Part One,” Miig narrates how Anishinaabeg have been on these lands for millennia and how they welcomed the visitors who named the land Canada (23). He details the devastating early diseases brought by settlers, the violent residential school system, the Water Wars, and finally the early fallout from the climate crisis that saw diseases spread from “too many corpses and not enough graves” (26). “Part 2” details the shifting weather patterns and altered landscapes of a place ravaged by climate change and burst oil pipelines (87). It is here that the “plague of madness” descends, and the residential school system is reborn (89–90). Miig tells the characters that when they are taken to the schools, they “join [their] ancestors, hoping [they] left enough dreams behind for the next generation to stumble across” (90). Despite the grim reality of their current world, the continuum of Indigenous presence demonstrated by Story’s connection to the “old-timey” instills pride: the young men “puf[f] out their chests” while the young women “straighte[n] their spines and elongate[e] their necks” (23). This oral history equips the youth characters with confidence, curiosity, and knowledge that motivates them to continue investing in and working to protect their family, community, and the land itself.

The difficult and essential lessons imparted through these oral histories of the land also indirectly convey knowledge to the youth characters about what it means to possess a spiralic temporal worldview that they learn from the land. Rather than a Eurowestern linear temporality that relinquishes the past to an inaccessible realm, under spiralic temporality processes of Indigenous resurgence can operate as a continuum that affirms Indigenous presence across time. This reality manifests in the novel as the characters hear “Story” from Miig with the intention of “set[ting] memory in perpetuity” (25). Through these oral histories, Miig teaches the youth exactly how the past, present, and future are part of a larger whole, always interrelated. The

damage brought to the earth by settler excess cannot be siloed away into the past as it continues to live in the present.

The second form of oral storytelling foregrounded in the novel is the "coming-to" story, the genealogies of "Indian geography" I mentioned earlier. *Marrow Thieves* dedicates three individual chapters to telling the complete coming-to stories of Frenchie, Miig, and Wab in English—although the novel gestures towards many more. Miig briefly explains the ethics around sharing genealogy when he says that "'everyone tells their own coming-to story. That's the rule. Everyone's creation story is their own'" (79). The heft of telling one's coming-to story and the importance of its timing emerges through the delay in disclosure for Frenchie, who tells his painful story somewhere in the years after being found by Miig and before the second chapter begins; for Miig, whose story Frenchie is given in parts at particular moments; and for Wab. The readiness of one's audience is essential, which older family members exemplify when they want the youngest, RiRi, to "form into a real human" before hearing certain stories (26). Many in the group fear that RiRi's discovering too soon that some people see her as "little more than a crop" could result in a dangerous hopelessness (26). When Wab tells her story, she believes the youngest members of the family (RiRi and Slopper) to be with Minerva, but RiRi had snuck into the room and overheard everything. Wab is mortified and concerned that the experience will damage RiRi as prior to this moment, and for "Story: Part One," the Elders did not permit RiRi to join the larger group. Miig intervenes, however, and suggests that it is time for RiRi to also hear Story so that Wab's coming-to story can be placed in context.

The dire consequences facing Indigenous Peoples who are severed from the knowledge and ways of being contained in Story emerge in the capture of Miig's husband, Isaac. Miig contends that Isaac was unable to see through the deception of undercover Recruiters because he

did not hear Story growing up: "[Isaac] didn't have grandparents who'd told residential school stories like campfire tales to scare you into acting right" (107). Miig deeply regrets his role in not sharing Story with Isaac, and laments that he "didn't have time to share" (107). He seeks to somewhat remedy this regret by sharing Story with the youth characters in the novel, an act that functions as a form of resistance because it educates the youth characters on how they might collectively protect one another and the community they are building. Telling his family these stories in English, Miig demonstrates the English language's ability to carry the weight of their Indigenous experiences and to provide a support structure for the future integration of Anishinaabemowin and Cree words as a means of further Indigenizing the language and enacting resurgence.

The indigenization of English in *Marrow Thieves* also carries Indigenous ways of knowing and being by conveying an ethics of relation to other than human kin that expands the novel's sense of community. These ethics are an example of Kimmerer's *grammar of animacy:* the extending of animacy in language to non-human kin, e.g., plants, animals, rocks, mountains, water, fire, places, stories, drums, songs, any being imbued with spirit, sacred medicines, etc. (55–56). Part of this animacy manifests in the way that most Indigenous languages address the living world with the same words that they would use for addressing family—because they *are* family (55). Admittedly, English does not provide many tools for incorporating this animacy—you are "either a human or a thing" (56). English limits its speakers with its gendered pronouns and the non-human "it" (56). But there are ways to infuse English with greater animacy. Kimmerer provides the example of her friend and ethicist Michael Nelson who once told her about how a field biologist friend of his works around these limitations:

> [Her] work is among other-than-humans. Most of her companions are not two-legged, and so her language has shifted to accommodate her relationships. She kneels along the

> trail to inspect a set of moose tracks, saying, "Someone's already been this way this morning." "Someone is in my hat," she says, shaking out a deerfly. Someone, not something. When I am in the woods with my students . . . I try to be mindful of my language . . . I hope I am teaching them how to know the world as a neighborhood of nonhuman residents, to know that, as ecotheologian Thomas Berry has written, "we must say of the universe that it is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects." (56)

By making this small shift, Berry indigenizes English to accommodate, and thereby impart, an ethics of relation. The animacy of the world is something people are born understanding, demonstrated in the way children speak about plants and animals as if they are human—that is, until they are taught to do otherwise (57). In learning Story and working with language, Frenchie and the other youth characters begin to unlearn an inanimate relation to their surroundings and further embrace a relational way of being.

Indigenizing English so it may accommodate some animacy and enact an expanded definition of community appears on several occasions in *Marrow Thieves.* For example, while out hunting by himself Frenchie listens as insects "*pirouetted* somewhere above [his] prone head . . . a group of small birds *chatted* with some clipped formality" (48; emphasis added). When a moose emerges, Frenchie prepares to shoot but stops: "he saw me. He blinked a long, slow blink and faltered for only a second or two before he began chewing again. He turned a bit so that I knew he knew I was there" (49). Here, insects can pirouette, birds chat, and a moose stares long and slow before granting acknowledgement. English still restricts these descriptions, falling into anthropomorphism, but Frenchie pushes the language in an important direction. As Kimmerer writes, the "arrogance of English is that the only way to be animate, to be worthy of respect and moral concern, is to be human" (57). These creatures are not the *things* of the forest but its inhabitants and Frenchie's relations. When the moose first appears, Frenchie sees "food for a week. Hide and sinew to stitch together for tarps, blankets, ponchos. This was bone for pegs and chisels" (49). Frenchie sees the materials, the resources the moose could provide. As he stares

into the moose's eyes, he realizes that there would be too much meat to carry, no time to smoke or dry it, that they would leave at least half of the moose behind to rot (49). Reducing the animal to its parts results in waste and does not align with the teachings Frenchie has received from Miig and Minerva. Taking seriously what it would mean to kill this relation, this non-human community member, Frenchie proceeds thoughtfully, ethically, and the moose walks away. This scene provides an example of an indigenized English that makes room within itself for a more meaningful engagement with non-human kin, an engagement that builds community beyond the human.

Conclusively, *Marrow Thieves* portrays language use and learning as acts of resurgence. These acts are paramount not only to the disruption and destruction of the marrow extraction systems and the schools, but to the strengthening of community through the sharing of language across nations and generations. Resistance at the close of *Marrow Thieves* thereby intensifies as Elders encourage youth members to be active participants in the building of their community, a community that their indigenized English works to expand.

The "I" and the "We"

The culture of 1970s neocolonial Western Samoa in *Where We Once Belonged* complicates Indigenous community resurgence through language. Alofa and friends struggle to negotiate the tension between the role of the individual—so central to Western life—and the broader Samoan community. The complications that Western individualism and egocentrism bring to sociocentric Samoan worldviews (which privilege a relational understanding of identity) appear throughout the book and particularly in language. At school, Alofa struggles to navigate the collective "we" of Samoan culture and individual "I" of Western influence in English. In the chapter entitled

"We," Alofa's American Peace Corps teacher, Miss Cunningham, tasks the students with writing an essay about a topic of their choice from a short list:

1. My village.
2. My pet.
3. On my way to School today I saw a … (135)

Alofa chooses the second option, but her essay never includes *my* pets. Rather, she writes about how her family has a pet pig: "'My *family* has a pet. His name is Piki . . . *We* loves him because he is good . . . *we* going eat him when he grows up'" (Figiel 135; emphasis added). When Miss Cunningham presses Alofa about who Piki specifically belongs to and does not get the answer she wants, she narrows the assignment. Now, the class must write on the third prompt. Alofa finds this impossible:

> I knew only that it was hard to witness something—anything—alone. You were *always* with someone. I didn't go to school alone . . . We all woke up when the sun woke up . . . We all took the same road to school . . . before we entered the gate of Falelua Primary School. Nothing was witnessed alone. Nothing was witnessed in the 'I' form—nothing but penises and ghosts. 'I' does not exist, Miss Cunningham. 'I' is 'we'…*always*. (136–37)

Alofa's difficulty with the assignment, her struggle to inhabit and integrate a different worldview, underscores the relational nature of the Samoan self. Alofa struggles to conceive of herself in the singular because when she does anything, she is part of a community. Her life has taken place alongside other people with only a few exceptions. The Samoan self exists in relationship to other people—"'I' is 'we'…*always*"—a reality that is closely linked to the *va*: a relational space that occurs between an individual and their family and community members (A. K. Henderson 316). Miss Cunningham's lesson is ultimately irreconcilable with the students' experiences of what it is to be Samoan, the complications of which play out as they try to express their Samoan experiences in the English language.

The novel's next chapter extends this tension, looking at the erasure of the "I" from a gendered perspective. The chapter is titled "Girl Lessons" and begins with a poem expanding Alofa's perspective:

> 'I' does not exist.
> I am not.
> My self belongs not to me because 'I' does not exist.
> 'I' is always 'we,'
> is a part of the 'aiga ("family/extended family"),
> a part of the Au a teine ("girl guides"),
> a part of the Aufaipese ("choir"),
> a part of the Autalavou ("young church group"),
> a part of the Aoga a le Faifeau ("pastor's school"),
> a part of the Aoga Aso Sa ("Sunday school"),
> a part of the Church,
> a part of the nu'u ("village"),
> a part of Samoa. (138)

Here, the "I" only exists as "a part of" the greater whole, whatever that whole may be in a given moment. However, this "I" now refers specifically to the "I" of a woman, an "I" that "does not exist." As a Samoan girl, Alofa's self does not belong to her, but to her community. Rather, this girl-self is always already responsible to a steadily widening circle of relations: 'aiga ("family/extended family"), Au a teine ("girl guides"), Aufaipese ("choir"), Autalavou ("young church group"), Aoga a le Faifeau ("pastor's school"), Aoga Aso Sa ("Sunday school"), Church, nu'u ("village"), and Samoa. So, while nothing in the world has an independent existence within a Samoan worldview, the hybridization of Samoan and Eurowestern culture has further reduced the degree to which women and girls can see themselves as both independent beings and valued members of their community.

With its location directly under the title of the chapter, the poem implies that neocolonial Samoa permits men a more individual existence than women and girls. This inequity in gender norms puts pressure on women to belong so they are not excluded from a community that defines

a woman's value and purpose in relation to, and by what she can do for, that community. Examples of this double standard appear throughout the novel in reference to Alofa's family. Her father's first wife, Vaisola, was unable to have children and hung herself after Filiga began ignoring her and looking for a second wife (151). Despite doing everything expected of her, Filiga kicked his second wife, Logo, out of the family home after Pisa showed up pregnant and Filiga was "coerced" into supporting her (100). Pisa, twenty years younger than Filiga, was lied to:

> How could she know she was going to be seduced by a middle-aged man who was not a matai or head of any clan as he had led her to believe? Or that she was going to carry his child? Or that it was going to be a girl and she would burn her eyes in the fire until the end of her days? How could she know that the man was married and that he already had two little girls…and two wives…and that one of them committed suicide? He told her he wasn't married, didn't have a wife, didn't have children. He told her that he was in Savai'i working for himself and his 'aiga—meaning, his mother, brothers and sisters, their husbands and wives, their children. He wasn't married. He swore it . . . This was the curse of girls. Girls would grow up and continue the cycle of being seduced by middle-aged men. Girls would grow up to shame their 'aiga and to burn their eyes in the fire. (105–6)

This "cycle" is one of the ways that Western egocentrism has disproportionately impacted the women of Samoa. In the novel, how a woman cares for her relations—a "care" that the patriarchy defines—determines her value. When she cannot perform that care, even unintentionally or by no fault of her own, she suffers. Entering the Filiga household in this way, the extended family abuse and largely ignore Pisa. In particular, Tausi, Filiga's mother, regards Pisa as "an outsider . . . a nobody" (151–52). In her isolation and pain, Pisa concentrates on willing herself to give birth to a boy so she could have something to offer the family and community (152). When Alofa is born a girl, Pisa is despondent: "She refused to look at me. She refused to produce milk to feed me . . . Pisa had forgotten that I was there. She willed herself to forget" (153). Pisa never fully recovers from this trauma and the rejection by a family and

community that defines a woman's value by her ability to perform a specific set of responsibilities. This type of relational existence, one shaped by patriarchal structures, makes life appear untenable for several of the novel's women.

One scene in particular from "Girl Lessons" emphasizes how patriarchal Samoan society pits women against one another as a means of entrenching its presence. The narrator, presumably Alofa, witnesses two women fighting in the street in the middle of Apia. They violently pull each other's hair, kick each other in the stomach and ribs, bite each other's ears, "vomit insults into each other's mouths" (138–39). The women speak these insults entirely in Gagana Samoa and the narrator provides no translation. Despite this violence taking place in a public space in front of a crowd, "[e]ach woman did not exist in the eyes of the spectators. Each woman did not have a name. She 'was' through her village, and her village 'was' through her" (139). These women problematically exist as extensions of their respective communities. What happens between them, happens between their communities, rather than between two individuals. Instead of directing anger at the inherited colonial structures that would have women destroy one another, or at the men who benefit from those structures, patriarchal society places women in opposition to one another. This type of conflict is also reflected in how the Charlie's Angels direct their rage at Mu and Afi; how Pisa directs her frustration at Alofa, Tausi, Vaisola, and Logo; and how Tausi directs hers toward Pisa. It is easy to imagine how, no matter who "wins" the street fight, both women will have brought shame to their communities.

The responsibility that patriarchal society places on women as representatives of their communities is also evident when Alofa attends Samoa High School. Here, the students must speak English and never Samoan—a violent cultural erasure. Despite being able to write and read in English, Alofa is terrified to speak English and remains largely silent (which her teachers

mistake for stupidity). Ultimately, her greatest worry is rooted in her representation of Malaefou: "I didn't want the other students from our village to be humiliated just because I, a daughter of Malaefou village, did not know how to pronounce the written English" (209). The dissonance between gendered dimensions of "I" and "We" in Western Samoa causes Alofa immense stress and anxiety as her ability to represent Malaefou perfectly feels impossible.

Navigating the "I" and the "We" is even more convoluted in Alofa's after school lessons with the unnamed pastor's wife earlier in the novel. Here, Samoan society forces a different "we" on Alofa, one that does not represent a communal Samoan existence but rather signals how she is to behave as a young woman growing up in a "Christian" society. Alofa remembers: "[w]e were not allowed to laugh too much or too loudly. We were taught to be meek. We were taught to be humble, again" (142–41). Here, the pastor's wife's words force the same rules upon Alofa as those imparted by her family in criticism of her in-betweenness. Alofa's realization of this repetition appears in the word "again." She goes on: "'[w]e' were taught to mimic Jesus Christ in all that he was, so that 'we' too could be good examples of his life. 'We' were young ladies, and 'we' should handle ourselves as such. Therefore: 'I' am 'We.' 'I' does not exist" (142–43). This phrase echoes Alofa's response to Miss Cunningham—that "'I' does not exist . . . 'I' is 'we'…*always*"—albeit here the "we" contradicts Alofa's understanding. This Christian "we" is one of deference to men who do not have to follow rules telling them to be meek and humble, telling them not to laugh. Alofa resists and critiques the pastor's wife's "we," however, by placing it in scare quotes in this passage. Given this context, Alofa's cheeky rejection of this Christian "we" becomes clearer: "'*[w]e'* were young ladies, and *'we'* should handle ourselves as such" (emphasis added). The English "we" fails to encapsulate her relational existence as this binary interpretation of the relationship between "I" and "we" will always seek to control and

oppress women rather than see them as integral parts of a sociocentric community that sees "I" as just one part of a greater whole ("We").

The English language enforces a binary worldview that Alofa finds confusing as she navigates her in-betweenness. When her strict but beloved teacher, Mrs Samasoni—the only Samoan school teacher—is away, Miss Cunningham takes over. During Art class, Miss Cunningham tells the students "'[t]here are no wrong answers in Art'" (171). This confuses the class: "How could something not be wrong, we asked ourselves? Our right-wrong world was questioned then for the first time, and we tried as hard as we could to justify our own beliefs" (171). Miss Cunningham's statement breeds distrust with the students. They have been taught to view the world, in English, through a binary lens of right and wrong, do and do not, "I" and "we." The students have not learned to embrace and trust a nuanced, relational perspective. The teachers have taught the students that "love meant guidelines and rules and punishment" and so they wonder if Miss Cunningham "really [thought] we were *that* dumb and did not deserve the truth? Or that we did not even deserve love?" (171). They begin to wish for Mrs Samasoni's return, even if it means a return to the harsh rules that now made them so comfortable. When they laugh at Miss Cunningham as she tries to control the class by speaking Samoan, she leaves the room: "[w]e didn't respect Miss Cunningham. We didn't dislike her either. We only thought it funny to hear a pisikoa ("peace corps") speak Samoan. After all no palagi spoke Samoan" (172). Although Miss Cunningham is only trying to reach the students through their first language, the binaries that colonial structures enforce upon them backfire as she tries to wade into the in-between: removing rules in Art class, speaking Samoan as a white American. The teachers have taught the students that occupying some kind of grey area, some kind of in-

between, is wrong and these teachings make Miss Cunningham's approach irreconcilable in their eyes.

No character draws more attention to the problem with Western egocentrism than Alofa's aunt, Siniva. After Alofa discovers that her father is having an affair with Mrs Samasoni, he sends Alofa to stay with her Aunty Sisi (Siniva). When Siniva was younger she had been one of the most beautiful women in Malaefou whose "large brain" allowed her to study in New Zealand on a government scholarship (190). Returning in 1972, "No one recognized her" (190). She had become (according to the people of Malaefou) "fat, wore an afro, wore no bra," wore a "cap with a picture of a burning American flag and 'Get out of Vietnam' scribbled under it" (191). The people immediately view her as "a real bum," but she tells them she has been "reincarnated (alive), and that reincarnation was not only Buddhistic but very, very Samoan" (191). Siniva makes a powerful return to more traditional Samoan ways, walking through Malaefou and reminding the people of Tagaloa'alagi, the creator, and "the cosmos of ancient Samoa, and the old religion, too, which taught respect for trees, for birds, for fish, and for the moon" (191). She claims that "pastors and nuns killed Tagaloa'alagi" and desperately tries to remind her fellow Samoans that "'Jesus Christ is not Samoan, do you understand? Cathedrals and churches are graves, cemeteries. Do you understand?'" (191). Her rejection of neocolonial Samoan life does not seek to bring Samoan ways of being and knowing into the blended reality of the world she inhabits. Rather, she advocates for a complete return to traditional ways. In violent retribution, her father and brothers beat her, and "[t]he whole village [i]s embarrassed by her" (191). Siniva destroys her degrees and wanders around Apia, shouting at tourists:

> 'Go back to where you came from, you fucking ghosts! Gauguin is dead! There is no paradise!' . . . Palagis were confused when they heard such words—most of them were shocked, shocked that someone recognized them doing what they usually did: Peeping-Tomming for a past, an illusion long dead, long buried in museums of their own making.

> They were ashamed and looked down, buying ulapule or coconut earrings from an old woman out of guilt. (192)

Siniva catches the tourists participating in imperialist nostalgia: a nostalgia that describes how "people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed," of the very form of life they "intentionally altered or destroyed" through colonialism (Rosaldo 107–108). This nostalgia "uses a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imagination and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination" (108). The white folks Siniva shouts at temporarily shed their nostalgia, but what Siniva really wants is for Samoans to be shaken out of their inherited desire to participate in Western ways of being. Siniva's time in New Zealand and the education she received made her aware of what colonialism has done to her country. This awareness is experienced as a crushing burden that results in her total rejection of Western ways of life, despite her Samoan community working to make them their own in whatever ways they can.

The people of Malaefou interpret Siniva's rejection of the West, her criticism of Christianity and neocolonial Samoan society, as madness. In so publicly expressing herself, she transgresses against the Samoan social parameters and gendered hierarchies of one-hundred-and-fifty years of colonial Christian presence and cultural hybridity. The people of Malaefou see Siniva as out of place in that she does not uphold her tofi ("responsibility, heritage, duties") and as a result is ironically at odds with neocolonial Samoa and its shifting sense of fa'a Samoa ("the Samoan way") (A. K. Henderson 325). Despite critiquing outsider Western influences in Samoa, the community casts Siniva as the outsider, as an "I" who stands against the "We" (Raiskin; Keown, "Major Authors").

The way an indigenized English extends community beyond the human by incorporating the grammar of animacy appears in *Where We Once Belonged* as it did in *Marrow Thieves*. As

Alofa narrates, she frequently refers to her other than human kin in ways that suggest a more animate worldview, despite Eurowestern influences. She describes the whispers of her and her friends as "loud enough for ants and snails and beer bottles to hear" (3). Rather than the typical English phrasing of *it's pissing rain*, Alofa use of language recognizes the rain's agency: "rain was pissing on the tin-roof" (8). From Alofa's worldview, fish "cried and cried and cried…and sang a song" (50); the moon can recall events and people: "the moon remembered" (122). Birds can also speak to humans: "[a] bird told Pisa about Vaisola" (151), and dogs can speak to one another: "[e]ven dogs quoted [the rumors] to other dogs during fights" (201). Alofa's communion with her non-human kin is most overt at night "when the moon was awake and pulu leaves were awake" (22). It is here that the "we" of Alofa's daytime becomes an "I" when she is away from other humans and alone with her non-human kin: "[l]eaves talk to me at night, when 'I' exist. They show me their bones and their blood, too. And they ask me to suck the blood from them . . . And 'I'? 'I' become a god…'I' am…'I' exist" (190–94). When Alofa engages with her broader community, she can find herself amidst the noisy mixed messages of the wider world. Here, she can embrace her own in-betweenness. After this night, Alofa begins to use the first-person pronoun more and more in her narration. This shift is significant because as one of just three students from her village who pass the national exam, she begins to attend Samoa Secondary School (one of the most respected schools in Samoa) and is no longer as enmeshed in the "we" of Malaefou. At Samoa Secondary, Alofa must find her own "I,"

In the novel's final chapter, "I," Alofa reflects on Siniva's traumatic suicide and on her own place within her wider community. Here, Siniva—the teller of unpopular truths—passes what she knows onto Alofa in a letter. For Siniva, "[l]ightness is dead. Lightness died that Friday day in 1830 when the breakers of the sky entered these shores, forcing us all to forget…to

forget…to burn our gods…to kill our gods…to re-define everything" (236). With Alofa's new generation, however, this amnesia can change: "'[n]ow,' says Siniva. 'Is our turn to re-evaluate, re-define, re-member…if we dare'" (237). Siniva wants Alofa to resist being "'blinded'" by too many Bibles, cathedrals, cars, money, by "'too much bullshit'" (237). Siniva chooses suicide because "'it is the only way. For isn't that what we're all slowly doing anyway? Each time a child cries for coca-cola instead of coconut-juice the waves close into our lungs'" (237). For Siniva, living in-between is not an option because it implies a denial of Samoan culture and life. Imperialism and Christian missionaries have claimed her home and replaced a relational way of being with an anthropocentric Christian "we" and an egocentric capitalist "I." Siniva closes the letter by asking Alofa what she will do "'now that [her] eyes are opened to the darkness?'" (239). Alofa contemplates her aunt's question:

> After reading Siniva's thoughts I am silenced. Alone. For the first time I am alone. I am alone. I am 'I' in its totality—'I' without 'we'…without Moa, Lili, girls, boys…. I am. What if there is truth in her observations? Like so many before Siniva, should I too pour kerosene over my body and run towards the sea? . . . As I thought these thoughts the Tuli of Tomorrow flew high up in the sky, a fue tattooed on her wings, a to'oto'o tattooed on her peak. The Tuli called to me, her voice music to my feet, and I began walking…walking-walking…away from Siniva's grave…walking now towards Malaefou, towards the new gathering place where 'we' once belonged. (239)

As Alofa considers the feasibility of suicide, a Tuli bird calls out as if to remind her that there is room for "I" and "we" within her contemporary Samoan culture. Yes, in some ways she is more alone now, but she also has not abandoned her community. Her use of language embodies her tentative embrace of this hybridity, this in-betweenness, and while there is no means by which her now hybrid self and culture can reverse the past one hundred-and-fifty years, the Tuli reminds her that another existence is possible. She responds to the Tuli's call by rising to her feet and walking "away" from her aunt's grave, away from the total rejection of what Samoa has come to be. Instead, she walks toward Malaefou, "toward the new gathering place," "new" here

implying the fusion of Western and Samoan cultures that have created a new, albeit ambiguous, space where the completely Samoan "'we' once belonged."

Better Futures

By depicting everyday oral storytelling in English, *Don't Run* demonstrates how English can carry and impart knowledge of survival across generations, enacting resurgence. As a people story, *Don't Run* carries traditional Naga knowledge and teachings that emerge in the exchanges taking place between Visenuo, Atuonuo, and the reader (Chatterjee, "Women and Natural Resource Management" 107). As with much Naga Anglophone writing, Kire's novel "seeks to narrativize the oral literary culture" by expressing Naga metanarratives of everyday life that write Naga culture into the Anglophone history that would otherwise leave it absent (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'" 30). The didactic nature of Kire's text, then, creates a new emergence of Angami Naga culture and knowledge systems through representations of everyday language use that enact a broader resurgence.

The precolonial historical context of the novel's setting means that Angami Naga life in Kija village has not yet met with the British colonial presence. Consequently, political institutions remain decentralized (as they had for centuries) and cultural institutions are robust (Srikanth and Thomas 98–99). The ancestral domain of the Nagas lies in what is currently the district of Tengnoupal, in the Indian state of Manipur. The region's major economic centre is the town of Moreh that sits on the India-Myanmar border. Prior to British arrival, each tribe lived in their own village and had their own chief (Srikanth and Thomas 99). The novel makes no reference to the British but mentions the distance between tribes on multiple occasions (79, 81, 82). Within this context, Naga tribes lived autonomously with little outsider presence. When

readers meet Atuonuo, then, they meet a young woman who is excited to apply the knowledge her mother has imparted to her and to become a strong member of her community. This representation—in English—demonstrates the dynamic nature of Angami Naga life prior to British incursion and encourages readers to see this dynamism as ongoing and contemporary.

Precisely because of its presentation in English and its use of key terms and concepts in Tenyidie, the vibrancy and complexity of the women's Angami Naga community contributes directly to a broader Naga resurgence. This dynamic resurgence not only enacts Naga nation building through regenerating traditional ways of being and knowing, but takes those ways and make them stronger and more equitable. *Don't Run* enacts this resurgence by exposing existing inequalities through the juxtaposition of, for example, the individual and collective in a language that can be widely read. This exposure is explicit in Visenuo's relationship with her family. When Visenuo and Apuo refuse to host a feast, the resentment they experience from Abau and Khonuo is in part because they cannot, according to custom, inherit land from their deceased father. The aunties treat the couple's denial of their request as a transgression against community expectations despite Visenuo and Apuo clearly demonstrating care for community in deciding to store and accumulate food. This critique of women's disenfranchisement continues when Abau and Khonuo see Kevi helping the women with their loads of grain. The aunties warn Visenuo that by accepting help from a stranger she is putting Atuonuo in a precarious position that may disqualify her from finding a husband. Khonuo takes this opportunity to remind Visenuo: "'[y]ou live in a community. You must heed the rules of the community or risk being talked about by the members of society'" (43). In response to her aunts' disapproval of Kevi's presence, Visenuo explains why the women accepted his help with their load and that they compensated him with food. When her response is dismissed, she questions "the wisdom of living in a close-knit

community where one was answerable to everyone else for any actions or decisions" (42). After all, as Visenuo remarks, '"Abau is not the sort to change. What she thinks reflects what the village thinks'" (48). The patriarchal community structure governing the women's lives is hereby maintained by the very women it oppresses. Of course, Visenuo and her aunts have more in common than they are able to perceive and *Don't Run* makes this commonality clear so that new generations of readers—accessing the book in English—can bring about a more equitable future.

Extending this critique, the novel depicts Visenuo as occupying an uncomfortable grey area as a widow, which prevents her from being a complete and respected member of her community. For example, societal expectations of widows inhibit them from engaging with the men of their community and accepting their support. This expectation means, for example, that Visenuo cannot accept help with the rice load when Vilhu offers: "Visenuo wished she could accept help from him without being nervous about offending his wife" (24). Additionally, the reader never sees Atuonuo learning from anyone other than her mother, despite Visenuo remarking: "'I only know the things that the village has taught me from childhood, and I try to pass them on to you" (18). The role of community in teaching the next generation how to build a responsible future is absent for Atuonuo. Without the teachings from her wider community, Atuonuo becomes vulnerable to (and guilty of) the very behaviour her community fears: running off in the night to meet Kevi when she should not be unaccompanied after dark.

Community support eventually comes when Visenuo and Atuonuo travel to the Village of Seers. After Atuonuo escapes Kevi in the field hut, they need protection. Visenua knows that the Village of Seers "can help us if no one else can" (79), and so the women set out to find the mysterious village:

> "Many people suspected that the Village of Seers moved location on a regular basis. Men got into endless arguments over its geographical location. While some swore it was five days' journey from Meriezou, there were those who were adamant that it was much closer, as close as a day-and-a-half walk away. The village of Meriezou was legendary among the Angamis; it was the seat of culture, the birthplace of many famed seers, and people still sought it out for answers. But the more adventurous and the needy travelled to the Village of Seers." (81)

The two women qualify as "needy" and make their journey with faith that the village will appear. When it does, they are welcomed by a local woman named Pfenuo who invites them into her home, feeds them and hears their story before they meet with the old seer (88–93). The Village of Seers is where Visenuo, Atuonuo, and the reader learn all about the concept of Tekhumevimia. This knowledge of were-tigers (92–93), their dangers and how to kill them (97), demonstrates the kind of teaching and care the women—and Atuonuo in particular—should receive from their village. In this way, Kire's English-language novel imparts a nuanced vision of the nation-specific tensions between an Angami Naga community and the individual so that readers can imagine futures that not only sustain and regenerate ways of being, but their improvement as well.

Don't Run also explores the way a grammar of animacy indigenizes English by extending community beyond the human. Prior to British colonial presence, the Nagas practiced Animism as their religion, believing and understanding that each constituent of the natural world possessed a spirit and particular set of attributes. Under this animism, Visenuo and Atuonuo see the natural world as divine and a source of supernatural powers (Babar 3). Most obviously, this animacy appears in the were-tiger who comes to symbolize a dangerous outsider. According to Pfenuo, tekhumevi are both tiger and man with "'a foot each in both the worlds . . . the tiger and the man, they are one and the same. *When the tiger eats; the man eats . . . when the tiger dies, the man dies.* So they are very closely connected; they say the man is the body and the tiger is the soul.

Some say they can interchange at will'" (93). By fusing a dangerous animal relation (tiger) with a potentially dangerous human relation (man), the were-tiger warns against the reality that many kinds of relations—human and otherwise—are not only animate but are capable of harm.

Many of the teachings Visenuo imparts to Atuonuo carry Angami Naga knowledge in English and situate the women in a reciprocal relationship with the animate land they belong to and live upon. Visenuo teaches Atuonuo how the movement of the seasons dictates their lives. When the rains come in March and April, it is time for "planting beans, pumpkins, and any vegetable belonging to the gourd family" (5). Later when the monsoon rains arrive, the "farmers could flood their fields with sufficient water to plant rice" (5). When the harvest time comes, all their hard work becomes worthwhile but "no one missed a day's work" (5). Living on the land and caring for it means that you do not take more than you need and you use everything you have. For example, the women recycle by using the black rain-soaked grain as chicken feed (Chatterjee, "Ecological 'Self'" 41). An Angami Naga sense of being Indigenous has everything to do with how they relate to their land and other than human communities (Mandal and Singh 207). Living their lives with the seasons demonstrates an intimacy with the land born of an understanding that land is a relation worthy of respect and care precisely because of its animacy. This relationship allows the women to foster their connection to each other; to non-humans; and to past, present, and future relations (207). Imparting these teachings in English reinscribes Naga presence against the tide of absence asserted by British and Indian narratives.

Constellation of Coresistance

In this chapter, reading resurgence has demonstrated how contemporary Indigenous novels *The Marrow Thieves*, *Where We Once Belonged*, and *Don't Run, My Love* enact resurgence by

representing Indigenous languages and indigenized Englishes. The juxtaposition of these novels has revealed several of the ways that language functions as an act of resurgence. As with the previous chapter, the value of this constellatory thinking is in its ability to tell a story that can only be seen in the context of relationships.

This chapter's constellation of coresistance imparts a story about the essential role Indigenous youth play in resurgence through language. In *Marrow Thieves* (and Indigenous YA literature more broadly) youth characters threaten the settler state by representing Indigenous futures. Because Indigenous languages hold the key to those futures (e.g., destruction of the neo-residential schools), it is even more essential that the youth members of Frenchie's trans-Indigenous community learn Anishinaabemowin or Cree and indigenize their use of English. Rather than seeking the destruction of the settler state, the youth characters in *Where We Once Belonged* must negotiate their in-betweenness as the first generation of Samoans to grow up after the state's independence from New Zealand. Alofa, Moa, and Lili struggle under their Elders' pressure to be "good" girls who adhere to Western Christian conceptions of "proper" behavior. Their indigenization of English enables them to begin accepting their hybridity—a kind of in-betweenness that does not wholly reject the West or accept traditional Samoa. *Don't Run* also centres a youth character in Atuonuo, whose education in Angami Naga ways of being and knowing takes place in an indigenized English. Situating the text as a people story in a precolonial context provides a valuable window into Angami Naga life for contemporary readers of English who, because of the Indian state's repression of Naga culture and languages, may be unfamiliar with this history. This constellation's youth characters thereby perform and emphasize essential roles in intergenerational Indigenous knowledge transmission that importantly occurs through Anishinaabemowin, Gagana Samoan, Tenyidie, and indigenized Englishes.

Further contributing to this constellation's story about the importance of youth using language to secure Indigenous futures is the necessity of rebellion to those futures. Although typical in non-Indigenous YA, the youth characters in *Marrow Thieves* do not rebel against their Elders; rather, they rebel against the settler state by indigenizing their English with Anishinaabemowin and the "old-timey" ways of knowing and being imparted by language. This rebellion is accepted, and even welcomed, by their Elders who understand the importance of youth rebellion to Indigenous futurity. *Marrow Thieves* also literalizes the potential Indigenous languages have to dismantle settler colonial infrastructure with the destruction of the neo-residential school #47E. With this destruction, the youth characters begin to see what a new generation of language speakers can hope to achieve. In *Where We Once Belonged*, Alofa, Moa, and Lili rebel against the power structures and institutions that surround them, but unlike with *Marrow Thieves*, their Elders do not perceive this rebellion as an effective means to secure Indigenous futurity. The girls find a means of rebellion, however, in an indigenized English that rejects the colonial Western English their parents and teachers prefer. Instead, they develop a vernacular English replete with crude insults, iterative phrasing, and indigenized figures of speech that more fully reflects their neocolonial Samoan experience. Atuonuo's single act of rebellion—running away at night to find Kevi—sits at the core of the novel's cautionary tale. The fact that Atuonuo's lessons have been imparted to her in an indigenized English, however, enacts a greater rebellion: the ability to carry Atuonuo's story beyond Nagaland such that Kire's novel also rebels against state-sanctioned erasure of Naga stories, language, and knowledges.

The story told by this constellation—one where youth characters enact a rebellious resurgence through language—is also a story about belonging and community safety. For Frenchie and his community, language keeps them safe by providing information about

newcomers and enhances belonging for the youth characters by instilling pride in both their heritage and their essential role in community resurgence. Differently, Alofa's sense of belonging grows from her reconciliation of sociocentric Samoan and egocentric Western interpretations of "I" and "we." In this in-between place, she begins to carve out a space for herself where "we" once belonged. Lastly, Visenuo and Atuonuo, as well as their readers, learn from Atuonuo's rebellion about how they can better keep their own communities safe from dangerous outsiders. Taken together, this constellation's story describes how youth characters use Indigenous languages and indigenized Englishes to secure Indigenous futures through forms of rebellion that enhance belonging and community safety.

As with my previous chapter, reading resurgence through language manifests an Indigenous internationalist perspective that understands every being as part of a relational network of responsibility (Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* 24). This perspective underscores the comparative nature of Indigenous ways of being and knowing that always already encourage continuance and connection across borders and boundaries. Illuminating the role that language plays in resurgence through the contemporary Indigenous novel, this chapter responded to English literature's part in disconnecting Indigenous Peoples from their communities, knowledges, and selves. In my next chapter, I look at the relationships between humans and the land (non-human kin) in a constellation comprised of novels from Haisla, Hawaiian, and Adi authors.

Chapter Four: Land as Context

Remember that you were not always earthbound. Every living creature, every drop of water and every sombre mountain is the by-blow of some bloated, dying star. Deep down, we remember wriggling through the universe as beams of light.

Eden Robinson (Haisla & Heiltsuk), *Son of a Trickster*

Looking Across: Land and Resurgence

The importance of land to Indigenous Peoples cannot be overstated. According to Vine Deloria Jr., Indigenous Peoples "hold their lands—*places*—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind" (62). Land is, therefore, more than home, land is an "ontological framework for understanding relationships" (Coulthard, "Place Against Empire" 79); land imparts the very ways of knowing and being that comprise Indigenous worldviews (Blaeser, "A Cosmology of Nibi" 31). For Indigenous Peoples, land is "everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. Our lands are where our responsibility to the world was enacted, sacred ground. It belonged to itself; it was a gift, not a commodity, so it could never be bought or sold" (Blaeser 29–30). Rather than the role that land plays in the Eurowestern imaginary (as property, resource, and/or capital), for Indigenous Peoples their ways of being and knowing cannot be separated from the land. Justice addresses this reality when he writes:

> Perhaps nothing matters more: Indigenous peoples' complex and overlapping sets of relationships, obligations, legacies, loyalties, and languages that deepen as they extend outward in time and space are intimately tied to and dependent on specific places and their meaningful histories. Without these places—on the land or on the water—the rest of that network begins to unravel. For this very reason colonialism in its myriad forms is fundamentally invested in undoing those relationships to place and imposing new, extractive structures in their stead. ("A Better World Becoming" 21–22)

Understanding the colonial project's violent obsession with land and Indigenous removal thereby gains a new dimension. Removing Indigenous Peoples from a particular place is not just a matter

of their physical presence on the land and the colonizer's need to access its resources; it is also a matter of disconnecting people from their kin and the ways of being and knowing imparted by relationships with those kin. The goal of destroying Indigenous Peoples' "specific, constitutive relationships" to place pursues the goal of total erasure (Justice, "A Better World Becoming" 33). According to Glen Sean Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene), "Indigenous struggles against capitalist imperialism are best understood as struggles oriented around the question of *land*—struggles not only *for* land, but also deeply *informed* by what the land as a mode of reciprocal *relationship* . . . ought to teach us" (*Red Skin, White Masks* 60). Even in the face of such violence and destruction, however, Indigenous nations and people have found ways to carry these relations with them, to survive, adapt, and thrive in contexts that work to consistently discredit and devalue their knowledges.

Indigenous relationships with land are rooted in principles of reciprocity and relationality that can connect seemingly disparate Indigenous nations. Writing about the core values that Indigenous Peoples and cultures from across North America share, George Cajete (Santa Clara Pueblo) notes that "knowledge could be received directly from animals, plants, and other living and non-living entities" (75). Indigenous Peoples understand that animals and plants, like humans, have rituals of interaction and that "[a]ll life and Nature ha[s] a 'personhood,' a sense of purpose and inherent meaning that is expressed in many ways and at all times" (Cajete 75). This chapter extends these considerations to the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific and the Mishmee Hills of Arunachal Pradesh as it thinks about what can be seen—and seen differently—when diverse land-based relationships are placed in juxtaposition.

Reading resurgence in this chapter, I look closely at how the novels themselves represent the interdependent, reciprocal relationships between Indigenous Peoples and their other-than-

human kin. These non-human kin include plants, birds, animals, insects, rivers, lakes, and rocks, etc., and are each—as the previous chapter noted—alive and "spiritually replete" (Whitt et al. 702). Taking this animacy seriously, then, means understanding non-humans to be agentic in their existence. They can and do communicate with their human relations if those relations are willing to pay attention and willing to learn. As John Borrows (Anishinaabe) writes: "If trees, mushrooms, otters, and mosquitos are all endowed with agency, then the scope of our relationships take on different meanings. When we add the sun, moon, and stars to this list we may start to see and hear the world in a different way" (52). The novels in this chapter each depict characters either attempting, or already able, to "see and hear the world in [this] different way." Reading resurgence across these juxtaposed texts underscores the presence of these connections to the land within diverse Indigenous worldviews.[61]

Reading Indigenous relationships with land as expressions of resurgence also means working to understand the ways in which context is crucial—and under threat—when it comes to meaning making for Indigenous knowledge systems (Mishra 112). Simpson argues for the importance of context with the story of Binoojinh who learned how to harvest sap and make maple syrup. Here, the land is "both context and process" and Binoojinh develops "place-based" theory through the practice of learning with and from the land (*As We Have Always Done* 151). Binoojinh's knowledge of the harvest is knowledge that changes if it is separated from its

[61] In focusing on Indigenous Peoples' relationships with land, I am not asserting Indigenous Peoples as "natural environmentalists" (Borrows 49). Doing so would reduce Indigenous Peoples to yet another stereotype (49). In reality, of course, Indigenous Peoples can be just as destructive as any other society: "we are part of humanity, not outside of it" (49). What is important here, however, is how these novels demonstrate and impart an ethic of care whose reproduction across generations can bring Indigenous Peoples closer to "living harmoniously with the earth" as they have always done (50). Reconciliation with the earth is the kind of resurgence Borrows values most, as it is the key to regenerating relationships with other-than-human kin.

original context and place. The story of Binoojinh's harvest is meant to be told in the sugar bush—the specific context from which the story emerged—where hearing the story can impart knowledge for harvesting maple syrup (Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* 151; Mishra 112). Simpson contends that textual versions of Binoojinh's narrative present challenges because the story has been taken away from the land and its sights, smells, sounds, and relationality (Mishra 112). In mentioning this example, I seek to underscore the significance of land to meaning, and meaning making, for Indigenous Peoples. The novels in this chapter each centre the vital importance of learning on the land and maintaining connection to context.

When people and story are removed from their original context(s), the Indigenous relationship with land can be disrupted. As Tuck and Yang note, land is the irreducible basis of settler colonialism which operates via a "mode of total appropriation of Indigenous life and land" (5). By relating to land in terms of ownership (resource, capital), settler colonialism casts Indigenous ethical, contextual, and reciprocal relationships with land as "premodern and backward" (Tuck and Yang 5). In so doing, settler colonialism rationalizes its disruption of those relationships (Tuck and Yang 5). With this disruption, settler colonialism attempts to destroy Indigenous ways of being and knowing that are imparted through lessons like those Binoojinh learns in the sugar bush.

Reading resurgence through a focus on land, I do not intend to elide the important material differences (and effects) between literary resurgence and resurgence off the page. Although part of a shared future, the expressions of sovereignty and nation-building I discuss here must also be accompanied by the return of lands, as well as economic and political sovereignty. The settler state's attempts to violently sever the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the contexts that house their knowledges make land rights a very real, ongoing site

of legal contestation in contemporary Indigenous politics and sovereignty movements. For example, 1492 Land Back Lane (which I mentioned in the Introduction) constitutes an ongoing occupation of unceded Haudenosaunee territory near Caledonia, Ontario, by Haudenosaunee people from the nearby Six Nations of the Grand River reserve. Foxgate Developments failed to gain free, prior, and informed consent from Haudenosaunee hereditary leadership for the building of a subdivision, thereby disregarding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In response to the occupation, the settler state has deployed "indirect strategies of continuing police harassment" and "injunctions to remove Indigenous peoples from their lands based on legal tests that completely ignore the case law on aboriginal rights" (Manuel and Klein). 1492 Land Back Lane is part of a wider Land Back (#LandBack) movement for Indigenous sovereignty led by Indigenous Peoples from across North America.[62] The Land Back movement is centred on the return of contexts that hold relationships which impart Indigenous stories and languages. The ongoing fight for Indigenous land-based sovereignty is not divorced from literary sovereignty but it is an important reminder of the very real material and legal dimensions of this chapter's focus that extend beyond representations in the novel.

Attending to how resurgence is expressed through relationship(s) with land necessitates engagement with Coulthard's concept of *grounded normativity.* Coulthard defines grounded normativity as "the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagement with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time" (*Red Skin, White Masks* 13). In other words, grounded normativity refers to the ethical framework provided by place-based practices

[62] Land Back means just that: "taking land back under Indigenous control and protection that was never legally ceded in the first place" (Manuel and Klein).

and forms of knowledge (Coulthard 60). Simpson sees Coulthard's grounded normativity, its theories and practices, as informing Indigenous understandings of how humans should relate to the waters, the skyworld, plant and animal nations, family, as well as other communities and nations ("Indigenous Resurgence and Co-Resistance" 22). For Simpson, grounded normativity can be understood as a "system of ethics that are continuously generated by a relationship with a particular place, with land, through the Indigenous processes and knowledges that make up Indigenous life" (22). Indigenous resurgence is nation building that takes place in the context of grounded normativity which, when actualized, becomes one way to create an escape from settler-colonial violence ("Indigenous Resurgence and Co-Resistance 22). It follows, then, that the rebuilding of Indigenous nations through resurgence cannot take place outside nation-specific contexts enmeshed within specific lands (*As We Have Always Done* 158). Reading relationships with land in the context of grounded normativity, this chapter seeks to illuminate just some of the complex and dynamic relationships existing between Indigenous Peoples and their non-human relations.

The scholars in this introduction emphasize the need for understanding existence through a holistic lens wherein no being's presence on earth is independent (Zimmerman 276). In this chapter, I carry these teachings forward as I read resurgence through relationship(s) with land in Robinson's *Monkey Beach*, Davenport's *Shark Dialogues*, and Dai's *The Black Hill.* This chapter demonstrates the many ways in which Indigenous nations are continuing their relationships with land despite very real colonial attempts to disconnect them from place. These novels contribute to the reclamation and recovery of traditional knowledges by representing human relationships with land as everyday acts of resurgence. In the next section, I provide a brief synopsis of each novel before moving on to a review of the relevant literature on each text.

Synopses

Monkey Beach is centred on protagonist Lisamarie Michelle Hill, a nineteen-year-old Haisla woman from Kitaamat, one of several Haisla communities in what is currently northern British Columbia. The story is told from Lisa's perspective across four distinct parts. Part One, "Love Like the Ocean," begins in present-day 1989, shortly after Lisa's brother Jimmy has gone missing on a fishing expedition to Namu with his girlfriend's (Karaoke) Uncle Josh. The narrative structure oscillates between the present and Lisa's memories of her youth and teen years growing up on the Haisla reserve, fishing and exploring nearby forests and rivers with her family. Through her memories, Lisa tries to piece together what may have motivated Jimmy to join Josh and what might have happened to them. As she revisits her past, readers learn of Lisa's special ability to communicate with the spirit world and her struggle to trust and accept this unwieldy skill inherited from her mother and grandmother (Ma-ma-oo). As the novel progresses, readers learn of Lisa's close relationship with Ma-ma-oo and Uncle Mick who both try to teach Lisa, in their own way, what it means to be a Haisla person. Ma-ma-oo's teachings focus on the old ways while Mick imparts knowledge of the American Indian Movement, of which he was a part, and of all the ways Haisla People need to continue resisting the American and Canadian settler states.

In Part Two, "The Song of Your Breath," Lisa travels to Namu in search of her brother. Lisa's memories recount Mick's violent death in a fishing accident and her subsequent trouble at school. Lisa remains skeptical of her abilities because they fail to prevent traumatic events. Specifically, Ma-ma-oo's tragic death in a house fire and Lisa's rape by a so-called "friend" at a party. In Part Three, "In Search of the Elusive Sasquatch," Lisa is living off the money her Ma-

ma-oo left her and partying in Vancouver, having dropped out of school. When Lisa dreams that her cousin Tab has died and is told that an old friend committed suicide, she returns to Kitaamat for her friend's funeral and is relieved to be told that Tab is supposedly still alive. Jimmy, who has injured his shoulder and given up his dream of swimming at the Olympics, encourages Lisa to move home and she eventually returns to school. Jimmy puts all his energy into his relationship with Karaoke, but when she begins to pull away from him, he makes the decision to go to work on Josh's seiner. Lisa suspects something more is going on as Jimmy has no interest in becoming a professional fisher.

In Part Four, "The Land of the Dead," Lisa listens to what the spirits tell her and visits Monkey Beach—a cove where her family used to collect cockles and search for sasquatches—to find Jimmy. Here, Lisa makes a blood offering to the spirits in return for information about her brother. By this point, the reader knows the violent truth: that Jimmy killed Josh in retaliation for Josh's rape of Karaoke, who aborted the resultant pregnancy. Forced underwater by the spirits, Lisa meets Ma-ma-oo, Mick, and Jimmy—confirming his death—and they tell her to return to the surface and to trust her gifts. The novel ends ambiguously, with Lisa on the beach as she hears a speedboat approaching.

Davenport's *Shark Dialogues* traces one family across a hundred-and-fifty years of Hawaiian history. The novel is told by a third-person narrator in two parts: (i) Ka ʻŌlelo Makuahine: *Mother Tongue*, and (ii) Ka Poʻe Hapa Hawaiʻi o Ka Honua Hou: *Hybrids of the New World.* In both sections, the novel's events revolve around Pono, a "pure-blood Hawaiian" matriarch (Davenport 6),[63] and her four mixed-race granddaughters: Jess, a Hawaiian–Caucasian

[63] Pono is introduced as "pure-blood Hawaiian" but is of Euroamerican and Polynesian descent. This pure blood claim asserts that being native to Hawaiʻi is not defined solely by blood but by relationship with the land.

veterinarian and divorced mother living in Manhattan; Vanya, a Hawaiian–Filipino lawyer living in Australia who is grieving the death of her son and who hates herself for having a relationship with a white man named Simon; Rachel, a Hawaiian–Japanese woman living in Honolulu and married to a Japanese Yakuza husband, Hiro; and Ming, a Hawaiian–Chinese mother dying of lupus and an addiction to morphine who lives in Honolulu with her husband. At the core of the novel is the granddaughters' negotiations with their own hybridity—coming to terms with it, celebrating it, redefining it.

Shark Dialogues begins in present-day 1993 as the four granddaughters make their way home to the Big Island, Hawai‘i, to meet with nearly eighty-year-old Pono. The cousins do not know why they have been summoned and as they near the plantation, the novel moves back and forth across the history of modern Hawai‘i, tracing the genealogy of Pono's family (which has been kept secret from her descendants). This genealogy begins in the Hudson River Valley in 1834 where Mathys Coenradtsen, Pono's grandfather and descendent of a Dutch immigrant, joins a whaler headed to the Pacific. When the ship capsizes three years into the voyage, Mathys and one other sailor survive by cannibalism and eventually land in Hawai‘i where they try to survive in the jungle. At the same time, Kelonikoa Pi‘imoku Kanoa, the daughter of a Tahitian chief and Pono's grandmother, runs away from a betrothal to the first cousin of the reigning Hawaiian King (Kamehameha III). Kelonikoa is living off the land when she discovers Mathys floating unconscious near the beach. She cares for him and the two fall in love, vowing to start a new life together in Honolulu with the black Tahitian pearls intended for her dowry. Of their seven children, the novel follows Emma (the youngest) as she gives birth to Pono. Pono grows up to be a *kāhuna* ("shaman and healer") who can communicate with the non-human world and

shapeshift into a shark.[64] Sixteen-year-old Pono eventually meets Duke Kealoha, a Polynesian man, and the two fall in love and live on his coffee plantation. Duke has leprosy and when his symptoms become pronounced, they live in the jungle to evade bounty hunters searching for people with leprosy. Eventually, Duke and Pono are captured by bounty hunters searching for those with leprosy and Duke is forced to live on Moloka‘i in the Kalaupapa leper colony. Pono continues to visit him, and they have four children: Holo (Ming’s mother), Edita (Vanya’s mother), Emma (Jess’s mother), and Mina (Rachel’s mother). Pono struggles in her relationships with her daughters, each of whom she eventually disowns for their decision to marry non-Hawaiians. She subsequently judges her granddaughters for being mixed race and for making life choices that take them away from the Big Island. By the end of the novel’s first half, it becomes clear that the cousins have been invited home so Pono can prepare them to inherit the plantation. Additionally, they hope to learn the identity of their grandfather—a decision Pono struggles with as Duke swore her to secrecy, ashamed of his illness.

The novel’s second section begins as the cousins descend upon the house. Once again, the narrative oscillates, moving between the cousins’ difficult personal histories and their present as they arrive at the coffee plantation. Early in their visit, Pono tours them around the island, explaining what the Japanese and American developers have planned: destruction of the rain forest to build five power plants over ancient burial shrines and plans for a Riviera Resort whose pollution will tragically destroy the reef, kill the fish, and impoverish the small coastal fishing villages. The locals want Pono to join in the fight against the Resort’s development but if she does, it will divide her workers and impact the coffee harvest, as the white coffee distributors

[64] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Hawaiian used here are provided in the glossary for *Shark Dialogues*. I italicize Hawaiian words in reflection of Davenport’s choice in the novel.

will reject coffee from her plantation. The cousins must decide how to proceed because the plantation will soon belong to them. Ultimately, it is Pono's hope that the women will commit themselves to protecting the land so that she and Duke can finally rest.

Events intensify when Jess overhears Pono telling her best friend Run Run (who also lives on the plantation) that Duke is forcing her to keep him a secret from the cousins. As Ming's health worsens, she confesses to Pono that she has always known Duke's identity and that her dying wish is for Pono to tell her cousins the truth so they can meet their grandfather and gain a better understanding of why this land means so much. When Ming dies, Pono tells the remaining cousins the truth about Duke and they travel to Moloka'i together and bring him home. When Duke's condition worsens, Pono takes him out into the ocean so they can travel to the land of their ancestors together. As the novel reaches its conclusion, each of the cousins choose their own means of safeguarding the land: Vanya, with the help of Simon, turns to terrorism and lives as a fugitive in the jungle; after the death of her husband, Rachel brings his children from Thailand to Hawai'i to live on the plantation as the next generation; and Jess cares for the plantation with Run Run and her grandson, Toru, hoping her daughter will someday join her.

The Black Hill is set in the mid-nineteenth century in the Padam and Mishmee Hills of what are currently the northeastern Indian states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The novel is based on real events that took place in this region between 1847 and 1855 when French Jesuit Priest Father Nicolas Michel Krick attempted to reach Tibet to set up a Jesuit mission (Goyal). After numerous attempts, Krick made it to Tibet and became the first European to enter Tibet from Assam and the Mishmee Hills. Returning once more with a younger priest, Father Augustin Etienne Bourry, records show that the two men were murdered by a tribal chief, possibly named Kajinsha. Kajinsha was later executed by the British in retaliation for his alleged murder of the

two priests. The details of what exactly happened are unknown, however, and Dai's novel works to fill these gaps (Goyal).

Told in the third person, *The Black Hill* focuses on Krick as well as the relationship between Gimur, a young woman from an Adi tribe, and Kajinsha, a man and chief from the Mishmee tribe. Their relationship is not accepted by Gimur's Adi village of Mebo and she runs away with Kajinsha to live with him on his land in the Mishmee Hills near the border with Tibet. As Gimur and Kajinsha begin their lives together, Krick's attempts to reach Tibet become increasingly difficult; local tribes believe that even though Krick is French and not a threat himself, if he makes it to their region then the British and their East India Company cannot be far behind. Through several chance meetings, and Krick's need to pass through Kajinsha's territory, the two men develop a tentative friendship.

Gimur struggles with the isolation of life on top of the black hill. Kajinsha is often away from home for long periods of time to conduct trade, leaving Gimur to care for their infant son, Siengbow, alone or in the company of Awesa, Kajinsha's son from his first marriage. Kajinsha's absence drives a wedge between the couple, and she decides to leave Kajinsha and make the dangerous journey back to Mebo. Awesa goes with her, helping to carry Siengbow, but the baby dies from exposure on the journey. Kajinsha and Gimur eventually reconcile but quickly thereafter learn of a plot to kill Father Krick and Father Bourry, who have finally made it to Tibet. Trying to warn the priests, Kajinsha and Gimur travel into Tibet. A group of men murder Bourry and, while trying to intervene, Kajinsha and Gimur witness Krick's murder. Kajinsha is wrongfully accused of the killings, so him and Gimur attempt to hide in a remote corner of their land. Eventually, however, the British authorities find and arrest Kajinsha. Gimur manages to visit him in the prison in Debroogurh but cannot stop his tragic execution. Dai's reimagining of

the events offers a critical take on the well-meaning Priest whose presence triggers a violent series of events for those who encounter him. In this chapter's next section, I review what has been written by critics and scholars on these three novels, further situating my readings.

Literature Reviews

Monkey Beach

Early reviews of the novel describe *Monkey Beach* as a "glorious Northern Gothic" that uses the "trappings of a contemporary Gothic novel" and aligns Robinson with her literary idols Stephen King and Edgar Allen Poe (Thomas; Cariou 36; J. Hunter). The novel does, however, balance those moments of intense darkness with moments of happiness and hope (Petten). Robinson is praised for delivering a powerful story, especially given the pressure put on young writers from Canada, and First Nations authors in particular (Jackson). Critics note that Robinson's "shifty and wise" humor has a rare energy and the novel's suspense "rivets the reader's attention until the very last page" (Jackson; Bridgeman). Reviewers also describe the novel's appeal for teen readers (Connally); its rejection of white Canada's stereotyping of Indigenous women (Schiedel); its focus on the loss of the "old ways" and the harm this causes not just the Haisla characters, but everyone living in the Pacific Northwest (Seaman); its rejection of easy resolution (Steinberg); and the way Robinson interweaves lore and landscape (Stuhr). With a reception like this, it is no surprise that Robinson has continued to be a key fixture of the Indigenous and Canadian literary landscape.

Published twenty-three years ago, much of the early work on *Monkey Beach* focuses on locating the text within a particular literary genre or subgenre—e.g., Gothic, Magical Realist, or Young Adult. Jennifer Andrews and Richard J. Lane propose that the novel be read as an

example of the Canadian Gothic, with Lane adding that *Monkey Beach* also falls within the "genre" of trickster writing due to its subversive engagement with gender (Andrews, "Native Canadian Gothic Reconfigured"; Lane 163). In another article, Andrews further considers what role the Gothic might play in contemporary First Nations literature more broadly and asserts that *Monkey Beach* is a "distinctly Aboriginal reformulation of the Canadian Gothic" that contributes to the "Native Canadian Gothic" ("Rethinking the Canadian Gothic" 206). Building on these interventions, Jodey Castricano interrogates the relevance of Eurocentric literary genre conventions (i.e., the Gothic) to Indigenous novels like *Monkey Beach*, as the role of ghosts, in a First Nations context, is distinct from Western interpretations. Importantly, Castricano suggests that while Robinson's novel may gesture towards the Gothic, it also resists the "strangely familiar world of Western Gothic" (808), warning readers not to ascribe the novel's "interpretive challenges" too quickly to the Gothic genre (806).

Other early work on the novel continues to focus on genre alongside considerations of the novel's more supernatural elements. Coral Ann Howells examines the extent to which European genres—such as the quest narrative—can effectively aid in the reclamation of Indigenous cultural inheritances (Howells). Other scholars concentrate on *Monkey Beach*'s use of magical realism as a means to remember and reformulate traumatic experiences in narratives (Mrak 2), as well as how the novel complicates readings that would view it as a "work of salvage ethnography for a vanishing culture" (Soper-Jones 16). Several scholars pay particular attention to the sasquatch figure: reading the novel's artistic expression through the *b'gwus* ("sasquatch") figure as representative of Robinson's *bricolage* artistic practice and embracing ambiguity (Appleford 86); examining how the culturally specific figure of the sasquatch exposes the contradictions inherent in colonial notions of natural and native space as empty, claustrophobic, and threatening

(Beautell); examining how the novel uses the monster motif to critique and illustrate the impact of colonialism broadly, and that of the residential school system specifically, on the novel's Indigenous characters (Remy-Kovach); unpacking the essential importance of the supernatural in Lisamarie's coming of age—specifically tree-spirits, b'gwus, and various ghosts (Rössler). Katja Sarkowsky's work recognizes that space is not just a background for cultural expression but a dynamic process of simultaneity that reveals how the "complex cultural agendas" of contemporary Indigenous literatures are negotiated through the ongoing construction of ambivalent cultural spaces (324). Taken together, these interventions indicate a central interest in the novel's complex depiction of contemporary Haisla life and cultural resurgence.

Michele Lacombe's 2010 work shifts critical approaches to the novel by addressing the limitations of reading Indigenous novels with methods derived from Euro-Canadian cultural and literary frameworks, arguing instead for the use of Indigenous literary theory (Lacombe). Similarly, Lydia Efthymia Roupakia's work asserts that *Monkey Beach* warns attentive readers against bringing their existing interpretive frameworks to their reading and asks them to actively engage with the text when they encounter its difference (Roupakia). David Gaertner remaps the Gothic concept of the uncanny, the return of the repressed, and uses it to define this return as one of resurgence, via Simpson's theorization. Instead of focusing on how repressed Indigenous Peoples come back to haunt their settler repressors, Gaertner contemplates the implications of a "return that comes back unto itself" as a resurgence whereby the return of the repressed is not experienced only by the settler (51). In this form of the Gothic, the psychoanalytic return of the repressed is thereby not reduced to nightmare; rather it becomes a means by which Indigenous characters can reconnect with practices and knowledges that have been hidden by settler colonialism (Gaertner 51). Building on Gaertner, Janie Beriault argues that the Kitamaat reserve

operates as a site of contestation between Native and non-Native worldviews and that Robinson makes such a space possible by both using and critiquing a Gothic construction of space. This Gothic enables the coexistence of the mythical and the secular (Beriault).

Additional interventions address an array of topics, indicating the sustained importance of Robinson's novel. Kit Dobson reads *Monkey Beach* as just one example of why the further study of literature that is written in Canada by Indigenous authors and authors of colour are necessary now more than ever, given the ambivalent forms of recognition authors like Robinson face (Dobson). Cara Fabre's work considers how the novel dismantles the myth of the "drunken Indian" by placing it in the context of ongoing colonization and refigures addiction as "social suffering rather than individual—and racialized—pathology" (126). Other scholars look at the role mystery plays in resisting settler colonial mastery in the novel (Kramer-Hamstra) and consider how the child narrator helps to contruct *Monkey Beach* as a postcolonial bildungsroman (Orhero). Jutta Zimmerman's work asserts the importance of decolonizing regimes of knowledge that are too often assumed to be universal. Here, juxtaposing Western trauma narratives and Indigenous survival stories enables a critique of Western knowledge production and highlights the importance of decolonized approaches not only for the wellbeing of the characters, but for humankind more broadly (Zimmerman). Most recently, Ginevra Bianchini considers how gender—specifically, gendered violence and intergenerational trauma—intersects with and informs the "re-appropriation of cultural traditions" and resurgence in the novel (Bianchini). In 2022, Sarah Stunden's work proposed a temporal framework for reading Robinson's novel based on Paula Gunn Allen's (Laguna Pueblo) theorization of achronology (390). This framework makes possible a reading of the novel whereby an "epistemic kinship" exists between

Eurowestern and Indigenous knowledges that reveals the former as always already indebted to the latter (Stunden 391).

Only two of these scholars contend directly with resurgence in *Monkey Beach*—Bianchini and Gaertner—but neither consider resurgence through relationship with land. Although some of these scholars gesture to the importance of place and setting to the novel (its rich descriptions, the land as a character in and of itself etc.), no scholars have yet considered relationship with the land directly as I do here. My reading of the novel therefore makes a new contribution to the robust field of work on *Monkey Beach.*

Shark Dialogues

Published in 1994, early reviews for *Shark Dialogues* note its breathtaking imagery and sobering indictment of the US for the pollution of the Hawaiian islands in the name of commercial greed ("Shark Dialogues" *Kirkus Reviews*; "Shark Dialogues" *Publisher's Weekly*). Others note how the novel's narrative asserts the "cathartic effect" of disclosure as the characters are able to be their "authentic sel[ves] (away from socialized self-censorship) through a recovery of place" (P. Lyons 266). Nancy Pearl observes the text's ability to educate the reader about Hawaiian history without slipping into didacticism (Pearl), while Susan Wyatt focuses on the "physical damage and psychic splitting" that take place (Wyatt). Several reviews of the novel comment on the effective and engrossing description of the land, acknowledging the environment as one of the novel's main characters (P. Lyons; Min; Pearl).

Surprisingly, very little scholarly work has been done on *Shark Dialogues.* Of what has been written, scholars focus on the novel's critiques of tourism, representation of hybridity and

leprosy as ecological otherness, depiction of land, and the novel's importance to Cultural Studies. Specifically, in his ecocritical reading of the novel, Patrick D. Murphy considers how connection with the land is depicted as essential to the cultural survival of what has become a very hybrid community (*Farthur Afield*). Building on Murphy, Mayumi Toyosato argues that through its rereading of Hawaiian history and contemporary issues, and its emphasis on identity as land based rather than blood based, *Shark Dialogues* imparts a nuanced understanding of current sovereignty movements in Hawaiʻi (Toyosato 72). In this way, the novel is a work of literary activism that participates in current social movements (Toyosato 72). E. San Juan Jr.'s work takes a Cultural Studies approach to the novel in an effort to encourage further engagement with this valuable work that has been largely ignored by scholars (San Juan Jr.). For San Juan Jr., a Cultural Studies intervention can go a long way towards ensuring that literary texts like *Shark Dialogues* are appreciated for their "pedagogical and conscientizing" qualities (Juan 76). In this way, Davenport's novel is conceived of as a cultural study in and of itself. Finally, Kristiawan Indriyanto considers how people with leprosy are represented as ecological others, their segregation being just one expression of colonial power in the region that cast Kānaka Maoli as the diseased colonial subject.[65] Leprosy disrupts Hawaiian identity in *Shark Dialogues* precisely because it requires that those suffering from it are removed from both family genealogies and the lands so essential to Kānaka Maoli identity (Indriyanto 8). Stephen Spencer looks closely at Davenport's use of the word hybrid in the novel as a translation of the Hawaiian word *hapa,* which more precisely means "mixed blood" (21). Spencer contends that hybridity is a core theme

[65] Kānaka Maoli is the term I most frequently use to refer to the Hawaiian People or a Hawaiian person. According to Noenoe K. Silva (Kanaka Maoli), "'Kanaka' means 'person,' and 'maoli' means 'real; true; original; indigenous.' 'Kanaka' by itself also means 'Hawaiian,' especially when used in contrast with 'haole' when meant as 'foreigner' (kanaka denotes the singular or the category, while kānaka is the plural)" (12). Silva notes that the term Kanaka Maoli evokes important "linguistic and familial relationships with other people of Oceania: for example, Maoli is cognate with Māori of Aotearoa and Māori of Tahiti" (Silva 13). In this way, it is a reminder that the Hawaiian Islands are of the Pacific, rather that the west coast of the US (13).

and problem throughout the text, one that the granddaughters and Pono must reconcile if they are to keep the plantation safe and in the family's care (21–22). Ultimately, Spencer asserts that linguistic and cultural hybridity come to represent resistance in the novel despite Pono's difficulty accepting them as such (27). Anthony Carrigan's work focuses on how the text goes beyond a simple critique of the tourism industry's exploitation toward a more nuanced portrayal that is critical, yes, but also aware of the reindigenization and cultural growth tourism has made possible. In one way or another, each of these interventions recognize the novel's core focus on environment. While none of them do what this chapter does—consider how relationships between human and non-human kin operate as expressions of Indigenous resurgence—I am indebted to these works for establishing the key relationships between human and non-human kin in the novel.

The Black Hill

Early reviews of *The Black Hill* in English are limited. Anuradha Goyal's review notes how effectively the text acquaints readers with the Adi and Mishmee tribes, their ways of living, and what their worries may have been about the changes coming their way as the British began entering their region. Another review notes how the novel "resuscitates" a chapter of history that has been largely ignored and takes that history beyond the sometimes isolated Northeast (Mukherjee). Importantly, this review also highlights how *The Black Hill* centres the "wealth of inspiration" offered by the land if people would only take the time to consider it (Mukherjee).

Scholarly work on the novel is burgeoning as critics begin to pay greater attention to English-language literatures of Northeast India. The scholarship that exists in English takes a

close look at the role of the environment in the text and how the characters interact with place. In many ways, this is owing to the fact that many Northeastern authors writing in English avoid writing about "modern" urban life (J. Basumatary 123). Rather, these authors write "from the spaces and community where the characters are deeply rooted, or rather enmeshed" in their respective societies (J. Basumatary 123). This means that most of the literature from the Northeast written in English focuses on tribal worlds and traditional cultures (J. Basumatary 123). T. Santhiswari and M. Palanisamy's work offers a sociocultural and ecocritical reading of *The Black Hill* that asserts the central importance of the Mishmee and Adi tribes' unbreakable relationship with land (Santhiswary and Palanisamy). Gulsan Basumatary's New Historical reading asserts that *The Black Hill* is just as much as literary work as it is historical, owing to the book's exploration of a specific chapter of Northeast history that has been "largely ignored by the mainstream historians" (163). Additionally, scholars consider how issues of identity are intertwined with issues of ecology in the text (Chakraborty; Rangarajan); how patriarchal expectations and gender complicate core relationships, spaces, and identities (Sarmah and Bhuyan; Kumar); how Dai reimagines a hidden past to create a recorded history where one has been absent, and in so doing retraces tribal culture and history (Lakshmi and Natarajan); and how Gimur's specific relationship with the land is depicted as a spiritual journey recounted throughout the novel (Satapathy and Nayak). Many of these interventions pay some (however brief) attention to the depiction of land in the novel and its importance. However, a close analysis of the relationship between the characters and place, and their other-than-human kin, has yet to be carried out. By considering how the relationship with land demonstrates resurgence and imparts an ethics of grounded normativity to the reader, my analysis of *The Black Hill* invites future scholars to consider the importance of Indigenous literature from the Northeast of India

within the broader field of Indigenous literatures. In this chapter's next section, I begin reading resurgence by contextualizing the novels within tribally specific relationships with land.

Reading Resurgence

Land in Context

As this chapter's introduction and review of the relevant literature suggests, *Monkey Beach*, *Shark Dialogues*, *The Black Hill* have received very limited attention regarding their depictions of the relationship between human and non-human kin. Thus, while the importance of land to Indigenous Peoples and their literatures has been underscored by numerous scholars, further intervention is needed regarding how relationships with land inform, influence, and empower resurgence across diverse nations. Before moving forward with my readings, I will contextualize each novel's relationship to land as these contexts inform my method.

Eden Robinson is from the Haisla Nation Kitamaat reserve in what is currently northern British Columbia. The Haisla People ("dwellers downriver") have lived on their traditional territory "since time immemorial" ("About the Haisla Nation"). Kitamaat Village is the centre of contemporary Haisla life as majority of the Haisla People live in the village; others inhabit Terrace, Prince Rupert, Kitimat, the Vancouver area, and the US. Water has always been central to the lives and work of Haisla People as they have "lived off the land and water resources of the Douglas Channel and [their] traditional territory for hundreds of years" ("About the Haisla Nation"). The resources given to the Haisla People by the land have always provided food, shelter, and livelihood. What is more, the land connects the Haisla to their past, their culture, and their future ("About the Haisla Nation").

The Haisla relationship with land is exemplified in their connection with the oolichan fish, a connection depicted in detail in *Monkey Beach* and discussed in my analysis. As Jacquie Green Kundoque (Haisla) writes, "[o]olichan fishing is vital to understanding Haisla community, people, and ways of being" (14). Oolichan are a key part of the Haisla origin story: when the first man to enter Haisla territory, Huncleesela, arrived, the territory was being occupied by a white monster. Huncleesela studied the monster and realized that "the big mouth was not a monster at all, but flocks of seagulls swooping down to grab oolichans from the river. This story tells of the discovery of Haisla territory and the relationship to oolichans" (Kundoque 15). Oolichans are most important for the harvesting and processing of oolichan grease which is considered a delicacy not only for its nutritional qualities but for its medicinal ability. Knowledge of the land is passed down from Elders during the oolichan harvest (January–April). Kundoque describes the communal process of oolichan fishing as a time for teaching respect and honour, for "modeling our relationship with the land, [and] the importance of family, and community" (18). Oolichan fishing imparts a relational understanding of each person's role within the wider Haisla community (Kundoque 18).

Pollution and ocean dragging, however, have had a devastating impact on oolichan runs and have resulted in the fish no longer spawning in many traditional areas (Kundoque 19–20). This change poses a threat not only to non-human kin, but to the stories and knowledge imparted throughout the harvest. The disappearance of oolichan is a direct result of humans "living as though they are not a part of nature" (Armstrong, "Living from the Land" 36). Oolichan harvesting exemplifies Haisla efforts to reconnect with and maintain tradition—to enact resurgence—in *Monkey Beach.*

Considering the relationship between human characters and the land in *Shark Dialogues* means considering the Kānaka Maoli cultural concept of *aloha ʻāina*. In the Hawaiian language, aloha means "love, respect, honour," while ʻāina means "land, lit., 'that which nourishes'" ("About the Project"). This concept carries "an understanding and perspective that shapes everything" the Kānaka Maoli do, as aloha is indicative of a holistic "mutuality" existing between all living things, including ancestors and the unborn ("About"). Aloha ʻāina can be observed in practices such as: "[t]reating the land as a family member"; "[s]howing reverence and respect for all life forms and asking permission to take from the environment"; "[t]aking from *ʻāina* only what is needed, and using what is taken"; and "[l]iving with nature's cycles by refraining from harvesting during spawning cycles of marine life, and planting, fishing or harvesting by phases of the moon" ("About"). Aloha ʻāina is taught by the land to the People who transmit its message from generation to generation in written and oral stories. The words *wahi pana* ("legendary place") are often used to remind inhabitants that "the land is not just a resource; it is sacred, it is family" ("About"). Pono's impulse to impart her history to her granddaughters demonstrates a commitment to strengthening Kānaka Maoli identity, which is based on familial ties, genealogy, and attachment to place (Indriyanto 3).

This Kānaka Maoli relationship with land is more than reciprocal. As Haunani-Kay Trask (Kānaka Maoli) makes clear, the relationship between Hawaiian people and the land is familial: "The land is our mother and we are her children. This is the lesson of our genealogy . . . Who we are is determined by our connection to our lands and to our families. Therefore, our bloodlines and birthplace tell our identity" (vi). To learn about Kānaka Maoli, then, is to learn to understand the land by protecting its bond with the Hawaiian People (Trask 120). As Trask notes, "it is not possible to know this connection through Western culture" because the West has lost the ability

to understand the bond that exists between people and land (120). In *Shark Dialogues*, Pono imparts this knowledge to her granddaughters through the story of her own life. Many of her teachings include essential knowledge about the relationship with land and how that relationship is expressed through everyday acts of resurgence.

In addition to representing the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and land, *The Black Hill* creates a historical record of the Mishmee Hills in English. The Adi tribes, of which Dai is a member, previously belonged to a major Tribal group called the Tani who migrated from the northern Himalayas and spread out in settlements throughout the Siang River valleys of Arunachal Pradesh. These tribes were formerly referred to as the Abor but prefer the name Adi ("hills") because the word reflects their connection to place (Lakshmi and Natarajan).[66] Speaking of this connection, Dai says "I feel attached to the land – its features, rivers, the stories and villages . . . I think there is a lot for me to learn. How to be patient, how to be good natured" (Dai qtd. in Sarangi). Dai hopes to contribute to this knowledge by telling this story of the Adi and Mishmee Peoples in English (Sarangi).

By depicting Indigenous relationships with land, these novels demonstrate how everyday acts of resurgence are being re-envisioned and practiced by the characters. These resurgences demonstrate an ethics of grounded normativity that is always already nation building. As Corntassel writes, "Being Indigenous today means struggling to reclaim and regenerate one's relational, place-based existence by challenging the ongoing, destructive forces of colonization" (88). Each of these novels works to do just that. In the next section, I begin reading resurgence across this chapter's literary constellation of coresistance by turning to *Monkey Beach.* Once

[66] Abor is a name given to the Adi by outsiders from Assam and is rejected by the Adi as a slur. For historical accuracy, Dai still uses Abor in the novel where relevant (Lakshmi and Natarajan). To respect this distinction, I refer to Gimur and her tribe as Adi rather than Abor.

again, I move across each novel twice, gathering what can be seen differently when diverse yet related novels are juxtaposed.

Learning the Land

Relationships between human and non-human kin in *Monkey Beach* range from the more clearly defined (e.g., with plants, animals, oceans) to the more opaque (e.g., with tree spirits, ghosts, and sasquatches). Over time and with lessons from her family members, Lisa gains confidence in her relationships with her plant and animal relations. The development of her relationships with the land's spirit realm, however, are less certain and Lisa struggles to cultivate this relationship and find a reciprocal balance within it. Through Lisa's personal journey of reconciliation with the land, *Monkey Beach* depicts an ethics of grounded normativity. This ethics imparts knowledge about how to maintain good relationships through a conceptualization of land that encompasses the dead, the living, and the not yet born. This section focuses on Lisa's developing relationships with the plants, animals, and landscape around her, carrying these representations forward to inform my reading of *Shark Dialogues* and *The Black Hill*.

In several scenes, Lisa notes the important relationship between Haisla People and oolichan. Waiting for news about Jimmy, Lisa reflects on her mother's sadness at not going oolichan fishing that year: she "wanted someone in our family to learn to make grease" (85–86). The detailed description of how to make oolichan grease that follows, however, indicates that Lisa has learned more about the process than her mother realizes (86). Lisa demonstrates an intimate and informed relationship with oolichan as she details the many ways to cook the fish—"[broiled,] dried, smoked, sun-dried, salted, boiled, canned, frozen, but they are tastiest fresh"—

and prepare oolichan grease (85–86). Lisa knows that oolichan "go rancid easily and don't last in the fridge or freezer"; to ensure that what cannot be eaten has a use, "you have to make them into grease" (86). This grease is "versatile" and although most people drizzle it over cooked fish or add it to stews and soups for flavour, it can also be used to "combat cold symptoms and to boost . . . general health . . . spread on the skin, grease is an expensive, fragrant and highly effective moisturizer" (86–87). In the "olden days," oolichan grease was also used to "preserve berries, fruit or meat" (87). Lisa's detailed understanding of how to treat oolichan and prepare grease demonstrates a close and respectful relationship with these non-human kin rooted in an ethics of grounded normativity. In fishing for oolichan, preparing the fish, and making the grease, Lisa performs everyday acts of resurgence.

Lisa originally learned about oolichan fishing and preparation on a fishing trip to the Kemano river with her Mom, Uncle Mick, Auntie Edith, and Uncle Geordie that the novel frequently revisits from Lisa's perspective. Here, Lisa learns that oolichan still run in "three of the rivers in Kitamaat territory . . . the Kitimat, Kitlope and Kemano" (92). The Kitimat River used to be the best for oolichan but has since been polluted by industry (92). Lisa's mom recalls when "the runs used to be so thick, you could walk across the river and not touch water. You didn't even need a net; you could just scoop them up with your hat" (92). This is not the case anymore, however, and Lisa's family often trades for oolichan grease when they cannot make the trip to the Kemano.

On fishing trips Lisa learns how to communicate with the land and interpret what the land is trying to tell her. For instance, "when the sun touched the bow" on Canoe Mountain across from the Hill family home, the mountain is communicating that it is time for oolichan fishing (88). Similarly, Lisa's mom tells her to look for seagulls who point out where the oolichan are

located: "[w]herever the oolichans go, the sea gulls follow" (114). Her mom also explains that the seals will communicate where the killer whales are if you watch their movements carefully and understand what to look for (114). On the family oolichan fishing trip, Lisa learns how to communicate with the water and interpret its language. Arriving at the Kitlope River to catch oolichan, Lisa's mom explains that "'[w]hen you go up the Kitlope . . . you be polite and introduce yourself to the water'" (112). Mick adds, "'It's so you can see it with fresh eyes'" (112). Her mom leans over the edge of the boat and "dip[s] her hand in the water, then washe[s] her face. After stubbing out his cigarette, Mick d[oes] the same," demonstrating proper protocol for engaging with the river as a living being (112). Lisa knows when she has arrived at the Kitlope because "the closer you get . . . the milkier the water becomes, until all around you the water is the colour of pale jade" (112). Knowing how to respectfully engage and communicate with the animals and the river cultivates the reciprocal relationship between humans and land.

On a trip to collect berries with Ma-ma-oo, Lisa learns that even bear scat has something to say, something that can be understood by humans. In the woods, they come across a pile of scat that is still moist and Ma-ma-oo moves it around, noting the fish bones that indicate the bear is fattening up for winter (150). More importantly, "'[y]ou can tell where the bear's going to be by its scat. Berry seeds, it's up the bush. Fish bones, it's down by the river'" (150–52). By paying attention to what the surrounding land tells her, Lisa can avoid disrupting any nearby bears. Even on this small scale, the land is always communicating, and Lisa's Elders work to teach her how to listen and read its language.

Lisa also imparts her own reading of the land to the reader on multiple occasions, passing on the knowledge learned from her family and demonstrating a developing commitment to

resurgence. For example, Lisa remembers how Mick would take her berry picking in spring.[67] This process meant "scan[ning] the ground for the serrated, broad leaves of thimbleberry and salmonberry shoots" and being "careful not to pick the ones higher than your knees, because once they were that tall the stalks became woody and no amount of chewing would make them soft" (73). The skin of the shoots has a "texture similar to kiwi skin, prickly soft," and once peeled the "shoots were translucent green, had a light crunch and a taste close to fresh snow peas" (73). The presence of *qoalh'm* indicates the "first taste of spring" and their picking only lasts a few weeks (73). When the salmon berries arrive, Lisa recommends picking "out the red ones because the sweetness depends on the colour of the berry, with red being the sweetest, orange less sweet, and yellow the mildest" (76). Here, readers learn that ripe berries can be "as long as the tip of your thumb, and are best picked before they come mushy" and that the taste can be slightly watery because the flavour is so gentle (76–77). Lisa's descriptions transmit knowledge of the land to readers so others may interpret its language as she does (76–77). Depending on how much they were able to pick, Lisa and Mick share the berries with Ma-ma-oo who makes salmonberry stew—a dessert "as thick as cheesecake" that mixes the berries with sugar and oolichan grease (77–78).

When the weather is good, Ma-ma-oo prefers to pick her own berries with Lisa so she can pass on knowledge to her granddaughter. Lisa is excited to find blueberries but does not know how to distinguish between the different types. Ma-ma-oo points out a bush of *pipxs'm*, meaning "'berries with mould on them'" in Haisla, and notes that these are often misread as blueberries (160). Ma-ma-oo goes into greater detail as they continue their walk, pointing out a variety of blueberries and plants: *sya'konalh*, "'the real blueberry'"; *mimayus*, "'pain in the ass'"

[67] I italicize Haisla words in their first use, following Robinson's choice in the novel.

berries that are hard to find (160); *kolu'n*, "sapling cottonwood" (213); and *ci'xoa*, "wild crabapples" (264). In these scenes, Lisa learns where each plant lives, when they are in season, and how much is appropriate to take from each bush so it can continue to flourish.

On a different outing, Ma-ma-oo continues her lessons. She cuts from an *oxasuli* bush while warning Lisa that the plant is powerful medicine and very poisonous (151). She advises Lisa to put the plants on her windowsill or burn a bit of them on the stove: "'Ghosts hate the smell. It protects you from ghosts, spirits, bad medicine . . . Smoke your house. Smoke your corners. When someone dies, you have to be careful'" (151–52). They take two oxasuli plants, deciding they "had enough" (151). Before removing eight branches from a Cedar tree, Ma-ma-oo begins scattering tobacco at its base:

> "You leave tobacco here, see?" She broke one of the cigarettes and left the tobacco scattered at the bottom of the cedar trunk. She said some words in Haisla, then she broke off one of the branches. "We'll get four for you and four for me."
>
> "You're giving tobacco to a tree?"
>
> "The tobacco is for the tree spirits. You take something, you give something. I'm asking for protection. Going to go up in the corners of my house. Put these in your bedroom. Hang them up like this." (151–52)

Here, Ma-ma-oo imparts an ethic of grounded normativity, showing Lisa how to respect her relationship with the plant world by only taking what is needed and leaving something in return. The reciprocal nature of the relationship with the land must be maintained, especially if people are to remember that they belong to the land—the land does not belong to them.

One of the most important relationships with non-human kin is undoubtedly the relationship between Lisa and b'gwus.[68] Across the novel, Lisa's search for b'gwus comes to

[68] The Haisla word b'gwus means "wild man of the woods" (Appleford 88). In Heiltsuk, the word *pk'ws* (the homologue of *pi'kis* and *pa'gwus*) means "'orphan,' 'uninitiated,' and 'a Sasquatch, that was thought to live in the bush, devoid of culture'" (99). Appleford notes that "pk'ws, when applied to individuals in a traditional Heiltsuk

symbolize her search for a more defined identity and clearer understanding of her relationship with the spirit realm. She learns about b'gwus from her dad, who tells her and Jimmy stories about the "wild man of the woods" (7), and Ma-ma-oo, who imparts b'gwus's origin story. According to Ma-ma-oo, in the past "flesh was less rigid" and animals and humans could talk to one another and "switch shapes simply by putting on each other's skins" (210). When that age ended and animals and humans could no longer communicate clearly or shapeshift, b'gwus remained an exception. The creature came into existence because a beautiful woman had an affair with her husband's brother and attempted to murder her husband while on a fishing trip. When the wife and brother return to bury his body, they see footprints and discover "the man—transformed into a b'gwus—who then kill[s] his adulterous wife and brother" (211). Ma-ma-oo underscores, however, that for Lisa to really understand these old stories, she needs to speak Haisla (211). Lisa is discouraged as Ma-ma-oo only teaches her one word a day, a rate that would make Lisa an "old woman by the time [she] could put sentences together" (211). Lisa's inability to fluently speak Haisla situates her once more in a fraught space between understanding and confusion and makes it all the more difficult for her to believe in her ability to communicate with the land.

Lisa does not take seriously her father or grandmother's stories until she sees b'gwus for herself. Their first meeting takes place on a family trip to Monkey Beach, a popular place for b'gwus because it has so many cockles and clams (316). Sasquatches had been spotted several times digging in the sand at Monkey Beach and while some people claim these were just bears, Lisa knows that bears would not bother with clams and cockles when there is so much salmon

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community, signified that 'they were excluded from Heiltsuk symbolic life almost completely and so constituted a class of virtual nonpersons'" (99).

nearby (318). Walking in the trees with Jimmy who has run ahead with his camera, Lisa feels someone watching her. When she turns around, she sees b'gwus, "Just for a moment, just a glimpse of a tall man, covered in brown fur" (16). The sasquatch gives Lisa a "wide, friendly smile" before disappearing into the cedar trees (16). In his own way, b'gwus's acknowledgement of Lisa tells her that she can trust what she is seeing and has nothing to fear from his presence. She may not speak Haisla fluently enough to fully understand the stories about him, but this does not stop her from seeing him.

Lisa's sees b'gwus for the second time while she is driving home from Vancouver with Frank and Karaoke. Driving slow because of rain, Lisa avoids hitting a figure who suddenly crosses the road in front of her. When she slams on her brakes, "he paused in the headlights, his head turning sharply in surprise, then he broke into a jog and disappeared into the trees" (315). Lisa's memory of the man is seared into her brain: "the dark brown fur on his back, the lighter fur on his chest, the long hairy arms, the sharply tilted forehead and the row of pointed teeth he flashed at [her] when he snarled" (315). Rather than feeling fear at b'gwus's presence, Lisa feels "deeply comforted knowing that magical things were still living in the world" (316). Lisa is reassured by b'gwus and the "magic" that his presence affirms, a comfort that indicates a growing intimacy and trust in her relationship with the land, which has developed since she first saw him as a child.

Arriving at Monkey Beach at the end of the novel, Lisa demonstrates an understanding of b'gwus that has grown over time. She explains that b'gwus is part of a "larger social complex, complete with its own clans, stories, and wars" (318). The rumours that attempt to explain their dwindling numbers range from the creatures killing themselves off through too much battle, a series of cold winters at the start of the twentieth century, and the arrival of TB and smallpox that

saw the healthy sasquatches leave the unhealthy to die (318). They are so rarely spotted because they work hard to avoid "disease-ridden humans" (318). Still, sometimes at night it is possible to hear b'gwus howl (318). Turning next to *Shark Dialogues*, characters continue learning how to engage with, explore, and extend their relationships with the land.

Aloha 'Āina

In *Shark Dialogues*, resurgence occurs as Kanaka Maoli characters strengthen and revitalize their relationship through *aloha 'āina*. This reconnection asserts a holistic worldview that reminds the novel's characters of their reciprocal relationship with all living and non-living things, for non-human kin are also family. As the characters exemplify and reimplement an ethics of grounded normativity they become further enmeshed within the context of the land.

Kelonikoa's relationship with the land, and specifically with the sea and marine life, illustrates *aloha 'āina*. After fleeing her arranged marriage and leaving Honolulu for Maui, Kelonikoa lives off the coastal land. Here she enters a consensual, reciprocal relationship with a somewhat unfamiliar place. She sheds her human clothes, her only possession the dowry of black pearls she brought from Tahiti. She loses "the language of humans, hearing only wildlife, the sea's rhythms," living off raw fish and sleeping in rock caves (37). Her limbs become "draped with seaweed" and she begins to resemble "a creature half human, half fish" (37). Kelonikoa understands how to live as part of the land and is immediately accepted by her non-human kin.

Differently, Mathys is rejected by the Hawaiian Islands who know he does not belong to the land.[69] His presence in the Pacific is met with violence in return for the harm he enacts as a member of a whaling fleet. After three years on the whaling vessel, his ship harpoons a "maddened whale" that fights back, ramming the ship repeatedly and causing it to sink a thousand miles from land (35). The life rafts, tied together, are unlatched by sharks who slash the ropes as if in retribution for the murder of their kin. Facing starvation, the men resort to cannibalism. Mathys and the only other surviving sailor spend sixty-three days on a lifeboat before being rescued. When their rescue ship reaches Maui, they are detained because King Kamehameha III "refused to let *haole* ("white, Caucasian, foreigner") cannibals loose among his people" (36). The two men escape and attempt to survive in the jungle, which rejects them just as the ocean did: "Mathys's friend crushed his leg in a fall down a ravine; the leg grew septic and he died" (36). Terrified to eat for fear the unfamiliar plants of this "jungle prison" would kill him, Mathys feels he does not have "the aptitude to live like a beast" (36). He believes himself to be in hell "paying for his sins," in a "nightmare world of blood" and "incessant pain" (36). While not hell, Mathys experiences reciprocation from the land for his murder of countless whales and for membership in a culture that is estranged from a reciprocal relationship with land. In this way, the land is depicted as responding in kind to how it is treated by humans. In a final act of desperation, Mathys attempts suicide by throwing himself into the ocean from a cliff. The land will provide no such satisfaction, however, and a coral spear pierces his eye socket: "[w]hen the undertow wrenched him sharply back, there had been a swift, sucking *POP!* The coral snatching his eyeball" (37). The coral's animate "snatching" of his eye stands in sharp relief to Mathys's

[69] As a non-Indigenous person, I am also disconnected from the kinds of reciprocal relationships with land demonstrated by Indigenous characters in this chapter and others. This disconnection increases my distance from a fulsome understanding of what is really means and looks like to be in reciprocal relation with non-human kin. Although I have learned a lot about how to be a better relative to non-human kin, I still have a very long way to go.

memory of rowing up close to a whale and staring directly into its eye just before the harpoon struck: "'[it was as] if God had turned and looked at me'" (39). The land, very much animate, responds to the abuse it endures from humans who do not respect their relationship with non-humans.

It is only through Kelonikoa that the land begins to slowly accept Mathys, as she teaches him how to engage in the reciprocal relationship intended between human and non-human kin. When Kelonikoa rescues Mathys and decides to help him, the land responds: "[j]ungles that had choked him now opened into misty rain forests abloom with torch ginger, orchid, heliconia, towering waterfalls. The vegetation he was afraid to eat turned out to be luscious guava, mango, passion fruit" (38). The land invites him into a mutual relationship of care, the ethics of which are imparted by Kelonikoa. She teaches him "to stalk partridge, pheasant, goat, how to face a charging boar . . . She t[eaches] him Polynesian netcasting, how to pry limpets from tidal rocks, how to bake *kālua* ("bake in ground oven") pig in earth with heated stones. She teaches him to pound taro tubers into *poi* ("pudding of taro root"), and how to store meat in ti leaves" (38). After teaching him how to hold his breath and deep-dive, she introduces him to "pastel-colored coral, the courting dance of sea snakes . . . the intelligence of the octopus . . . the eerie and beautiful night world of plankton pulsing and glowing . . . They swam with schools of dolphin, hitch[ing] rides on the back of manta rays" (39). Through Kelonikoa's teachings, Mathys enters a more ethical, consensual relationship of mutual care with the land.

Just as the land is able to care for and heal Mathys of his wounds, so too does it heal Kelonikoa. Years later when the now husband and wife have established a life in Honolulu, the traumatic loss of their first three children to measles, smallpox, and a stillbirth pushes Kelonikoa to attempt suicide. When Mathys finds her, she silently points to the sea. Everyday he takes her

to “a secluded beach away from polluted harbors” where she can float in the waves and hear the “heart thump of her ancestral home” (50). One day, she begins speaking to the land, singing in Tahitian as dolphins swim up to her: “she slid onto the back of a dolphin, riding in lazy circles, the thing soaring so high his wife was sometimes airborne. Day after day the dolphins came, soaring her toward slow healing” (50). Gradually, the land helps her heal and with each future child she returns to the water, placing “the infant’s placenta between her teeth” and swimming out to the reef where she let the “waves carry it out into the elements, its blood flowing into that of its ancestors, their *mana* (“divine power”) flowing into the newborn child so it would be fearless and strong” (54). This offering to the land in exchange for its safekeeping of her children becomes a ritual Kelonikoa performs after the birth of each of their seven children.

At the close of the nineteenth century, the relationship between human and non-human kin in Hawai‘i is undergoing a dangerous shift. In 1893, Queen Lili‘uokalani’s reign is overthrown by a violent military coup under the direction of the Ambassador of the US, unbeknownst to the US government (66–67). Hawai‘i becomes a republic under a provisional white government despite the new American President, Grover Cleveland, calling the overthrow an illegal and immoral act of war (68). This provisional government does not recognize Cleveland’s power within the islands and retains its control for the next five years. Despite plans for a counterrevolution, Lili‘uokalani is forced to relinquish all claim to the Hawaiian throne in order to save the lives of those loyal to her—including Kelonikoa and her youngest daughter Emma, who are accused of treason (71). When the Islands are annexed by the US, the land resists in whatever way it can: “winds, incredible winds”; “Pele, Goddess of Fires and Volcanoes, shrieked. And mountains opened, burping blood”; “[g]iant squid large as ships rose from the sea and stalked the beaches, screaming”; “whole forests lay down on their side” (73).

The US installation of settler colonial rule means that "in that most beautiful archipelago, great contexts were broken forever" (73). One of the "contexts" that appears most broken is that which situates humans in reciprocal relationships with the land. In place of this relationship comes a colonial context that views the land as an inanimate resource, important only so long as it can provide something to the people that live upon it.

The violent severing of these "great contexts" is a signal to Kelonikoa that it is time for her to go home. Now seventy-four years old and nearing the end of her life, she returns to the cove of the healing dolphins one last time:

> She swam lazily for there was time, and there were distances to go. Deep, deep in the Pacific, far below the Equator, past the mysterious Marquesas, the Tuamotus. Waves lapped her gently, hair floating round her a phosphorescent net. She swam slowly, thoughtfully, befitting the pace of an old woman. She swam through Circadian troughs of night and into a purple hour, and looking back she saw, like points of pure yearning, the volcanic tips of Hawai'i. Then she turned, stroking for her birth sands. (73)

Here, the circle of Kelonikoa's life in the Pacific closes as she retraces her route home to Tahiti. Giving her fate over to the ocean, she demonstrates trust that the land will take care of her and take her home, even when she is no longer able to swim. Kelonikoa's departure and inevitable death force Mathys to face the possibility that the settler life he built with her in Honolulu, and which is now being formally imposed by the US, drove her back to the ocean. He tries to stay as close to her as he can, digging up the bones of their dead children and sleeping with them. He confides in Emma: "'I thought one could live without conscience. That's what killed her. What I lacked'" (74). Mathys's lack of conscience is indicative of his lack of an ethical relationship with the land, a relationship he abandoned to pursue his business desires: the Bay Horse Saloon. He dies trying to follow her to Tahiti:

> They found him lying in the shallows of Kelonikoa's cove, an arm outstretched, as if trying to overtake her in the depths. A canoe rocked above him with his children's

> wrapped-up bones . . . Weighed down by gold coins in his pockets, he must have slipped and drowned while struggling into the canoe. Coins had floated out around him, one of them settled on his face, his empty eye socket. (75)

Attempting to get into the canoe, the literal and moral weight of the "gold coins" drowns Mathys. The ocean floats the coins around his body, thoughtfully positioning one of them over his "empty eye socket" as if to imply that Mathys filled what he lacked with gold and in so doing turned away from the healing the land could provide, choosing instead to find comfort in accruing capital—a decision that directly harmed the land. In placing the gold coin over his eye, the ocean makes clear that Mathys was, at least partially, blinded by his desire for money. Mathys, now without Kelonikoa, is once again—and finally—rejected by the land.

The novel continues to trace the history of Hawai'i alongside Kelonikoa's family until the reader meets Pono. Kelonikoa's daughter Emma dies in 1899 when there is an outbreak of bubonic plague; Emma's daughter Lili survives her and eventually marries a Hawaiian policeman named Benjamin Huhu Meahuna. The two have four children, the last born being Pono in 1910. When Lili and Benjamin are wrongfully arrested, Pono escapes but is left to grow up on the land alone. She decides to make her way to Honolulu where the landscape has drastically changed. Pono witnesses the impacts of the US government's decision, as part of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, to "return" some of the stolen Hawaiian land to the Kānaka Maoli (88). This land included 26,000 acres of developed sugar land whose lease expired between 1917 and 1921 (88). However, these 26,000 acres are not returned to Hawaiians:

> Instead of verdant little acres where people could plant small gardens and live on a fish-and-*poi* economy, what Pono saw were sad little homestead plots on barren land, no irrigation, no forests, or running water . . . Some stood on land so rocky and mountainous, nothing grew, not even weeds, land so steep people could not build or even haul up drinking water. (88)

Under settler colonialism, Kānaka Maoli are violently alienated from the land and forced to be grateful for tiny plots that all but ensure their starvation. These impossible living conditions push them further and further away from the land that imparts their story, language, and knowledge, forcing them into "Honolulu's growing slums" (88). Pono establishes her home in Chinatown and becomes friends and roommates with Miko, a Chinese sex worker, and Miko's daughter Run Run. Pono eventually marries Valentine, a *paniolo* ("Hawaiian cowboy") but is quickly widowed, her husband's death encouraging her to return to the land.

Pono's relationship to the land is reminiscent of her great-grandmother Kelonikoa's bond with the Hawaiian Islands. When Valentine dies, Pono decides to explore the unfamiliar Big Island: it's "mysterious Waipiʻo Valley . . . Great soaring cliffs with thousand-foot waterfalls. Glittering lava beaches . . . Coffee mountains . . . bubbling steam vents and sulfuric fumes . . . [and] Volcano country" (99). Pono, "fe[eling]she had been called to this island of so many moods and geographies," travels through its interior; when she needs to rest, she climbs down from the cliffs and floats in the sea (100). It is here, in the water, that Pono "began to understand that water was her natural element, entering her like a drug. When motion and colors of the land exhausted her, when she saw how she stood apart from ordinary people, the sea was what she now turned to" (100). Like Kelonikoa, Pono finds the sea's acceptance and envelopment of her body healing and rejuvenating. She knows herself to be different from "ordinary people" because floating in the water places her back in what feels like her rightful context. Pono spends more and more time in the water, learning to "float for hours, calmly accepting all matter of sea life swirling around her. Clicking dolphins, barracuda like swimming stilettos, silver blizzards of sprats" (100). Her ocean kin know that she means them no harm and her time spent with them demonstrates the consent at the centre of their relationship. This consent is displayed in Pono's

interaction with an oarfish: "One day a twenty-foot oarfish wrapped itself round her . . . It slowly tightened its embrace, opened its great jaws round her head, then looked into her eyes. Something registered. Some common wisdom forever known. The fish seemed to sigh, slowly uncoiled, swam off through her streaming hair" (100). Here, Pono demonstrates a calm acceptance of the sea life, even when that sea life is an oarfish who places her head in its mouth. As with Lisa and b'gwus, rather than fighting, the two beings exchange a look that "registered" some "common wisdom forever known," a greater understanding of their simultaneous belonging in this space and Pono's difference from "ordinary people" (100).

When Pono eventually settles into life on a tiny farm, her intimacy with the land deepens but can never compete with the feeling she has in the ocean. She has no human kin to talk to, so she speaks to the "geckos, scorpions, [and] mongoose, just to hear her voice"; after laying still for a long time, she wakes to realize that a "spider web had grown across her mouth" (101). Unafraid of the land harming her, she "dare[s] everything . . . climbing forty-foot palms for coconuts, splitting them blindly with heavy axes. She ate all manner of herbs and roots, searching for company in new sensations" (101). Unlike her great-grandfather Mathys who feared the jungle and saw the food it offered as poison, Pono trusts in her relationship with the land and knows it will do its best to care for her. The ocean provides more comforting companionship than land, however, and she slides onto the "backs of giant manta rays," letting them "fly her through the sea on wings spready twenty feet" (101). Still, Pono is lonely, craving a more complete set of relationships that includes not just non-human kin, but human as well. Swimming one day she comes across "a strange species of seaweed that glowed pink and tasted septic" (101). She stuffs the seaweed in her mouth, hoping it will kill her:

> Instead, alkaloids in the weed produced a floating sensation. Standing in the surge, she felt her jaws tighten, then contract, something growing like a snout. Then she was

> swimming, released from gravity. She plunged down, sporting through coral canyons, through boulevards of light limned by prismatic lens of waves. Her lightness intoxicated her, she could no longer feel the weight of her organs. Huge sharks suddenly bladed along beside her, playful, amorously nudging her. Pono pulled back, terrified, then, in the eyes of one of them, she saw her reflection: a white-tipped reef shark, powerful in size, moving like a bullet. Schools of smaller fish scattered as she lunged. The taste of blood. (101–2)

Shapeshifting into a reef shark by eating seaweed, the ocean accepts Pono immediately, releasing her from gravity so she can visit "coral canyons" and glide weightlessly. Pono's loneliness fades as she plays and swims with other sharks, no longer isolated. She possesses the same connection to the ocean as her great-grandmother Kelonikoa, "a woman of the sea" who "resembled a creature half human, half fish" (37). Pono's ability to become a shark takes this connection even further and echoes Ma-ma-oo's Haisla stories of flesh once being less rigid such that people could swap skins with animals. Here, Pono becomes both of the human and non-human world, able to more fully understand the reciprocal relationship they must have with one another and to impart knowledge about that relationship to others.

Although Pono's time spent swimming as a shark satiates her loneliness, she does not wish to live entirely in the sea. Her desire to leave the water becomes visceral as her "buoyancy begin[s] to pall" and her shark skin feels "wrapped tight, restricted" (102). The nerves in the soles of her feet "cry for land" and her joints "mour[n] the heaviness of tissue and musculature" as she struggles with the "profound desire to walk, the lack of power to do so" (102). Bound by this "bag of scales slowly suffocating her" she swims to shore and tries to push herself out of the water but "the long draughts of air almost kil[l] her" and she plunges back in (102). Finally, she imagines herself dreaming and manifests the feeling of waking yourself from that dream: "[s]he woke on the sand . . . She looked down at her skin, and it was gray, eerily marbling to brown, then golden . . . In her mouth there was blood and the taste of raw fish" (102). Pono's push and

pull between physical land and sea demonstrates a relationship with place that extends beyond the typically human, one that enmeshes Pono within the context of the land. She knows now that whenever she feels "too lonely in the world" she can eat the glowing seaweed and "for hours, until she long[s] for gravity," she can enter "the world of the *manō* ("shark")" (102). And, although she was in the world of humans, she was no longer "wholly of that world" (102). It is especially significant that Pono can shapeshift into a *manō*, because Kānaka Maoli see humans and sharks as related: this "'potentially dangerous animal [is considered] a trusted member of the family'" (Wyatt 129). Her shark perspective supplies her with a deeper understanding of how humans belong to the land and how this reciprocal relationship can sustain all beings.

It is in her shark form that Pono meets Duke for the first time, falling immediately in love with this person who, like her, appears fully contextualized within the land. As she swims with the other sharks, Pono sees a human wrestling with "a squid large as a steer," killing and pulling it ashore (102). She follows the man as he rides the waves on his surfboard, sailing "like a god" until a storm begins and the waves pull him under, tumbling him in "a cyclone of coral and shell . . . like a doll" (103). Like Kelonikoa rescuing Mathys, Pono whips around Duke, "trying to lift him up to the air" until she reaches the floating longboard and cracks her head on it (103). Just as Mathys saw Kelonikoa coming to him from the sea, so too does Duke witness Pono appear from the ocean. This time, however, both are Kānaka Maoli and possess an ethical relationship with the land.

Many years later, when the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, Pono knows the land will keep her and her daughters safe. At the time, Pono is living in Chinatown on the Big Island with her four daughters: Holo, Edith, Emmaline, and Mina. Pono had dreamt the attack would happen so when she awakes to the smell from her dreams, she takes her daughters to the sea for protection

as the Japanese planes approach. They swim past the reef to where their *ʻaumākua* sleep ("family or personal god"); Pono knows that "if they were going to die it should be in ancestral precincts" (157). *ʻAumākua* are familial gods or ancestors who can assume the form of animals, plants, or other beings occurring in nature. Kanaka Maoli families have reciprocal, symbiotic relationships with their *ʻaumākua* and as such do not hunt or harm them in exchange for their *ʻaumākua* warning or reprimanding the family (typically in dreams) to keep them safe ("ʻaumakua"). Having descended to the home of their ancestors, a paragraph without punctuation describes the unending flow of life where nothing is ever gone, it just changes shape:

> Down down where life was rhythmed by reflex . . . they clasped hands floating in a circle squinting like embryos dreamily acknowledging each other in a giant womb and in that floatingtime a timeless time . . . they were just cells connected by a stroke of light . . . they blended like the elements of color elements that somewhere in the grid of time would recede and rinse away and in this moment in this motherwomb flesh tendered watery and wrinkled so they looked wise they heard the clicking of the reef billions of cells building microscopic civilizations in its branches civilizations that would perish and be built again in time and perish . . . things are as they are that things can be no other way they would never find that peace again not one of them they would never be that safe. (157)

Here, the ocean bed acts as a "giant womb" outside of time where Pono and her girls are fully enmeshed, "blended" within "microscopic civilizations" (157). On the ocean floor with their ancestors, Pono and her girls know a kind of peace that can never be re-created, a place safer than anywhere else they would ever go (157). The paragraph's long running sentence manifests the eternity of this space, as if the paragraph itself is outside of time. This passage foregrounds an understanding of the ongoing connection between the not-yet born, the living, and the ancestors amidst the death and destruction of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Kelonikoa and Pono's relationship with the sea echoes once more in Pono's granddaughter: Jess. Flying from Manhattan to Honolulu at the start of the novel, Jess's airplane crosses the Pacific Ocean and "it seemed her metabolism changed, she could almost feel the

pigment in her skin thicken, imagined her knuckles hardening like knobby bamboo, soles of her feet growing calluses. And the sea, the sea, quickening in her veins!" (9). Jess can hear the "coral reef ticking" and when she closes her eyes, she sees the "prismatic colors on backs of leaping dolphin" (9). Jess's physical response to the shift in landscape increases in intensity as she nears the land she belongs to and with whose waters she has a special connection.

As with Kelonikoa and Pono, Jess also turns to the sea to heal her wounds. When Jess brings her mother Emma's ashes home, Pono is avoidant. At night, however, Jess sees Pono swimming in the ocean "drinking her daughter's ashes" (296). During this time, the sea is "like an amniotic fluid that kept [Jess] alive in the months of grief that followed" her mother's death (296). During that time, she "*didn't want to remember, wanted only to swim* . . . Feeling nothing but the suck and pull of the tide, she swam for miles with the agility and speed of a racer, day after day, week after week (296). One day, Jess looks down at the forest of staghorn coral and begins to "feel her mother inhabit[ing] her, that she was seeing the world with two pairs of eyes. She was living for two" (297). The ocean reminds Jess that while her mother has taken a different shape, she is still present. Even back in Manhattan, the ocean is "so indelibly imprinted on [Jess], [she] carrie[s] it within her" (297). Jess's ability to carry the ocean suggests the strength of her connection with it, that, as Tommy Orange writes, "the land moves with you" (11). Jess knows that her relationship to the land is paramount as the ocean cares for her in her grief.

After learning her family's history and meeting Duke, Jess decides to sell her veterinary practice in Manhattan and move home to Hawai'i. She passes her time learning from Pono and Duke, who tell her to spend more time in the sea: "'[y]ou have to let the sea know you are home so that it will begin to welcome you again. Seawater is still the best tonic, best cleanser. Three

tall glasses every day. Once it is running in your veins, you will never drown, for you will have lost the fear of drowning. You will *become* the sea'" (372). Like Lisa greeting the Kitlope, Jess must "let the sea know" she is home. Pono explains how Jess can more fully contextualize herself within the land, that by taking the water into her body (as Pono did with Emma's ashes) they can become one being. After Ming, Duke, and Pono's deaths, while Vanya is on the run and Rachel is in Thailand, Jess remembers Pono's words and returns to the sea. Here, Jess behaves much like Pono when Pono was young: she "sat on beaches eating seaweed, dragged home prawns and mussels for cleaning. She deep-dived, watching clever *he'e* outsmart moray eels. Sometimes a *he'e* wrapped its tentacles round her leg, emphatically clinging. Jess would drag it to the shallows, stroking its arms, patting its head until the arms fluttered out" (457). Jess demonstrates respect for her octopus kin, admiring their evasive movements and playing with them in the shallows. Run Run, now a surrogate grandmother to the cousins, underscores to Jess that this special relationship with the sea means that "'[b]y and by you start to sleep less. Swim moah and moah. Swimmin' become foah you anot'er form of sleep'" (458). Run Run knows what this relationship looks like, as she watched Pono having a similar relationship with the sea, a connection that reciprocated Pono's love. Kelonikoa, Pono, and Jess's ethical, reciprocal relationships with the sea echo the relationship Lisa is learning to have with the land and its rivers. Keeping these representations in mind, the next section turns to *The Black Hill*.

"Nothing is changed since the world began"

The three main characters in *The Black Hill* each have a distinct relationship with the lands to which they belong, shaped by their life experiences and worldviews. For Gimur, this relationship is rooted in her Adi upbringing in the small village of Mebo where she spends much of her time

in the forest, watching the mountains, or farming with her mother. Kajinsha's relationship with the land has been shaped by a family history wherein his father broke from their village to find a new home in the Mishmee Hills near Tibet. Kajinsha's house now sits atop the black hill amidst challenging terrain that he has learned to navigate and respect. Father Krick's relationship with the land provides a contrasting Eurowestern view through the eyes of a devout Priest entering what he perceives to be God's kingdom. Terrified and humbled by God's creation, Krick feels ready to explore this apparently unknown landscape. *The Black Hill* represents these characters' divergent understandings of the Indigenous principles of reciprocity and relationality as they each work to enmesh themselves within the Mishmee Hills. First, I focus on Gimur and Kajinsha's relationships with the land, returning to discuss Krick's in this chapter's final section.

At the beginning of the novel, Gimur is only seventeen and is still learning how her relationship with the land will come to define her worldview. Like Pono's grandchildren and Lisa, she has much to learn. Gimur loves the forest, climbing trees, and sitting alone staring out at the hills beyond the river from Mebo. Gimur has never left Mebo and is naïve and curious about the land beyond her village. She spends much of her time watching the land, hoping to see the "strangers . . . the British, the white men—the miglun—who were coming upriver towards Mebo in long boats" intending to set up trading posts (Dai 3).[70] Much of her time is spent sitting on the back veranda of her family home, engaging with her non-human kin. She speaks to the moon, willing it to rise faster and to cast light over the hills: "'[c]ome, come to me,' she said softly. 'Shine on my face. Enter my body, float in my blood and settle in my heart like a golden swing'" (4). The "rustling leaves" of the old jackfruit tree in front of Gimur makes her feel

[70] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Adi used here are provided in *The Black Hill*. Following Dai's example, I do not italicize Adi words.

"restless" and as she stares at the tree's thick trunk she wonders "how long it had stood like that. Some of the trees in the village were older than the oldest grandfathers, they said. Did the tree know its age, she wondered" (28). Gimur immediately ascribes animacy to the tree, wondering how aware this non-human kin is of its own age. The jackfruit tree is juxtaposed with those of the Kumku forest, a "dark and silent patch of trees rising out of a bed of dense, green undergrowth" (27). Walking to the cultivation clearings where her and her mother carry out their subsistence farming, Gimur walks past Kumku forest with a growing curiosity of what lies within (27). She knows the stories about Kumku: that "no one liked to venture [in] . . . where unlucky victims had died with their heads twisted by malevolent spirits" (27). Still, "she felt drawn to that patch of forest, a secret place, hidden most of the day behind a thin mist that crept down the hill and engulfed the land as if the ravine and the river had dissolved into the air" (30). Gimur longs to know more about the place she lives, but the women of her village never travel far, and she must rely on her friend Lendem for stories of the world beyond Mebo.

Kajinsha's appearance presents Gimur with an opportunity to learn more about this wider world. After a long day of working in the field, Gimur rests in her ippo—a small shack of thatched bamboo raised a few feet off the ground—and watches the "bleak southern face of Kumku" (30). When thunder wakes her later that night, she hears a stirring outside the hut and Kajinsha appears as if "melting" in and out of the darkness (31). She permits him entrance and over the coming weeks the two develop a friendship. Gimur's descriptions of Kajinsha blends him with the land as if "[h]e was always before her eyes" (31) When she looks up, she begins to constantly see him "where the outline of the mountain was emerging through the mist, advancing towards her" (31). At times, he would appear "sitting by her fire but gone when she looked hard, like a leaf carried away by a hard wind blowing in darkness and rain" (31). Here, Kajinsha is

depicted as fully contextualized within the land, rather than separated from it. Gimur is taken with this mysterious man who appears to be so much a part of the land. From Gimur's perspective, the "land was there for him to explore at will. The trees were a swathe of green that revealed its secrets to this man who knew their hidden paths and the frozen routes over the mountains that kept tribes apart" (35). The two eventually fall in love, despite Gimur knowing that their union will not be accepted by her village. Ultimately, she decides to run away with Kajinsha and make the dangerous journey through Kumku and the Mishmee Hills to the black hill.

Gimur's relationship with place, her sense of grounded normativity, is deepened by her relationship with Kajinsha. Leaving her home territory for the first time, Gimur defers to Kajinsha's knowledge of the Mishmee Hills. She is worried about the long journey, but Kajinsha reassures her that "'[a]ll animals and birds have a map [the river]. We can follow in their path'" (35). Just as Lisa needs to watch the seagulls to find the oolichan, Kajinsha knows that the birds will lead him in the right direction. Gimur's confidence and trust in Kajinsha grows as they travel, and she sees how "[l]ike a forest animal Kajinsha seemed to sense invisible paths" (61). Kajinsha is at home on these paths because he can read the land. Later, while sharing a meal with Krick, Kajinsha explains that rather than reading books like Priests: "'[w]e read the land. The land is our book. Everything here on this hill, the grass and rocks and stones is saying something. And what falls from the sky—rain, thunder and lightning—are also the voices of spirits telling us something'" (140). Here, Kajinsha tries to explain how the land imparts stories that can be "read" and that those stories teach the land's inhabitants everything they need to know. Each being has knowledge to impart, even the elements like "rain, thunder and lightning" (140). He explains to Krick that this "'is how we have learnt what is good and what is sweet or bitter, by

living here and remembering what happens during the day and the night, every day, for hundreds of years'" (140). Rather than writing everything in journals as Krick does, Kajinsha reads the land and commits its teachings to memory through a repetition that has been taking place for generations. Kajinsha explains further: "'I only have to recall and it is there, here…' he tapped his forehead. 'My father also told me that everything on earth and sky is connected since we are born of the same mother. I take only what I need. Animals and trees offer themselves. We help each other survive'" (141). Indirectly, Kajinsha is hereby referring to an oral body of knowledge housed within the people who inhabit the land and care for it; it is through this reciprocal care that further knowledge is learned. Kajinsha understands that the land is a teacher, and it is this understanding that makes him into the confident, knowledgeable man that Gimur meets, a man who can read the maps birds follow and bring her safely to the black hill, teaching her as they go.

Gimur listens to what she can understand of the stories Kajinsha swaps with allies they meet as they travel and finds herself puzzled by the significance of the stories Kajinsha is told. She notices that these stories always have something to do with land: "the root of conflict, it seemed to Gimur, was always about land. What is this land? Men spoke of land as a possession. 'From this stream to the limits of the jungle and up to that hill with the white rock is my land,' they said. Every piece of earth was claimed" (70). Gimur has never travelled outside her homeland and, consequently, has never come up against the many boundaries drawn by people who have laid claim to place and chosen to belong to that place. Reflecting on the land around her, the "big trees," "high mountains," "rivers rushing down crevasses," "steep cliffs and jagged rocks," she wonders: "[h]ow could the mere features of a landscape ignite such love and ferocity" (70). Wracking her brain, she remembers what the shaman of her village says: "'[t]he land belongs to us. It is the soul of our ancestors. Where would we be, what would we do,

without this land?' Maybe there was something that she did not understand" (70). She considers the teachings of the shaman alongside those of her mother, who agreed that "land was everything" (70). She remembers questioning her mother about the land and why it is so precious, but her mother would grow frustrated: "'[i]t is where you were born!' She had said. And how important was that? Gimur had wondered" (70). In this moment, Gimur lacks the knowledge and deeper understanding she possess later in the novel. Proleptically, the narrator explains:

> It would be years later, when she was standing sick and lonely on a black hill that the answer would suddenly come to her. Weeping, and clutching handfuls of grass and mud she would tell herself: 'This is what it is. This is the secret that has hidden itself from me for so long. I was so blind and foolish. I could not see! All this time my heart and its longing have been tied up with these features—these hills, this sunset, this cold dawn and icy wind. The land has bred this. We are one. This is my desire. My life!' But that day was far away yet, to be reached after long journeys of the body and the heart. (70–71)

In this snapshot of her future, Gimur realizes that everything she loves is part of a greater whole, herself included: "[w]e are one." Gimur's holistic understanding of her world is not fully realized until she is older. Rather, she focuses on individual elements out of context: e.g., the "icy wind" or "cold dawn." This perspective occludes an understanding of how the land must be conceptualized holistically as encompassing everything and everyone. Gimur must learn this the hard way, "through long journeys of the body and the heart" (71).

Kajinsha's understanding of land ownership and land as possession is, importantly, not rooted in Eurowestern understandings of land as property. Kajinsha's "ownership" of his lands is an ownership rooted in a reciprocal relationship with the land. In exchange for only taking what he needs, the land cares for him and his family. Kajinsha has carefully planned the use of his land to ensure that it remains healthy: "Kajinsha had agriculture land—tei-nyal—and separate spots for hunting, fishing, and catching rodents and birds; as well as forest land where chal, the

beloved animal Gimur knew as Mithun—eso in her native Mebo—were allowed to roam feely" (81). Kajinsha's knowledge of how to care for the land was imparted to him by his father, who told him that "'[l]and is a place of ownership and rest . . . If a man clears the forest and builds a house and harvests his fields the land belongs to him. If a man owns land he owns rest. He can live his life with nothing to worry about'" (112). If Kajinsha cares appropriately for his land, it will provide him with everything he needs for his life: "[w]hat did he care about lands beyond his own? All he wanted was his life, his life with Gimur and their newborn son. He had his house and his fields. It was his piece of earth and that was that. He would live and die where his house stood on the black hill" (114). It is only when too much is taken that the relationship with land breaks down into one focused on resource extraction, creating the "need" for more and more land.

The reciprocal relationship of care that the human and non-human kin inhabiting the Mishmee Hills possess is further underscored in human-to-human relations. When travelling to conduct trade, it is essential to ask the landowner for consent to move through their land. For example, if someone is going to visit Kajinsha or move through his territory they must send an advance runner to ask for consent (75). People know not to "enter his territory without permission" (75). Discussing with Gimur whether Krick will eventually settle in Sommeu (just over the Tibet border) and if the British and other Europeans will continue to follow him, Kajinsha believes that, ultimately, it will not matter too much as Krick is not settling on the black hill. From Kajinsha's perspective, there will be no confusion about who belongs to the Mishmee Hills: "'[w]e are people who belong to these valleys and rivers. We can wander at will travelling behind a wall of mist, find shelter with a friend, and disappear with the wind like invisible men who have no regard for boundaries laid down by any authority'" (106). Kajinsha and his People

strongly believe that "their worlds could not be divided up, for they had lived in these lands for centuries, while empires had come and gone" (106). Historically, "empire and borders [have] meant little" and Kajinsha tells Gimur that this foreigner passing through their lands should cause them no concern (106). As the novel progresses, however, Kajinsha begins to rethink his assumptions. He worries that because the border with the Tibetans was never really settled, this "wedge of land that he had so passionately defended was impossible to defend" (113). He knows the "land had a heart of its own, a voice and language that beckoned men," and that those men may not be as easily integrated, or as respectful, as Krick (113). Kajinsha ultimately relies on "the eastern frontier of India [being] a region that attracted few visitors and remained cut off from any outside influence . . . no one comes here" (257). Of course, Krick's politeness and deference to Kajinsha and other chiefs has more to do with his need of their help if he is to survive the journey, rather than an understanding of the consensual relationship people should have with the land and with one another.

The reciprocal nature of Kajinsha's relationship with the Mishmee Hills, particularly his non-human kin, is further underscored when he and Gimur must run home after Krick and Bourry are murdered. Kajinsha instructs Gimur that the way out and through the forest requires that they "see it at close quarters" and make their way "slowly through it" (255). He tells her to "'stud[y] the faint path that your hands and your feet make on the silent earth. It is not the time to be afraid. If your heart is patient, the jungle will let you pass'" (255). The land can sense how Gimur engages with it and will respond in kind: "'[t]he night creatures will move away from your path if you stay calm and walk with ease'" (255). Gimur must remember that no matter how quiet they are, or how delicately they move, "'the creatures who live here will have seen you already, and they will see you all the time before you see them, if you ever see them'" (255). She

must remain humble in this landscape where her kin who belong to the jungle have much more skill at navigating than humans ever could. This is a space "where no villagers ventured and trees stood close together with their branches interlaced in a net of green through which the fractured sunlight glinted and played tricks with their eyes" (255). If they read the forest, Kajinsha and Gimur may be able to hear the trees whispering "'[l]ook out! That way is covered with sharp cane and here the path is sticky with the tears of trees and mashed leaves dissolving beneath your feet to form new life'" (255). Their decision to navigate the dense jungle rather than more familiar paths allows them to make it home undetected.

When Kajinsha is executed by the British, falsely accused of the murders of Krick and Bourry, it is their relationships with the land that give both him and Gimur comfort. In his final moments, Kajinsha "could see the steep hill. It was so black it pulled his gaze into memories of what once was, of how he longed to be, and what had been lost" (285). Remembering the black hill, he recalls struggling up its steep side to reach the top, "look[ing] beyond the rim of earth and fac[ing] the open sky" (285). Thinking of where he belongs, Kajinsha feels that "[d]eep in his heart he had always wanted peace," the peace the black hill gave him. Kajinsha's knowledge of and care for his land continues in Gimur, who, rather than returning to Mebo, decides to live permanently on the black hill. On the final page of the novel, Gimur's reflects on what land has come to mean to her: "*[f]eel the wind…hear the air rustling through my body like the murmur of centuries. Nothing is changed since the world began. There was fire, water, air. And I am fire, water, air. All that was is mingled in my blood, dripping in my marrow, crusted into my bones. It is what keeps my heart beating*" (289). Gimur has enmeshed herself within the context of the Mishmee Hills. Now, when she feels the wind or hears the air, she understands herself and the land as part of a much longer history that extends into the past as well as the future. She is of the

land—"*[a]ll that was is mingled in my blood . . . crusted into my bones*"—and the land keeps her "heart beating" (289). Even though Kajinsha is dead, Gimur knows he is not really gone, only changed shape. She feels: "I am earth and Kajinsha is the sky and we have looked at each other and will look at each other like this for a million years" (289). Gimur knows that the relationship she had with Kajinsha, and the relationship with the land he imparted to her, continues long after they have left the black hill. Just as Kajinsha and Gimur's connection continues through her relationship with the land, so too does Lisa's relationship with those she loses.

Like Oxasuli

Lisa's developing connection with the land through her non-human kin extends beyond the living to encompass the spirit world. In this way, *Monkey Beach* troubles the hard line between living and dead so starkly drawn by a Eurowestern worldview. Both the living and the dead, in *Monkey Beach*, exist as parts of a greater whole that Lisa must work to embrace as she learns the land. Her relationship with the dead is less clearly defined than leaving tobacco in exchange for protection, however. Even Ma-ma-oo—Lisa's most direct connection to Haisla knowledges—cannot give concrete instructions on how Lisa is to navigate this bond and Lisa is often left to negotiate this uncertain space on her own. It is not until the novel's final pages that she moves toward more fully embracing her ability to engage with the land's spirit realm.

As if to foreground the bond between Lisa and her non-human kin, *Monkey Beach* opens with Lisa, half-awake, listening to the crows outside her family's home. Unlike her family and friends, Lisa knows what they are saying: "I hear them speak to me in Haisla" (E. Robinson 1).[71]

[71] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Haisla are provided in *Monkey Beach*.

The crows are trying to tell Lisa how to find her missing brother, but Lisa does not understand, trust, or even want to believe them:

> *La'es*, they say, *La'es*, *la'es* . . . they launch themselves upwards, cawing. Morning light slants over the mountains behind the reserve. A breeze coming down the channel makes my curtains flap limply. Ripples sparkle in the shallows as a seal bobs its dark head. *La'es*—Go down to the bottom of the ocean. The word means something else, but I can't remember what . . . For the last week, I have been dreaming about the ocean—lapping softly against the hull of a boat, hissing as it rolls gravel up a beach, ocean swells hammering the shore. (1–2)

Lisa questions what she is seeing and hearing: "God knows what the crows are trying to say . . . The seiner sank? Mom and Dad are in danger if they go on a boat? I should go after him?" (17). There have been a number of spelling systems used in Kitamaat Village, contributing to the ambiguity of "La-es." There are "two homologues for 'La-es': 'Lah'is' (to set (sun); sunset; to go on the beach; to go on a wide expanse; to go to the bottom of the ocean), and 'La'ais' (go to the bottom of the ocean)" (Appleford 74). The novel ends on Monkey Beach at sunset, adding to the significance of Lah'is'. Rob Appleford notes that La-es also provides "a potential further linguistic irony" given that Ma-ma-oo tells Lisa "everything in the land of the dead is backwards" (Appleford 374; Robinson 140). La-es "could also be the English word 'seal,' which 'bobs its dark head' both in this introductory passage and in the final passage of the novel" (374). In this way, the ambiguity between the spelling systems brings the text full circle. As if to confirm the crows' knowledge of Jimmy's location, about a hundred pages later and in a paragraph set off from the rest, an unknown narrator describes a sea otter that dives for an urchin. After eating the urchin's soft underbelly, the sea otter drops the remains of their meal: "The urchin's shell parachutes to the ocean bottom, landing in the dark, drifting hair of a corpse" (131). The land knows Jimmy's location and is trying to help Lisa find him. Still, she does not

trust her interpretation of reality: "I used to think that if I could talk to the spirit world, I'd get some answers. Ha bloody ha" (17).

Trying desperately to get Lisa's attention later that morning, Spotty (a familiar crow) wakes Lisa from another dream about Monkey Beach. Spotty hits her beak on the roof, "her claws clicking against the shingles. *La'sda*, she says. Go into the water. *La'sda, la'sda*" (135). This is not the first time Spotty has communicated with Lisa or members of the Hill family. After Ma-ma-oo's death, Lisa sees something moving in the water from her position on the porch. She feels something: "[i]t came then, a light touch on my shoulder. No one was near me" (356). Lisa wades into the water and Jimmy shouts, "'Lisa! Lisa, what the hell are you doing?'" (356). At this point, Lisa is standing waist deep in the ocean when "[s]omething ca[tches] [her] ankle then and yank[s] [her] under" (357). Jimmy pulls her from the water, but Lisa has no idea how she got there or what she was doing. He tells her, "'[w]hen you went into the water, Spotty woke me up. She was flapping against the window like she was trying to get in'" (357). This time, Spotty is trying to wake Lisa and tell her where Jimmy has gone, that she needs to retrieve him from the bottom of the ocean.

Lisa's struggle to embrace and trust her relationship with the land and its spirit world is in part a result of her parents' influence. Both her mom (Gladys) and dad (Albert) have distanced themselves from traditional ways. Ma-ma-oo tells Lisa that Gladys shares Lisa's ability to communicate with the dead but chooses to ignore it despite Gladys's grandmother having been a "real medicine woman" whom people feared for her ability to talk to the dead (154). When Lisa tries to tell her mom what the crows say about Jimmy, she is dismissed: "[c]learly a sign, Lisa . . . that you need Prozac" (3). After her parents leave for Namu to join the search for Jimmy, Lisa regrets mentioning the crows and is relieved that she kept it a secret that she had had a dream

about Jimmy the night he disappeared. Her parents would never take seriously what the dream showed her: that Jimmy was at Monkey Beach, standing at the edge of the sand where the beach ends and the trees begin (6–7). In the dream, Jimmy is wearing the same clothes he wore the day he left on the boat and the "fog and clouds smea[r] the lines between land and sea and sky" as Jimmy fades "in and out of view" (7). Moments after Spotty's warning wakes Lisa, her dad calls to say that they found an empty life raft (135). This discovery pushes Lisa to take the speedboat to Namu and to stop at Monkey Beach on her way, despite it not being anywhere near where the Seiner sank. Lisa does not listen directly to Spotty's instructions, but all of the crows' repeated communications undoubtedly contribute to her decision to visit Monkey Beach.

Through Lisa's memories, readers also learn that Lisa has always been able to communicate with the land's spirit world. One of Lisa's earliest memories of ghosts visiting her takes place on a family trip to gather oolichan. Lisa and Mick set out early and as they near the Kildala Valley, Lisa feels a sudden chill: "[a] white man and his son, in matching neon green and black scuba gear, stood on a point, waving to us. I stood up and waved back wildly" (91). Mick looks at Lisa like she is "nuts" and asks who she is waving at; Lisa realizes that he cannot see them. She watches the man walk into the woods: "[t]he son—I don't know how I knew he was the son—stopped waving too, but stayed and watched us. He seemed so lonely that I took off my cap and waved it in the air to make him smile. He stayed on the beach until we were out of sight" (92). Later, Mick and Lisa meet up with her mom, Auntie Edith, and Uncle Geordie at the Kemano fishing village. Walking up to the house, Lisa feels "a heaviness, like you feel emerging from water after swimming, pressing against [her], making [her] skin tingle" (101). She hears a "tinkling laughter" coming from the trees behind the house (101). That evening, Lisa is afraid to go to the bathroom by herself in the woods. When Mick agrees to keep watch from the cabin,

Lisa tells him "'I just don't like the ghosts . . . I just heard them laughing'" (107). Mick does not directly dismiss Lisa the way her mom does, opting instead to shrug off her strange comments and behaviours.

A couple of years later, when Lisa and Ma-ma-oo take a trip to Kitlope on the anniversary of Mick's tragic death, they are sleeping on the beach when Lisa is awoken by "the sound of footsteps crunching across the sand towards" them (265). The steps stop a few feet away but when she turns to look, nothing is there (265). Back in Kitamaat, Lisa tells Ma-ma-oo what she witnessed. Rather than being met with denial or dismissal, Ma-ma-oo plainly tells Lisa that "'[y]ou don't have to be scared of things you don't understand. They're just ghosts'" (265). Ma-ma-oo does not fear ghosts because she understands the spirit realm to be a continuation rather than an end. Becoming an ancestor or having ancestors visit you is not something to be afraid of if your worldview understands the living, dead, and not-yet born as occupying the same place. Ma-ma-oo's matter-of-fact response does not meaningfully resonate with Lisa until she is older. Instead, it confirms that she is seeing ghosts and contributes to her fear.

Lisa's most frequent spirit visitor is a small red-haired man who begins appearing shortly after Lisa's first encounter with b'gwus. The first time he emerges, Lisa is a small child and she has found an injured dog in a ditch near her house. She asks the "little, dark man with bright red hair" crouching beside her if the dog belongs to him but he shakes his head (19). The next day, a tidal wave hits her town (20). His second visit takes place when she is six years old and she wakes in the night to the "eerie feeling that someone [i]s staring at [her]" (20). When her jewelry box falls off her dresser, she sees "the red-haired man sitting cross-legged on the top of [her] dresser" (21). He smiles at Lisa and tells her "'[s]hh'" before standing and stepping "back into the wall" (21). Lisa convinces herself that "the little man was a dream brought on by eating

dinner too late," and yet he continues to visit her (21). Sometimes he appears "dressed like a leprechaun" but the night before Mick dies, "he has on his strange cedar tunic with little amulets dangling around his neck and waist. His hair was standing up like a troll doll's, a wild, electric red" (132). The "little bastard" tap dances on Lisa's dresser and falls into her laundry basket before re-emerging behind her. In a warning about Mick's fate, the man touches Lisa's shoulder with "a cold, wet hand" and stares at her "with wide, sad eyes" (132). He disappears and Lisa knows somehow, despite his strange behaviour, that "he'd been trying to comfort [her]" (132). Mick's body is tragically found the next day, caught in the coho nets he had been checking (134). Mick's death makes Lisa more suspicious and fearful of the little man as his appearances always seem to foreshadow some kind of danger or death.

While in the bush with Ma-ma-oo, Lisa finally learns the identity of the little red man. After picking oxasuli and leaving tobacco at the base of the cedar tree for the tree spirits, Lisa asks "'[w]hat do the spirits look like?'" Ma-ma-oo responds, "'I don't know. Never seen one. The chief trees—the biggest, strongest, oldest ones—had a spirit, a little man with red hair. Olden days, they'd lead medicine men to the best trees to make canoes with'" (152). Unfortunately, the tree spirit is not just trying to show Lisa where the best trees for canoes are located; rather, Lisa tells Ma-ma-oo that he seems to appear before "'something bad happens'" (153). Ma-ma-oo explains that "'[h]e's a guide, but not a reliable one. Never trust the spirit world too much. They think different from the living . . . there's good medicine and bad. Best not to deal with it at all if you don't know what you're doing. It's like oxasuli. Tricky stuff'" (153). This advice adds to Lisa's ongoing confusion and difficulty trusting her relationship with the spirit realm for fear that it will bring her and her loved ones harm. She remains unsure of what to make of the tree spirit's visitations and grows frustrated with his presence.

Not long after Ma-ma-oo's advice, Lisa is awoken by the tree spirit's touch on her shoulder (234). She watches him hop onto her dresser and smile, "[h]e hadn't changed, still wore his hair like a troll, sticking up in jagged red tufts. When he did his jig, the bells on his shirt jingled" (234). Angry and fearful at his presence and her lack of ability to communicate with him, Lisa throws her pillow at the spirit and screams "'[g]et out! Get out of here, you goddamned little bastard!'" (234). Later that morning, Lisa learns that Ma-ma-oo has had a heart attack. Despite this clear indication that she should pay closer attention to the tree spirit, Lisa once again ignores him after catching him darting into her closet. She quickly gets dressed so she can "get away from him" (254). That evening at a party, traumatic events unfold as Lisa is drugged and raped by her "friend" Cheese whom she had previously rejected (257–58). Devasted and alone in her room after making it home, the tree spirit appears once more on her dresser. This time, Lisa painfully lashes out: "'[i]f you couldn't stop it,' I said, 'what good are you?' His eyes glittered as he watched me. 'Don't bother coming again,' I said. He reached out to touch my hair, just for a second, and then he was gone" (259). Lisa's rejection of the tree spirit indicates not only her pain and frustration with his inability to clearly communicate the purpose of his visitations, but also her own inability to interpret his presence so she can better protect herself and those that she loves.

Standing outside and holding the bag of clothes she wore the night of the party, Lisa is given an indication from the spirit realm that they are willing to help. A voice calls her name and she hears something "slithering in [her] direction, a heavy weight being dragged through the undergrowth somewhere close" (260). Lisa hears what sounds like hundreds of crows cawing and soft "clicking sounds c[oming] from a bush" nearby that turn out to be a "good-sized Dungess" crab with its claws raised (260). The crab's location is confusing as the creature

typically makes its home under water on the seabed; still, Lisa follows it to a rusty oil barrel with six crows sitting on its rim (260–61). Inside the barrel is the "tiny grey corpse of what was once a kitten, or maybe a puppy" (261). Frightening Lisa, a voice shouts her name from the trees:

> "Who are you?" I yelled.
>
> "Guess."
>
> "Quit screwing around! Who are you?"
>
> A different voice, barely a whisper, said, "We can hurt him for you."
>
> "Yes," a chorus of other voices said, "Yes, yes, let us, yes."
>
> When I said nothing, there was giggling from the trees . . .
>
> "Bring us meat," the first voice whispered. "And we'll hurt him." (262)

Lisa immediately denies the reality she is experiencing, telling herself that "no one's in the trees" and that she is alone (262). It is becoming steadily clearer, however, that the tree spirits want to help Lisa even if that help is not always ideal. The spirit realm's offering stays in Lisa's mind and she relies upon the trade they offer in the novel's final scenes.

Lisa has a strong desire to ignore the spirit world owing to the competing interpretations she receives from family members and her ongoing feelings of fear. She is overwhelmed when she sees ghosts in the hospital that stand watch over their families with "strange sad eyes" (267), and a frightening creature with "no flesh, just tight, thin skin over bones" wrapped around her therapist (272–74). When Ma-ma-oo returns home from the hospital after a stroke, Lisa visits her only to be met with a house "filled with the sound of ghosts murmuring" (289). Ma-ma-oo can see the ghosts and remarks calmly on the presence of her sister among others (289). When Aunt Kate sends Lisa home for "looking so glum," Lisa goes to a party. Sitting outside watching the auroras, she is once again visited by a ghost:

> I heard something crunching on the hardened snow. In the distance, I could hear whistles. Something was coming towards me. I kept watching the sky. No one's here, I told myself. I'm not letting my imagination get away from me. I am alone, and I don't see

> anything but the auroras, low on the horizon, undulating to their own music. I sat on a log until my butt went numb, and then I went home. (291)

Lisa can hear the footsteps, but rather than trusting Ma-ma-oo's advice that there is nothing to fear, Lisa rejects what she is experiencing. She tells herself that "no one's here," "I am alone," "I don't see anything" (291). She dismisses reality as her "imagination" and talks herself out of listening to what this ghost might be trying to communicate. Later that night, Ma-ma-oo's house burns down with her tragically trapped inside (292–93). Lisa immediately punishes herself for not listening to the ghost: "I could have saved her. If I had listened to my gift instead of ignoring it, I could have saved her" (294). Ma-ma-oo's traumatic death initiates a shift in Lisa's perspective and she begins to recognize the responsibility she has to listen to the ghosts and spirits who visit her, to engage in a more reciprocal relationship with the land.

Lisa's efforts to enact greater control over her relationship with the dead are made evident by her experimentation with her friend Pooch's book *Voodoo for Beginners*. Prior to the scene in which she encounters the book, three distinct sections appear throughout the novel with lessons on how to contact the dead. In lesson one, the narrator notes that contacting the dead is all about entering a trance somewhere "between waking and sleeping" but not quite the same as watching a movie or obsessing about something (138). "To contact the spirit world, you must control the way you enter this state of being" (138). This advice contrasts with Lisa's experiences thus far, as she is typically caught off-guard by visits from the tree spirit or ghosts. The second lesson notes that "the fundamental principle of magic everywhere" is that "[n]ames have power" (180). All a person needs to do is call a "supernatural being" by its name and it will provide "its instant and undivided attention," once again contrasting Lisa's experience with the tree spirit who appears unannounced (180). Finally, lesson three explains that "[s]eeing ghosts is a trick of concentration" requiring: focus on "nothing and everything at the same time," a

specific body position, a specific set of behaviours, and a particular clothing selection (212). If these lessons result in failure to speak with the dead, "examine your willingness to speak with them. Any fear, doubt or disbelief will hinder your efforts" (212). The lessons read like a poorly disguised attempt at New-Age cultural appropriation. Moreover, they contradict Lisa's experiences, further underscoring the lack of clearly defined rules for relationships with the spirit realm.

Flipping through *Voodoo for Beginners*, Lisa finds a chapter entitled "To Communicate with the Restless Dead," revealing the source of the three lessons that appear earlier in the novel (221). Although Lisa does not "have any of the ingredients and thought [she]'d probably skip the recommended orgy . . . the rest of [the lesson] seems easy enough, and [is] worth a try" (221). At home, Lisa makes a few attempts to follow the book's guidance: the first time, nothing happens and she falls asleep (221); the second time, she sees "neon-coloured geometric patterns swirling and merging" that make her so dizzy she has to open her eyes (221); the third time, she feels like the bed is "on water" and "rocking in the waves" as she floats upward unable to feel her body (121–122). Beyond finding it relaxing, Lisa does not think much of the experience until she hears "creaking," and the little man appears: "[b]ut this time his red hair was stringy red and he was hanging by his neck from a yellow rope, smiling at me as he swung back and forth" (222). Lisa looks out the window to see crows screeching in the yard, gathered in a circle around a dead crow with a missing wing. She watches as Jimmy runs out and tosses the dead crow into the air and it suddenly flies away, healed. When Lisa looks in Jimmy's room, however, he is asleep in bed, and she realizes she "had a vision" (222). After her successful attempt at communing with the dead, Lisa is convinced that something bad is going to happen to Jimmy and she follows him closely for three days. When nothing happens, she begins to assume the tree spirit is "losing his

touch" (229). Watching TV with her dad later, Lisa feels a "sense of wrongness" strike her, "something is missing" (229). She realizes that their cat, Alexis, is gone. Days later, after a concerted search, Lisa and her friends consult Pooch's Ouija board as a last resort. The board spells "worm" "meat" and no matter how many times they try, "it spelled out 'M-e-a-t' over and over again" (232). These means of communicating with the dead prove to Lisa that with the right focus and intention she can control some part of her contact with the spirit realm. Thus, while she may not be able to understand the tree spirit's warnings, perhaps she can at least attempt to call upon the spirit realm if needed.

Lisa's acceptance of her relationship with the spirit world continues to develop as she nears the end of her time in Vancouver. At a party, she runs into her old friend Frank. It has been years since she last saw him, and he has come to Vancouver to pick up Karaoke and take her back to Kitamaat for a funeral. When Frank informs her of the devastating news that Pooch shot himself, Lisa decides to join Frank, assuring him that she will be up early and on time for the drive: "'Ma-ma-oo will wake me up. She always gets up early'" (312). Lisa is not afraid of Ma-ma-oo's ghost and demonstrates a calm acceptance of her grandmother's presence. At breakfast, Frank discloses that he saw Pooch's ghost the day Pooch shot himself and he asks her if she still sees ghosts. Lisa responds, attempting to comfort Frank, "'[t]hat's a death sending . . . It's nothing to worry about. He probably just wanted to say goodbye'" (313). Just as Ma-ma-oo used to tell her that the ghosts were nothing to worry about, Lisa now passes this knowledge on to Frank. In telling Frank he has "nothing to worry about," Lisa provides comfort from a place of experience, having received what she now knows to be a similar death sending prior to Ma-ma-oo's death. She does not want Frank to punish himself as she has, or to feel that he could have done something differently to change the outcome. Sometimes ghosts want to say goodbye and

the living need to accept their role in this reciprocal relationship. The preliminary acceptance Lisa demonstrates indicates that she has begun to understand her responsibility to the spirit world more fully.

Lisa's growing confidence in her relationship with the land and its spirit realm is most clearly demonstrated in the novel's final chapters as she returns to Monkey Beach. Upon her arrival, Lisa immediately hears the tree spirits calling her name from beyond the beach (316). She can feel that this place is "full of power . . . like a warmth, a tingle" (316). The spirits tell Lisa once again: "'[w]e can help you . . . Give us meat'" (336), "'[c]ome closer . . . Just listen to us. Come over to the trees'" (360). Lisa does not have meat, but she does have her own blood and she cuts her hand, sprinkling blood on the forest floor, an exchange reminiscent of when Lisa and Ma-ma-oo left tobacco for the tree spirits in exchange for protection. Here, Lisa leaves her own blood in exchange for help finding her brother. Just as she is about to give up, Lisa hears the same kind of "stealthy slither" she heard the last time the tree spirits asked her for meat (366). Unsure what has happened and waking a little while later, the cut on Lisa's hand has been licked clean and the spirits are asking for more. Lisa demands, "'[y]ou tell me where Jimmy is first'" (369). Here, Lisa exhibits an understanding of the reciprocal relationship she has with the spiritual realm and commands that the spirits fulfil their part of the exchange. When they continue to press her for "more," Lisa tries to get into the speed boat and leave Monkey Beach but slips and is knocked on the head by the boat, forcing her to the bottom of the ocean (370). When Lisa wakes, she is in the spirit realm and Ma-ma-oo is once again warning her she has a "'dangerous gift . . . It's like oxasuli. Unless you know how to use it, it will kill you'" (371). Ma-ma-oo tells her that "[w]e're where we belong, but you have to go back . . . You've come too far into this world. Go back'" (371–72). Lisa returns to the realm of the living but finds herself

underwater with the speedboat sinking away beneath her. Jimmy appears and pushes her up toward the surface. On the beach, Lisa is met by Ma-ma-oo, Mick, and Jimmy who communicate the importance of her returning to the realm of the living. The novel closes with Lisa on the beach listening to the howls of b'gwus as the distant sound of a speed boat approaches (374). Lisa has struggled to reclaim and regenerate her place-based existence, a reclamation that, while still in process, has allowed her to find Jimmy and reconcile her own relationship with the land. Lisa has begun to develop her own sense of grounded normativity, a set of ethics that is informed by knowledge of the land imparted to her by family members.

Lisa's connection with the land demonstrates a powerful resurgence that is further affirmed by the novel's final lines. As she lies on Monkey Beach, Lisa notes that: "[c]lose, very close, a b'gwus howls—not quite human, not quite wolf, but something in between" (374). Lisa is herself "something in between," capable of communicating with the living and the dead. In finding a way to navigate her relationship with the land, Lisa can make peace with her own hybrid existence that seeks to carry a strong sense of grounded normativity into the future. As with Lisa, the cousins in *Shark Dialogues* must develop their own individual relationships with the land so they can keep the plantation in their family for future generations.

A Creature Timelessly Alive

Different from Kelonikoa, Pono, and Jess, Duke feels most connected to place when he is physically on the land, rather than the sea. Duke's sense of grounded normativity is contextualized most fully through his relationship with the soil and earth of his coffee plantation. The plantation is set in "the coffee orchards in the misty blue hills of Captain Cook," a small community in the coffee-growing belt of Kona on Hawai'i's Big Island. Healing from the head

injury she suffers trying to save Duke, Pono listens as he teaches her all about "soil, rainfall, ideal altitudes, how it was all done by hand—planting, picking, sorting, processing" (105). He explains the coffee-making process: "'[n]othing is destroyed, things merely change shape or form.' He was trying to explain about the beans, how they were transformed into coffee, and how the faces in the leaves were real, faces she thought she had imagined in the hallucinatory weeks of her healing" (105). In addition to explaining how coffee beans become coffee, Duke's statement also underscores the holistic relationship he and Pono share with the land, an understanding of how everything has a presence even when dead or not yet born as nothing is ever really gone, it just changes shape. Duke teaches Pono how he and his workers demonstrate care for the land by making use of all that they farm. The cherry pulp, which surrounds the bean, is "'used for fertilizer, mash for livestock. Nothing is destroyed, a thing becomes another thing'" (105). Duke shares with Pono that he also thinks about his family—taken away to die from leprosy on Molokaʻi—"'that they are not dead but vitally alive, perhaps in another form, on another plane'" (105). Thinking of his family, Duke expresses an understanding of what it is to exist relationally upon the land, to understand that nothing is ever really gone. This understanding exemplifies Duke's grounded normativity, his experiential and land-based knowledge that informs his ethical engagement with human and non-human kin.

Contextualizing their place in Hawaiʻi within the wider world, Duke teaches Pono what he has learned through his travels beyond the archipelago. Duke had travelled widely, speaks three foreign languages, and studied at the Sorbonne (106). He imparts his knowledge to Pono as the two "stood for long periods over maps and globes, as he tried to explain the world to her, the vastness, the explosive newness of some cultures, the golden dotage of others" (106). With these lessons, Duke places Hawaiʻi and the knowledge he and Pono possess alongside the Western

knowledges he has studied. In this way, his lessons situate Kānaka Maoli ways of knowing within a wider network of knowledges from other cultures. He does not place one knowledge above another but, rather, relates them to one another, recognizing his and Pono's "native intelligence" alongside Eurowestern knowledges (107). Together, they develop "their own mythology" by sharing the histories of their families alongside these wider histories of the world (107).

Living on Duke's plantation, Pono is taken out of the context that makes her feel most whole. Her craving to be in the sea with her shark kin is deeply embodied: when Duke is not immediately by her side "she felt in danger of disappearing . . . she felt her skin grow rough, her bones grow thirsty, tasted saltwater on her lips, and wanted blood" (109). Duke coaxes her back to her human form when her skin begins "marbling to gray," telling her that she must be prepared to care for this land when he succumbs to leprosy as his family did before him. Duke watches her as she turns "her head toward the ocean, sniffing like a dog at salt air blown in on the trades . . . her mouth filled with saltwater, her gills opened, she became all cartilage and appetite" (109). Still, Pono reassures him that she has rejected that world and chosen to be on the island with him, the pressure of their waning time together weighing heavily on her decision. In turn, he reassures her of her decision to stay: "'[e]ach night ancestors walk this land. Can you feel it? . . . The island has much *mana* because it is the birth place Kamehameha I. And because Pele lives here. That's why, I believe, you were called'" (109).[72] Duke convinces Pono to live her life entirely inland and she concedes because Duke cannot join her in the sea.

[72] Kamehameha I was the first ruler of the Kingdom of Hawaii (1795–1819). Pele is the "fiery Volcano Goddess" who lives in Halemaumau, the fire pit of Kilauea's volcano's main crater (Davenport, *Shark Dialogues* 110).

Duke and Pono's connections with the land are challenged, however, when Duke begins to show the troubling signs of leprosy and the two must abandon his plantation to evade the bounty hunters that would take him to Moloka'i. Entering the jungles of Waipi'o valley, "they entered an ancient time. Dew evaporating on a leaf. A gecko blinking in sunlight. The languorous slide of sap. Then the whoosh of a hawk, claws curling round its squirming prey screaming like a human" (111). This "ancient" place is one where humans must learn to respect their environment or be destroyed by it, unlike the contemporary anthropocentric landscape of Honolulu. Like Gimur and Kajinsha moving through the jungle, Pono and Duke must live "'by ear and by nose . . . trusting to sound and smell. As so much of sight is tricked by the jungle'" (111). They are humbled by the jungle landscape: "not a paradise, but a life-and-death terrain where every footstep had to be measured" (112). To live in the jungle is to respect one's place within it, not as a conqueror but as a living being enmeshed within a complex system of relationships that can never be fully understood. Pono and Duke spend nearly a year in the jungle, his body slowly changing under the weight of the disease as they endure "volcanoes, typhoons, months of battering rains. Then, heat, incessant. Then moody trades" (115). Eventually, they are found by bounty hunters and brought out of the jungle: "Pono heard the moaning spread across the land, she heard the whispering. In his year of outrunning bounty hunters, of outsmarting them, Duke had come to symbolize his people's heritage; he became the embodiment of ancestor-warriors, men and women who had fought to the death for their freedom and their lands" (115). Duke's refusal to be imprisoned, his decision to turn himself over to the jungle for survival, makes him a legend. When he is put on the "funeral ship for Kalaupapa, 'Place of the Living Dead,' people crowded the docks, calling out his name . . . He was gone, a lion had got up and left the land'" (115). Although Duke and Pono are taken from Waipi'o by

bounty hunters, their ability to live in the jungle valley for nearly a year is a testament to their knowledge of how to respectfully integrate with the land. In this way, their time in the jungle stands in stark contrast to Pono's great-grandfather Mathys.

Duke's relationship with the land, and connection to place through Pono, keeps him alive for the next sixty years. Moloka'i is a "small, verdant island of almost impenetrable rain forests. Lush hidden valleys, plunging waterfalls, barking deer, and goat, and boar floating down aisles of giant fern, eucalypti" (22). One side of the island is lively with "old-time villages," "taro patches and rice paddies," and sits in sharp contrast to the "silent side" which during Duke's time is "inaccessible except by sea, air, or treacherous muddy mule paths down jungle cliffs soaring three thousand feet high" (22). On this silent side sits Kalaupapa Peninsula, where "rich green fields grow over acres of crude graves" (22). Initially, Duke feels severed from his homeland (of which Pono is a part) and spends a year staring "across the sea at night lights of Honolulu" (132). On this peninsula, "life became a prison within a prison. Strict confinement, isolation, first from one's friends and blood-kin, then from one's physical surroundings" (134). After two years, however, Pono manages to get a message to Duke that she is alive and has not given up on him. This correspondence—a connection to the land through Pono—breathes life back into Duke who focuses on caring for Kalaupapa: "planting gardens, weeding graves, clearing walkpaths up the mountains. In physically rejuvenating the land, he renewed something spiritual and intellectual within himself" (136). The renewal Duke experiences exemplifies his reciprocal relation to place. This reciprocity restores Duke's perspective and he once again "s[ees] the land and sea surrounding him not as a natural barrier, a prison, but as a creature timelessly alive" (136). The details of the land become once again "vivid" and in "everything ordinary, he saw the extraordinary. This land, shunned by the world, became a thing that fed his senses. Duke entered

it wholeheartedly in order to survive" (136–37). The fact that Duke's connection to place and to Pono keeps him alive underscores the necessity of a reciprocal relationship with human and non-human kin as one that is fundamentally sustaining.

Near the novel's end, after Duke has returned to the plantation, it becomes clear that his condition is tragically worsening, and he does not have long to live. Knowing he will die soon and that she does not want to take him to a hospital where they would be separated, Pono makes the decision to join him by taking him to the sea. They climb into a handmade canoe she prepared, ready to "'go home' . . . 'The way ancestors came. Crossing the same tracks that cannot be detected, but will be clear to those who know the way'" (375). Out in the deep ocean, Pono sees the "glowing eyes of *niuhi*, huge, white sacred sharks who ate only the flesh of *kāhuna* and those of royal blood. They swam about the boat in lazy, graceful circles . . . [Pono and Duke] lay back like lovers, waves washing over them. Then *niuhi* ghosted in. Golden eyes. And fins" (377). Pono and Duke return to the land of their ancestors and together they change shape, becoming something else but never leaving.

Earlier in the novel as Ming is nearing her own death from Lupus, she underscores the importance of connection to land and kin beyond blood. Ming confesses to Pono that she has seen Grandfather Duke and that she learned of his existence from her father, Tang Pin, who remembered the rumors and stories of bounty hunters. Years ago, she went to Moloka'i and watched Duke from a distance for hours. Ming begs Pono to let her cousins know Duke before he dies because "'Grandfather is our link, our history'" (309). Ming knows that if Pono is to get the cousins to invest in their relationship with place, to understand that they belong to the land, they need to have a relationship with their grandfather. Pono relents, promising Ming that she will take the cousins to Moloka'i and bring Duke home. On Ming's last night, the cousins gather

as she reminds them that her death is just another changing of shape: "'[g]radually you will feel that I am here still, that I inhabit you…and you will bring me back to life. Each of you will even begin to use my gestures. Your expressions will be my expressions . . . I will be the conscience whispering in your genes'" (311). Ming will continue through her cousins and their connection with this place where they all grew up together.

Pono keeps her promise to Ming and the disclosure the novel has been building toward finally takes place. Gathering Vanya, Rachel, and Jess at the house, Pono tells them the difficult story readers witnessed in the first half of the novel. After her disclosure, Pono underscores that she kept this soil, this land, as a memorial to Duke who has been captive on Molokaʻi (331). When she passes this land to the cousins, she is passing them his legacy (331). Pono explains that even though Duke has been trapped on Molokaʻi all this time: "[h]e was my destination. He is still my destination . . . He *lives*" (331). The cousins embrace Pono and forgive her for keeping this secret. On their way to Molokaʻi to bring Duke home, Pono underscores that for Kānaka Maoli "'Freedom depends on possession of land . . . No one in history has ever respected those who did not own their *own land*'" (336–37). Pono reminds the women that Hawaiians are looked down upon because their King gave away their lands, charmed by the *haole*. The young women need to remember:

> "The land doesn't belong to us, you see. We belong to the land. So it ever was . . . But this the *haole* cannot see. They use our land to adorn themselves. And so adorned, they delude themselves that they're superior . . . But—and this is my point—*haole* are becoming a minority in the world . . . They're threatened, out-smarted by Afro-Americans, out-manufactured and out-bid by Japanese, hated in most of Central and South America . . . They're frightened, looking for new victims, so they have turned back to the Pacific . . . they don't fear us, because we are *too small* . . . All they have to do is keep us in our place. They do that by buying up our land." (338)

Pono senses the spread of white fragility and the danger that it means for Hawaiians and the Hawaiian lands that white Americans will use to strengthen and protect themselves. By buying

land, white Americans maintain control not only over the land, but over the Kānaka Maoli who belong to that land. Pono reiterates herself: "'[w]hat I am saying is: sell the land, you sell your souls, you will damn yourselves to slavery, and keep the whites in power'" (338). This conversation, and their time with Duke, initiates each of the cousin's individual journeys toward the redefinition of their relationship with the land and their own land-based resurgences.

Slowly, the cousins begin to move out of the shadow of Pono's hypocritical hatred of their mixed blood to assert a belonging to land that rejects blood quantum for a land-based mode of identity that more fully strengthens cultural continuity and resurgence. Duke had already tried to convince Pono that there is more to belonging than blood. Pono remembers Duke trying to reason with her: "each of these girls was half of something else. Duke said she had to learn to accept this, that the true, original blood of their ancestors, the only one she recognized was dying. Their granddaughters, Duke said, were hybrids of a new world" (231). These hybrids of a new world rely more than ever on their relationship with place to encourage belonging, a reality that Pono simultaneously struggles with and works to understand.

Vanya's relationship with Simon convinces her to stop hating her mixed-race identity and to embrace a Kānaka Maoli belonging rooted in an ethics of grounded normativity. Simon is a white Australian whose great-grandfather came to Australia "in shackles. A simple Irish farmer who'd cursed Mother England after a couple of stouts" (254). Vanya hates his whiteness, his blood, and hates herself even more for being with him (259). She tells him that just because his family struggled it "doesn't make you less white" (254). Simon dismisses her perspective as childish and unnuanced; he grew up with the Aboriginal Peoples of Australia, "changed blood with' em, went through their gory initiations into manhood" (254–55). He begs her to stay with him so he can show her what he knows of the land:

> "How to find freshwater mussels under reeds . . . crocodiles that are playful and harmless, and what weeds make teas that cure tropical ulcers. I'd teach you what grasses are poison, and where water is always found near casuarinas . . . where black-lip oysters will nourish you with iodine . . . what grapes cure the bite of deaf adders . . . which crayfish-squeals draw sharks. I'd show you where to find edible worms . . . bush bananas . . . I'd teach you the secret seasons, the ones between the Wet and Dry that only Abos know. Like, when certain lilies flower, you'll know barramundi will be swimming in schools eager for bait . . . I'd even teach you to smell a 'soak,' water lying far below the most parched and barren earth . . . you'd learn to listen. You'd see how smart nature is. Vanya, you'd be amazed." (259)

Simon's relationship with the land, his understanding of how "smart" it is and how humans can communicate with it if they learn its language, infuriates Vanya. With Pono's pureblood rhetoric in her mind, Vanya cannot accept that this white man can connect to the land more than she can as an Indigenous person. Simon presents Vanya with an impossible reality: a world beyond even her own hybridity, where blood is not a precondition of acceptance for belonging to land and other than human kin.

As the novel progresses, Vanya decides that her commitment to the place she most belongs can be best exhibited by taking violent action against non-Hawaiians and the infrastructure they brought to the Islands. For her, "terrorism is imperative'" (351). Vanya joins a militant resistance group and contributes to funding and planning the destruction of various sites on the island (e.g., the geothermal plant, a new resort). Simon can see how these actions have made it possible for Vanya to define her Indigeneity, her relationship with the land, on her own terms. He wonders:

> *…What is it like I wonder to be so connected? Is it what I feel for that massive bulge in the Outback, Uluru? And mobs of rose-breasted galahs dragging their colors up the geometry of the rock, and how I feel when staring in the distance at the pitch and yaw of lolloping kangaroos, and out beyond Perth an azure sea, and then that moment sun going, all of nature, everything rinsed into amethyst, improbable color, pure fiction, maybe everything is fiction…* (438)

Here, Simon makes clear the relationship between human and non-human kin as a defining feature of belonging to the land. His experience growing up with Aboriginal People provided him with a specific relationship to the outback that he can see Vanya possesses for her Islands. The more Vanya commits herself to militant resistance and the movement for Hawaiian sovereignty, the more connected she feels to place.

What ultimately brings Vanya closest to the land, however, are the repercussions of the violent and traumatic actions she undertakes. After Vanya kills an FBI agent, she and Simon are forced to live as fugitives in the jungle of Waipiʻo. Here, they live by "older laws" at an "ancient pace," learning "to think like animals, eat anything, roots, vegetation. Some things they killed were so small, with so little flesh, they ate the viscera" (459). Vanya feels the weight and responsibility of killing her non-human kin for her own survival, as if with each kill, they "contribute to the death of this wild and sacred valley" (459). In hiding, Simon finally teaches her what he knows about living off the land and they start to blend in, to become contextualized within the jungle: "[t]heir odors were less human. They had begun to absorb the fragrance of flowers, vegetation, humid smell of soil. She felt a slow shedding, of background, philosophies, even of the sense of time" (460). Simon envies her "blood connection," but both of their relationships to the land are what continue to save them as the land cares for them.

Rachel's relationship with the land is also strengthened and redefined as the novel progresses and she is freed from her relationship with Hiro. Hiro has shaped Rachel according to his desires, so she appears more Japanese than Kānaka Maoli. She wears kimonos, plays Japanese instruments, practices calligraphy, and styles her hair according to Japanese customs. At times, Hiro forgets that she is Indigenous because there "was so much of him in her—culture, gestures, taste—he chose to think of her as his creation, pure-blood Japanese" (268). When Hiro

returns from a long journey overseas, she plays him a Japanese song on the shamisen. For her second song, however, she begins "plucking sounds out of nature" and Hiro understands that she is playing the sounds of the Big Island, reminding him of her hybridity: "[f]irst flowing sounds, like contours of volcanoes that had shaped most of the island . . . Then sounds of molten lava erupting from open fissures . . . Then plucking softly, dreamily, she drifted into valleys of the Big Island, bamboo forests, royal palms, hurricanes of butterflies in fields of vanda orchids. One by one, sounds of island animals issued from the rasping strings" (268). Rachel plays the sounds of "her world," moving from the music of the land to the "sacred sounds of the hula" (168). Hiro can see "how much she loved that place, how she belonged there. The Big Island was her history" (268). Despite all his attempts, Hiro cannot make Rachel fully Japanese. Her simultaneous embrace of Japanese and Hawaiian cultures asserts her Indigeneity as not contingent upon blood, but upon connection to the land.

When Hiro is murdered in Chiang Mai, Rachel inherits his estate and twenty-seven million dollars. She decides to use the money to help those she loves protect the land however they see fit and regardless of their diverse relationships to place. She begins by providing Vanya with money for the bombs needed to damage the geothermal plant and various resorts. When Hiro's body is brought back to Honolulu, it is accompanied by a young man named Ban Somporn Chantai. Ban tells Rachel that Hiro was like a father to him and he begs Rachel to sponsor his sisters so they can leave the sex trade and come to live in Hawai'i. Rachel travels to Thailand and brings the girls to live on the plantation, accepting them and Ban as her own children and the plantation's next generation. Using Hiro's money to care for the place that has always taken care of her, Rachel demonstrates how, despite the exploitation that capitalism breeds (manifested in Hiro), a better future is possible.

By the end of the novel, each of the granddaughters have redefined their relationship with land on their own terms. In the final scene, Jess receives word that Vanya is alive and living off the land in the Waipiʻo valley. Vanya's message to Jess is "*IMUA.* Go forward! Press on!" (481). Looking down the beach, Jess sees one single, huge dark fin blading out of the water and knows it is Pono. She is comforted that "they were all out there watching, assembled, in formation, in ancient dialogues. She was not abandoned, she would never be alone. As long as they lived, she lived" (480). Sitting on the beach, Jess realizes that while some of this archipelago's "great contexts were broken forever" (73), many do and will remain so long as Kānaka Maoli remember they belong to the land.

Terra Incognita

As a European, Father Nicolas Krick's relationship with the land, and the Mishmee Hills in particular, sits in stark opposition to those of Gimur and Kajinsha. From Lorraine, France, Krick does not belong to the land he finds himself in and this lack of belonging—similar to that of Mathys before Kelonikoa—is made readily apparent through his immoveable Eurocentric and anthropocentric Catholic worldview. His presence in the novel intensifies the text's critique of colonialism by presenting Krick as a man who is completely out of context and out of place.

Krick's goal of reaching Tibet is deeply imbedded in his problematic desire to be the first European to make the journey via the Mishmee Hills. He looks at the land beyond the Assam plain, his place of departure, as "terra incognita and anyone who went into those wild hills did so at their own risk. It was the land of 'savage mountaineers'" (42). In calling it "terra incognita," unknown or unexplored territory, Krick harmfully constructs the Mishmee Hills in cartographic

terms as an unknown space that has never been explored by "civilized" people who could document the land. Of course, this perspective relies on the violent concept of the "savage" (here, "'savage mountaineers'") to prop itself up, to render Indigenous knowledge of and presence on the land as not actually knowledge or presence at all, and to thereby justify exploration and exploitation. Despite describing them as "savage," Krick nonetheless must rely on the guidance of Adi and Mishmee people if he is to successfully enter Tibet: "the tribes living in the hills between Assam and Tibet might hold the key" to his entrance (56). Krick's Eurocentrism results in a fraught relationship with the land and those who belong to it and he is depicted as lacking awareness of on whose land he really is. Departing on his first attempt to enter Tibet, Krick feels "[t]here is an unseen country that lies before us all . . . Perhaps it is bigger and deeper in our imagination. I think it is desolate and that I will discover many things, but ah! If I look closer, bend down, I will find faint lines, traces of a presence, and someone else's thoughts there before me—equally ardent, equally captive" (59). On some level, Krick knows that this region has always been populated by non-Europeans, but he only sees their presence on the land as impermanent "traces" and "faint lines." His presence marks something allegedly different as he intends to make discoveries in this "unseen" "desolate" place, and in so doing, play his role in the violent "civilizing" process.

In a move akin to colonization, Krick reads the Mishmee Hills through a Eurowestern Catholic lens rather than learning from the people who have lived in communion with the land for centuries. In so doing, he folds the land and his interactions with it into an interpretive framework that does not conceive of people as beholden to and enmeshed holistically within the land. Rather, humans are either in opposition to the land or in awe of it—a dichotomy that further estranges Krick from place. He consistently describes Tibet as impenetrable and, early in

his travels, feels that the "closer they got to Tibet the further away it seemed to recede" (41). Other Europeans warn him that there will be "wild mountains and hostile tribes," that the jungle is "teeming with wild beasts" and the "damp air and the swamps bree[d] malarial fever that kill[s] men like flies" (59). Despite these warnings, Krick naively sees the hills as a "silent landscape" and falls immediately in love with what he believes to be one of his God's most profound works. He is "enraptured by the beauty of creation unfolding before him," remarking to himself that "here there is nothing to awaken passion, pride and jealousy in the heart of man, he thought. Everything around is peaceful, as it must have been in the first days of creation" (93). Krick's Catholic worldview distorts his reality, and he sees the Mishmee Hills, which require the utmost deference, knowledge, and respect to navigate, as "the work of an all powerful God . . . made manifest under the transparent veil of nature" (93). For Krick, nature is just a transparent veil for his God rather than a god itself.

When the land tries to communicate to Krick that he is out of context, he begins to somewhat temper his perspective. First, his boat capsizes crossing a river and he nearly drowns; then, a mountain collapses and his group has to take a dangerous detour. After the collapse, Krick begins to realize that "the path was not strewn with roses" (93). Krick's guides take him "along a narrow stream bed cutting through a hot, airless ravine. There was no shade. The path was steep and the hot stones hurt their feet as they trudged on with the sun beating down on their heads. The foot of the mountain was a wilderness of blocks of granite" (93). Amidst his suffering, Krick tries to remember that even the gardens of Paris, Saint Cloud, and Versailles cannot "compare to the beauty of God's work in these mountains. The work of man was but a lamp of coloured glass compared to the sun!" (94). Krick's relationship with the land is overdetermined by his specific religious perspective, one that is fundamentally irreconcilable

with this land. Although this outlook and his faith undoubtedly strengthen him during his more challenging times, they simultaneously make it impossible for him to enter into a reciprocal relationship with the land. Problematically viewing the land as "God's work"—a fundamentally anthropocentric perspective—is irreconcilable with the perspective needed to establish the kind of relationship with place that will contextualize him and make it possible for him to live in unity with the land, as opposed to ruling over it.

Krick is given opportunities to shift his relationship with the land, none of which he takes seriously. Krick's singular focus—to begin a mission and impart his worldview—intensifies throughout his travel as he encounters what he harmfully perceives to be a total lack of "religion" in the Mishmee Hills. When Krick reaches the Tibetan village of Sommeu, a Tibetan governor tells him that he must turn around and stay with the Mishmee until tensions with the British lessen somewhat. Making his way back with limited support, Krick begins spending time with Kajinsha near the black hill. Kajinsha tries to contextualize for Krick what religion means in this place: "'The Tibetan lamas have books and you read your book for knowledge of God. We read the land'" (140). Krick misses the point entirely and is only able to focus on how he has found himself "in a wilderness where there was no sign of an established religion, no Christians, Muslims and not even Buddhists even though Kajinsha and his people were so close to Tibet. Here it was only great domes of rocks, a hard, physical world that demanded only the stamina to survive" (140). Krick can only perceive religion if it manifests in familiar shapes—Christianity, Islam, Buddhism—and cannot consider that a religious perspective may take another form. In this "pristine empty world," Krick sees a gap that can be filled with his knowledge, regardless of its incompatibility with place (141). Of course, that "wilderness" with its "domes of rock" is the

very place from which ways of knowing and being are imparted. Despite Kajinsha's patient attempt at explanation, Krick only sees this place as profoundly empty.

Krick's relationship with the land, his estrangement from it, becomes steadily more apparent as he once again tries to return to Tibet. He feels the "thunderous rain and the mist rising up before his eyes were sweeping into his soul" as he faces "hunger, injury and the temptation to lash out at his guides" who he believes to be placing obstacles in his way (161). At one point, he is "knocked unconscious trying to jump across a small ravine carved by a stream and landing on a granite slab. His body was badly bruised and swollen, his nails were broken and his fingers were bleeding" (161). Humbled by the landscape, Krick begins to realize that Europeans could never "imagine the physical features of a land so remote, so densely covered in forest and dissected by mountains and rivers and battered by rain and crumbling earth, where a man could go mad wrestling with the elements in order to survive" (204). Krick's relationship with land places him in opposition to it, rather than as part of it. His perspective is one of wrestling with the land, rather than trying to understand that it may be communicating with him. He struggles with what of this strange and difficult place he should share with his Directors back in France: "First there was water. Then light, sunlight, then green…and always, hills—blue, pale, misty, inky blue, black. A black hill…he had been moving in a shifting world of water and sand and mountains" (205). He is unsure how to describe this place so that Europeans might understand, coming up only with colours and shapes. To Krick, the land is untranslatable, incommensurable with his Eurocentric worldview and Christianity, impossible to accurately render in French.

Shortly before his murder and near the end of another long journey into Tibet, Krick's relationship with the land appears to shift. By this point, he has spent several years in and around

the Mishmee Hills and no longer feels "lost or disconsolate" as he once did (243). Instead, when he hears the "sound of water, the breeze moving through the trees," he feels "the land was drawing him in" (243). Finally, the "sky and hills were becoming familiar and entangled in his heart. Perhaps this was home now" (243). Krick reflects:

> When he first came to these parts, he had thought he reached a place where everyone was engaged in a way of extermination, one clan against the other, but here he was again surrounded by the patient, dreamy beauty of undisturbed life around him. What belief did men and women cherish that kept them tilling these cold fields from dawn to dusk? . . . on this earth where no white man had ever set foot—here my footprint! See the light, hear the sound of water. Look at the small stream no other western eyes and few passersby have seen, a lonely stream, but the water is happy! No commerce, no ships, but how beautiful it is in its secret serenity. And I am blessed to see it! Indeed God's work is marvellous. (243)

While Krick believes himself to be more enmeshed within the landscape than when he first arrived, his thoughts reveal an inability to conceive of this place as anything other than the work of his God. Krick's understanding of the Mishmee and Adi Peoples has somewhat deepened—he no longer sees them solely as "savage" warriors—but he still harmfully views them as people without "religion" or anything like it. He wonders what "belief" motivates them to continue caring for their lands and sees a gap, a need for religion that he can fill. Krick remains obsessed with his role as an agent of history, the first white man to leave footprints here, the first Western eyes to look upon a particular stream. Sommeu may not have "commerce" or "ships," but this apparently Edenic paradise remains beautiful in its secret serenity, a serenity that Krick understands as a possession. Ultimately, Krick wrongfully attributes the serenity of the place to "God's [marvellous] work," rather than millennia of consensual, reciprocal relationships between human and non-human kin. By placing Krick's colonial relationship with the land in juxtaposition with Gimur and Kajinsha's reciprocal relationship with the land, *The Black Hill*

demonstrates the violent collateral damage that can be wrought be supposed "well intentioned" outsiders.

Constellation of Coresistance

In reading resurgence across *Monkey Beach*, *Shark Dialogues*, and *The Black Hill*, I have demonstrated how resurgence is expressed and enacted through the relationships between human characters and the land. As I demonstrated in my previous body chapters, the value of this constellatory thinking lies in its ability to communicate a story that would not exist were its novels analyzed separately. The story illuminated by the juxtaposition of these texts underscores the ways that human relationships with land operate as acts of resurgence.

This constellation of coresistance tells a story about how relationships between humans and the land must be reciprocal if they are to enact resurgence. In *Monkey Beach*, Lisa explores this reciprocal relationship with her plant, animal, ocean, spirit, ghost, and b'gwus kin. This complementary relationship is imparted to her by her Elders—her mom, Ma-ma-oo, and Uncle Mick—who teach her how to take only what she needs from the plant and animal worlds and leave the necessary offerings to the spirit realm. Lisa struggles, however, in her relationship with the tree spirits and ghosts, frequently disregarding their messages and misinterpreting the intent of their visits. For Kelonikoa, Pono, Jess, and Duke in *Shark Dialogues*, their reciprocal relationships with the land manifests physically. Kelonikoa, Pono, and Jess are each healed—albeit differently—by the time they spend in the ocean with their sea relations. Additionally, they are careful never to take more than they need from these interactions. Duke is also healed by the land: in return for taking care of Kalaupapa Peninsula he is able to find meaning in his life on Moloka'i. In *The Black Hill*, it is Kajinsha's and Gimur's ethical, reciprocal relationships with

the land that demonstrate resurgence. Kajinsha learns this relationship with land from his father and works to instill it in Gimur. Both characters recognize they "are one" with place—a holistic relationship that is demonstrated as they move swiftly through the jungle, away from the site of Krick's murder, plant and animal life allowing them to pass with ease, even in the dark (71). Having taught Gimur what he knows about the land, she eventually feels at home assuming Kajinsha's position at the top of the black hill. Ultimately, at the core of these reciprocal relationships is the understanding that people belong to the land; the land cannot belong to people.

The importance of reciprocal, complementary relations with land are underscored as essential by Mathys's and Krick's stories. Mathys's murder of the whales and embrace of capitalism demonstrate a failure to care for the land and understand it as a relation rather than a possession. This failure causes the land to reject him—first, in his expulsion from the jungle, and later with his drowning in the shallows of the cove. Similarly, Krick's colonial worldview proves immoveable despite his conversations with Kajinsha. During their time exchanging stories near the black hill, Kajinsha reminds Krick of the necessity of this mutual relationship to longevity and belonging on the land: "we help each other survive" (141). When Krick disregards this, the land responds: he nearly drowns in a river and nearly falls to his death from a cliff. Still, Krick pushes on to Tibet only to be murdered by those who told him on numerous occasions to turn back. Krick's and Mathys's deaths both demonstrate the land's agency and ability to refuse the wishes of those who show no regard for ethical relations with place.

This constellation's story about how reciprocal relationships between humans and the land enact resurgence also requires that humans learn the land's language. Lisa communicates with the land by interpreting what seagulls, seals, bear scat, and berries are trying to tell her; she

reads the colour of the river to know when she should introduce herself and enter into a consensual relationship with a new body of water. Her exchanges with the spirit realm, however, are complicated by her disbelief and distrust in her own ability to communicate effectively with them. The correlation between visits from the tree spirit and unfortunate events becomes undeniable, however, when Ma-ma-oo dies and Lisa begins to trust her interpretations of the spirit realm's signals. Reading the land comes easily to Kelonikoa and Pono, however, who each spend countless hours in the ocean communing with sea life. Pono, in particular, is able to communicate with her shark *'aumākua* and finds safety with them during the attack on Pearl Harbor. With time, Jess also learns how to read the ocean and to recognize a visit from Pono, now a white-tipped reef shark. Kajinsha can similarly read the land, noting to Krick that "[t]he land is our book" (140). Rather than reading books, Kajinsha reads and communicates with the grass, stones, and sky whose spirits are always "telling us something" (140). Ultimately, this constellation's story is the story of a grounded normativity's system of ethics—a system continuously generated by relationships with place that enact resurgence.

Reading resurgence through depictions of relationships with land across this constellation of coresistance once again centres Indigenous internationalism. Through their specific engagement with non-human kin, the particular characters in these novels recognize, or learn to recognize, the ways in which every being is always already enmeshed within a network of responsibility (Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* 24). As Simpson writes, Indigenous "existence has always been inherently international regardless of how rooted in place we are. We have always been networked. We have always thought of the bush as a networked series of international relationships" (*As We Have Always Done* 56). In my next and final chapter, I revisit this dissertation's key contributions and provide brief chapter summaries before turning to a

reflection on future research and applications for this work. Then, I close this dissertation by briefly looking across all three constellations to consider a core narrative that connects them.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

> We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves. Our best destiny is to imagine, at least, completely, who and what, and *that* we are. The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined.
>
> N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), "The Man Made of Words"

Responsibilities

The importance of Indigenous resurgence continues to be underscored by ongoing events in Canada that extend the painful reality of life under settler colonialism for Indigenous Peoples. In May 2021, an estimated two hundred unmarked graves were recovered at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential school on the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation in British Columbia. Since Kamloops, thousands of previously unmarked graves have been recovered at former residential school sites across the country.[73] The oral history of survivors, their families, communities, and descendants, have been at the center of this recovery work. On Cowessess First Nation land in Marieval, Saskatchewan, 751 unmarked graves were recovered at the former Marieval Indian Residential School site. This recovery process blended archival records, oral story and interviews, and ground-penetrating radar, revealing that the graves had likely been marked at one time. However, in the 1960s, a priest had the headstones on the graves removed after an argument with a local First Nations Chief (Eneas; Taylor and Neustaeter). Community oral history continues to be used to return markers to the graves, further underscoring the essential role of resurgence through storytelling.

[73] At the time of writing, 2614 suspected unmarked graves have been recovered at twenty-four Indian Residential Schools through the combined use of ground-penetrating radar, documentary evidence, and community oral history. These efforts mark an important moment in the broader history of recovery work that has been ongoing since the 1970s. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission estimates roughly six thousand Indigenous children died at the federally funded institutions. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's student memorial register "includes more than 4,000 recorded names. Many experts believe the actual number to be much higher" ("How ground-penetrating radar is used").

Support from non-Indigenous Peoples, however, continues to complicate this recovery process and underscore the relevance of this dissertation's core problem. The negative and problematic stories about Indigenous Peoples told on and off the page obscure these efforts by disseminating harmful stereotypes of Indigenous unreliability and deficiency that contribute to denialism regarding the truth about residential schools. In an interim report from the office of the independent special interlocutor into missing children, unmarked graves, and burial sites associated with Indian residential schools, Kimberly Murray (Kahnesatake Mohawk) cites narratives of denial as one of the core barriers to recovery efforts (Narine). Stories such as these are not limited to residential schools but are part of broader "settler moves to innocence" on the part of non-Indigenous people who refuse to face their own role in enabling, circulating, and supporting narratives that aim to erase Indigenous presence and secure settler futurity (Tuck and Yang 10).

At the core of these moves to innocence lies a reality that was continually gestured toward in this dissertation by characters such as Mathys and Father Krick: non-Indigenous people are estranged from reciprocal relationships with the land. This alienation is just one reminder of the illegitimacy of the settler project that settler people know—consciously or subconsciously—to be true. This reality conjures an anxiety and fragility that is too often soothed by false or distant claims of Indigenous ancestry and identity in the form of so-called "pretendians": non-Indigenous people claiming Indigenous ancestry (thereby participating in identity fraud) and performing cultural appropriation.[74] At the time of writing, Canadian film, literature, and academia finds itself facing an identity fraud crisis wherein non-Indigenous people

[74] Although I use "pretendian" in this section, I struggle with and recognize the violence such a term can elide by sounding as though this identity theft is make-believe rather than material.

are positioning themselves as Indigenous to secure professional positions, grant funding, and prestige ("Preventing 'pretendians'"). These pretendians are estranged from reciprocal relations with the land and with Indigenous communities and nations, relying instead on recognition by the settler state and its attending structures. When their identity theft is revealed, pretendians directly contribute to perpetuating the very kinds of stories that seek to obscure and erase Indigenous presence. The work done in this dissertation to situate my position as a settler scholar, and its attending responsibilities to story and research, are part of the broader work required of settler people in bringing about more ethical, allied relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Transparency and dedicated reflexivity on the part of non-Indigenous people—not opacity—lies at the core of these reciprocal relationships.

It is also my aim that this dissertation contribute to reciprocity with Indigenous communities and Peoples by shedding light on the material consequences of story and the ways resurgence in the contemporary Indigenous novel is imagining ethical, healthy futures for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. My readings of cross-cultural resurgence in the contemporary Indigenous novel underscore the reciprocal responsibility we all have to these narratives and to one another as inhabitants of a shared planet. If we are to imagine more equitable, sustainable futures, we must confront the stories and contexts that have created our contemporary moment. One way to confront these stories is through the concept of "response-ability" theorized by scholars such as Blaeser, Hanson, and King (Blaeser 1999; Hanson 2018; King 2003). Recognizing response-ability means that upon hearing a particular story, or reading a novel like those in this dissertation, readers must examine their own positioning in relation to that story and move forward by "articulating one's responsibility to act in response to what one has learned" (Hanson, "Relational Encounters" 235). Our individual positioning and experiences

will impact how we respond to the literatures we read and the stories we hear. This means that our responses will vary: engaging in conversation, acknowledging new learning, retelling, volunteering our time, or enacting various forms of resistance (Blaeser, "Writing Voices Speaking" 55). As Hanson notes, "[w]hatever forms their responses take, response-ability involves readers coming to some degree of recognition of their relationship with the story and the way that they are implicated in its telling and its teachings—an implication that calls them to respond" ("Relational Encounters" 325). Response-ability is underscored perhaps most famously by King when he closes each of his Massey Lectures with the phrase: "don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now" (*The Truth About Stories* 151). It is my hope that by reading resurgence in the contemporary Indigenous novel, this work calls other literary scholars and readers into a more responsible, reciprocal relationship with story that asks them to take pause and consider their individual ability to respond to the narratives that have emerged from the contexts we have all played a role in creating.

Non-Indigenous readers must also recognize that while they themselves cannot enact resurgence, they (we) have a responsibility to broader processes of reconciliation and decolonization. Several of the novels in this dissertation ask readers to enact response-ability, particularly to narratives regarding the legacy and continued presence of colonial and settler state education. For Roimata, Manu's struggle attending the settler school and his inability to see himself in the stories told there moves Roimata to create a homeschool that focuses on the stories of the land and its inhabitants. Enacting resurgence through oral storytelling, Roimata's school cultivates a greater sense of self-determination and belonging within her iwi that sustains them through the difficult fight with the developer. For Liya, her colonial education and its nationalist

narratives of belonging too readily erase the presence of the Adivasis of Assam and Liya decides to use that very colonial education to change the stories told about her people. Alofa also finds ways to assert her own hybrid presence through language against the formality of her Peace Corps education and its assertion of Western Christian hegemony. Each of these characters enact their own response-ability in answer to the narratives imparted by their formal educations. Roimata, Liya, and Alofa suggest that readers embrace reciprocal relationships with storytelling that necessitate a critical engagement with colonial and settler state narratives and curricula intended to produce docile (settler) citizens. Considering response-ability to story is just one of the ways non-Indigenous people can contribute to the wider work of reconciliation and decolonization while acknowledging that the latter can never fully take place absent the return of lands, and political and economic sovereignties.

This dissertation's contribution to decolonization—as I mention briefly in my Introduction—is a cultural contribution with material impacts owing to the mutually constitutive relationship between literature and life. Beyond changing story, this dissertation has also sought to underscore the relevance of methodology to the work of decolonization. Non-Indigenous scholars in particular must attend to the way methods of literary study have historically sought to delegitimate (or legitimate through comparison) Indigenous methods of analysis. One way we, as settler scholars, can do this is by ensuring that how we engage with Indigenous literatures is nation-specific, ethical, and centering of Indigenous knowledges. By theorizing reading resurgence as one potential method for cross-cultural analysis in global Indigenous literary studies, this dissertation has sought to provide one example, one route forward that is inherently dynamic and open to engagement by other scholars and thinkers interested in the important role methodologies play in the broader work of decolonization. In this conclusion's section on

"Future Research and Applications," I reflect further upon how teaching Indigenous literatures contributes to reciprocity with Indigenous communities and Peoples as part of the material and ideological change required by decolonization and reconciliation work. In the next section, I attend to this project's key contributions to the field of Indigenous literary studies.

Key Contributions

For scholarship, this dissertation has offered an ambitious synthesis of representations of resurgence in nine contemporary Indigenous novels. This project zoomed in to consider how different Indigenous (con)texts in North America, Oceania, and South Asia are (re)imagining Indigenous worlds and panned out to study what the connections across those (con)texts might mean. This dissertation argued that through representations of everyday acts of resurgence, the contemporary Indigenous novel contributes to the reclamation and recovery of relationships with knowledges, languages, and land. To make this argument, I relied upon the work of Allen, McGlennen, and Simpson as I theorized a new comparative method for global Indigenous literary studies that places diverse texts in dialogue while retaining a commitment to nation-specific analysis. Subsequently, I explored how resurgence radically rejects the intentional fractures of settler colonialism by creating connection across diverse and distinct Indigenous nations. These connections contribute to cross cultural understandings of the ways in which Indigenous Peoples around the world are conjuring Indigenous futures through literature. As a settler scholar, I worked to remain mindful of this contribution as one that does not enact resurgence itself, but that engages with acts of resurgence undertaken by Indigenous writers and their characters to bring about decolonial futures.

This project's core contribution has been a new comparative method for reading resurgence in the contemporary Indigenous novel. Performing this method in my chapters, I have read resurgence trans-Indigenously across juxtapositions of contemporary Indigenous novels within literary constellations of coresistance. This method linked diverse Indigenous contexts, gathering what can be seen differently when distinct novels are juxtaposed. This method also linked the work of scholars upon whom this work relies on and is grateful for: Allen, Simpson, and McGlennen. By maintaining a consistent focus on how each novel represents acts of resurgence—storytelling, language use, relationship with land—reading resurgence worked to reveal the Indigenous novel as one site of coresistance to settler colonialism's separations and erasures. Reading resurgence in each chapter, I have attempted to illuminate connections between Indigenous Peoples and worlds as they find creative ways to strengthen their communities amidst the colonial structures and boundaries imposed upon them. Importantly, this comparative method has worked to underscore the value of constellatory thinking—a value that lies in each constellation's ability to tell a story that exists because of the relationship between its novels.

In theorizing and executing a new global comparative method, this dissertation has also attempted to incorporate a perspective grounded in Indigenous internationalism which recognizes and makes visible the holistic network in which every being on earth is enmeshed. holistic perspective is always already comparative and based on "consent, reciprocity, respect, and empathy" (Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* 61). My developing understanding of Indigenous internationalism is indebted to Simpson's work in *As We Have Always Done*, a text that has profoundly impacted the work done in this dissertation. Forming literary constellations of coresistance, the diverse novels compared in this project work toward similar ends,

demonstrating Indigenous continuance and connection across colonial borders and boundaries through a method that is inherently relational.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter Two focused on storytelling, reading across *The Translation of Dr Apelles*, *Potiki*, and *Becoming Me*. I began my reading by situating each text within nation-specific knowledge about the role of storytelling for Anishinaabe, Māori, and Santal Peoples. Reading resurgence across these juxtaposed novels made it possible to see the diversity in how storytelling functions as an act of resurgence. Importantly, this constellation told a story about how a reciprocal relationship between a narrator and responsible reader can strengthen Indigenous self-determination and alter reality by changing story. In *Translation*, the necessity of an engaged reader is underscored by the text's dissimulating metafictional layers, metaphors, intertexts, and styles. Dr Apelles requires a careful reader for his heart who will also return to the Translator's note and reread to avoid forcing Dr Apelles and Apelles into roles as native informants. *Translation* also argues for the importance of self-determination when Apelles reveals himself to be the narrator of Dr Apelles and Campaspe's fictional reality. Apelles's omniscience thereby reveals his ability to change the story being told about Dr Apelles when a responsible reader is present. With its complex rendering of oral and carved storytelling in spiral time, *Potiki* also asks readers to meaningfully engage in the reciprocal practice of storytelling. Those readers that return to the Prologue learn how the narrators have been telling the carved stories from the wharenui all along. Self-determination also manifests in the iwi's rejection of linear reality, refusal to sell the land, and sharing of carved and oral stories that foreground spiralic temporality. It is Toko's omniscience, however, that demonstrates how self-

determination can begin to alter their realities. From his place of eversight, Toko understands how story changes reality and he warns his family members of the changes to come. In *Becoming Me*, coparticipation in storytelling is essential to Liya's survival and the continued presence of her tribe's knowledges. The knowledge Liya gains from her community fuels her desire and ability to control what stories are told about her People. Despite not being an omniscient narrator, Liya still comes to understand that both formal and community education are essential if she is to change the narrative about the Adivasis of Assam.

In Chapter Three, I centred language as an act of resurgence and read across *The Marrow Thieves*, *Where We Once Belonged*, and *Don't Run, My Love* to consider how contemporary Indigenous novels enact resurgence by representing Indigenous languages and indigenized Englishes. I began by situating each novel within nation-specific Métis, Samoan, and Angami Naga knowledges pertaining to language. This chapter's constellation imparted a story about youth characters enacting a rebellious resurgence through language that protects their community and bolsters their sense of safety and belonging. In *Marrow Thieves* youth characters threaten settler futurity by representing Indigenous futures with their knowledge of Anishinaabemowin, Cree, and indigenized English. Rather than rebelling against their Elders, youth characters in *Marrow Thieves* rebel against the settler state through the use of Indigenous languages (which possesses the power to destroy the neo-residential schools). This form of resistance is welcomed by their Elders who believe in a different future inaugurated by youth rebellion, a future where youth feel they belong even outside their communities. Differently, the youth characters in *Where We Once Belonged* negotiate their reality as the first generation of Western Samoans. The girls' indigenization of English enables them to begin accepting what they feel to be their in-betweenness—a hybridity that blends the West with Samoa. This indigenization manifests in a

vernacular English perceived as rebellion by their Elders but which helps Alofa, Moa, and Lili feel that they belong. Alofa's specific sense of belonging grows from her reconciliation of the "I" and the "we": sociocentric Samoan and egocentric Western worldviews. *Don't Run* also centres a youth character in Atuonuo, whose education from her mother takes place in an indigenized English. Atuonuo's single act of rebellion forms the core of the novel's cautionary tale, but it is the novel's blending of Tenyidie and English that enacts a greater rebellion, carrying the people story beyond Nagaland. In this way, *Don't Run* rebels against state-sanctioned erasure of Naga stories, language, and knowledges, while also teaching communities how they can better protect themselves from outsiders. Taken together, this constellation's story asserts the ways in which youth characters use language to secure Indigenous futures through forms of rebellion that enhance belonging and community safety.

Chapter Four constellated *Monkey Beach*, *Shark Dialogues*, and *The Black Hill* to investigate what juxtapositions of these novels reveal about how resurgence is enacted through the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the land. I began this chapter with contextualizing each novel's nation-specific—Haisla, Kānaka Maoli, Adi—relationship with land. This constellation of coresistance told a story about how reciprocal relationships between humans and the land enact resurgence and require humans to learn how to communicate with the land. In *Monkey Beach*, Lisa ethically engages in this reciprocal relationship, imparted to her by her Elders. She communicates with the animal and plant worlds with ease but struggles in her relationship with the spirit realm's tree spirits and ghosts, doubting her ability to interpret their messages and the intentions behind their visits. The correlation between unfortunate events and visits from the tree spirit can no longer be ignored when her Ma-ma-oo dies; Lisa must begin to trust her interpretations of the spirit realm's language. For Kelonikoa, Pono, Jess, and Duke in

Shark Dialogues, their reciprocal relationships with the land manifest physically in the land's ability to heal them so long as they respect the land in return. Communicating with the land comes easily to Kelonikoa and Pono, who each spend countless hours in the ocean. Eventually, Jess also learns how to read the ocean and to recognize a white-tipped reef shark and her Grandmother Pono. In *The Black Hill*, it is Kajinsha's and Gimur's ethical, reciprocal relationships with the land that demonstrate resurgence. Kajinsha learns this relationship from his father and passes it on to Gimur so they both "are one" with place and able to read the land (71). Gimur's knowledge of this relationship is what ultimately allows her to assume Kajinsha's former position at the top of the black hill. Differently, the stories of Mathys and Krick further highlight the importance of complementary relations with the land that understand people as belonging to land, rather than the land belonging to people. The two men fail to shift their colonial relationships with place and the land rejects each of them on numerous occasions. Their eventual deaths reveal the land's agency and ability to refuse the wishes of those who disregard ethical relations with place. Ultimately, this constellation's story asserts grounded normativity's system of ethics—a system continuously generated by relationships with place that enact resurgence.

Future Research and Applications

With this dissertation, I have intended to create an opening for engagement around reading resurgence in seemingly disparate Indigenous literatures. There is so much that we can learn and see differently when we place diverse contexts in ethical juxtaposition. In theorizing one possible method for global Indigenous literary studies, it is my intention that this project encourage

scholars in the wider field of Indigenous literary studies to embrace the messiness of new methods. In this way, I have taken seriously Allen's suggestion of working on a project that is "less foreordained, less forcibly balanced" (*Trans-Indigenous* xv). This meant welcoming the challenge of work that while "more intellectually stimulating, more aesthetically adventuresome, more politically pressing" also bears the risks and difficulties of stepping "outside established formulas" (xv). Allen is right to call for more and new methods in global Indigenous literary studies which can continue to contribute to "an academic field that increasingly defines itself as sovereign from the obsessions of orthodox studies of literatures in English" (xv). I have attempted to embrace the development of one such new method in the spirit of Allen's call while working to make space for other scholars to join in this burgeoning conversation.

Future research on resurgence in global Indigenous literary study might consider the relationship between linear (settler) and spiralic (Indigenous) temporalities in Indigenous literatures from within and beyond North America. In this dissertation, I briefly looked at spiralic temporality's relationship with storytelling in *Potiki*, but there is much more to be studied regarding how temporality operates as its own expression of Indigenous resurgence. Recent work by Patrizia Zanella and Laura Maria De Vos connects spiralic temporality and resurgence, but there are many new contexts within which scholars might consider the recurrence, return, and transformation characteristic of non-linear time. For example, what might novels like Stephen Graham Jones's (Blackfoot) *Mapping the Interior* or Eden Robinson's *Son of a Trickster* be telling readers about the relationship between temporality, settler colonialism, and Indigenous futurity with their portrayals of Indigenous characters living alongside ancestors?

As I have previously mentioned, the dialogue at the core of this dissertation is not just valuable for research. A key practical application of this work informs how we, as scholars of

Indigenous literatures, teach those literatures in the classroom. Too often, courses on Indigenous literature silo texts by settler borders and boundaries whose conditions, while certainly relevant, can occlude considerations of what scholars and students might see differently with more constellatory, trans-Indigenous perspectives. In aiming to equip students with new critical outlooks and ways of speaking about their worlds, approaches to Indigenous literatures in the classroom should consider the trans-Indigenous turn as an effective lens through, or position from which, the challenges facing our futures can be understood. This might mean, for example, organizing a contemporary Indigenous literatures course around modules (constellations) of Indigenous texts from diverse nations to see what their juxtapositions reveal about our world today and the futures we might conjure by considering alternatives to the settler status quo. Such a course might bring students to consider what stories inform their worldviews, to "learn about themselves in relational ways," or to think about what their own reciprocal relationship with land looks like (Hanson, *Reading for Resurgence* 321).

As I mention earlier in this conclusion, reciprocity with Indigenous communities and Peoples is part of the decolonization and reconciliation work that requires material and ideological change to take place within systems of education in Canada and beyond. Part of this change can begin with the way we, as scholars of Indigenous literatures, teach these literatures in the classroom to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. This means working against the structural and systemic inheritances of the post-secondary education system that falsely situate Euroamerican knowledge as superior. Specifically, we must be mindful that we contextualize the story we tell in our syllabi (i.e., the texts we choose) within the intellectual traditions from which they emerge. This also means decolonizing the classroom by changing not only *what* we teach (the texts and traditions we rely on), but *how* we teach them (e.g., in context on the land, in

sharing circles, through personal storytelling). As an example, below I discuss how my work in this dissertation has shaped my approach to teaching these literatures in the hope that other scholars of Indigenous literatures might better see the co-constitutive relationship between our research and our pedagogy.

The holistic worldviews expressed by many of the novels in this dissertation have led me to adopt a holistic approach to pedagogy that recognizes the ecological network of reciprocal relations in which students and educators are enmeshed. This practice works to affirm the key role each person plays in sustaining the balance within both our classroom community and the broader communities we return to when class ends. I envision my holistic approach to teaching through four interrelated pedagogical commitments that have grown out of my engagement with Indigenous ways of knowing and being in this dissertation: (i) knowledge diversity, (ii) self-determination, (iii) process, and (iv) collaboration.

The multiplicity of Indigenous knowledges and worldviews expressed by the novels in this dissertation underscore the importance of recognizing *knowledge diversity* both on and off the page. To enact this recognition, I contextualize the academic knowledge we are developing together as just one kind of knowledge among many (e.g., knowledge based in social bonds, culture, faith, language, experience, and self-teaching). This means affirming diverse routes to knowledge as students may have encountered course topics and developed their own expertise through mediums not often privileged in the classroom (e.g., video games, social media, friends, and Elders). With this pedagogical commitment, I keep in mind those students who, like Manu in *Potiki* or Liya in *Becoming Me*, have differing sets of expertise and knowledge that must be recognized as such in the classroom.

Each of the novels in this dissertation also assert the essential value of *self-determination* to the building of healthy and strong communities and individuals. Alofa's self-determination through her use of an indigenized English in *Where We Once Belonged* and Pono's granddaughters' varied and developing relationships to place in *Shark Dialogues* demonstrate the importance of individual self-determination to the wellbeing of the wider community. Recognizing and respecting the self-determination of students means allowing them to self-determine across a carefully scaffolded semester that provides a balance between structure (building particular skills) and freedom (selecting how they build those skills with choices for engagement).[75]

Rather than envisioning learning as only a means to a specified end (e.g., a desired grade or career), my holistic approach also considers the *processual* nature of learning to be paramount. My thinking around process as a pedagogical commitment was deeply informed by novels from this dissertation that foregrounded learning as part of a wider process. For example, Ma-ma-oo's lessons with Lisa in *Monkey Beach* regarding her connection with the spirit realm and the wider learning Lisa commits herself to in deciding to actively participate in her relationship with spirit kin. Lisa comes to these lessons unprepared, but Ma-ma-oo's contextualization of her learning as part of a wider life-long process supports Lisa through her early struggles. Similarly, when students arrive on campus and in my classroom, they may not already be equipped with the tools to navigate course curriculum with confidence and precision.

[75] I also focus on empowering students to self-determine by incorporating Universal Design for Learning (UDL): a method for advancing and improving teaching and learning for everyone that ensures the presence of multiple means of engagement, representation of information, action and expression. UDL creates opportunities for students to make choices for themselves based on existing (and growing) competencies. UDL has manifested in a number of ways in my courses: as multiple routes into each weeks' focus/topic (e.g., *YouTube* videos, film clips, music); in varied avenues for participation (e.g., *TikTok*, memes, storytelling, reading journals); and through options for evaluation (e.g., live/recorded presentations, podcasts, essays).

Perhaps they are first-generation students, or maybe they are engaging with new theories, skills, or subjects. Situating the learning we do as part of a broader process aims to reduce student anxiety by normalizing the confusion, mistakes, struggles, and uncertainties typical of grasping new content and skills.[76]

Finally, my holistic pedagogy recognizes our individual roles in a wider collective which necessitates *collaboration* across various contexts: from the space and energy we cultivate in the classroom, to the work we produce, and the help we give one another. Collaboration allows students to understand themselves as vital to not only their success, but to the success of their peers, their instructor, our course, and their broader communities.[77] Both *Translation* and *Marrow Thieves* impart lessons about the value of collaboration that inform this pedagogical commitment. Specifically, youth characters such as Frenchie and Rose learn the importance of collaboration with the youth members of the resistance movement when their communities merge and they begin to pursue shared goals. Differently, *Translation* argues for collaboration between narrator and reader as one means of ethical, reciprocal engagement with the storytelling process. Ultimately, this holistic approach to teaching Indigenous literatures seeks to underscore

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[76] I demonstrate a process-oriented approach in two primary ways. First, my courses begin with a dialogue about positionality and responsible engagement where I recognize and discuss openly the limits of my own knowledge as we seek new ways of knowing that disperse power. I clarify that given my subject position as a white settler and queer woman researching and teaching Indigenous literatures, I am always learning from Indigenous scholars and writers. I then moderate a discussion where students can share and reflect upon their own subject positions before moving forward together with critical awareness of our variable positions as learners in process. Secondly, I demonstrate a process-oriented approach by incorporating formative feedback in my evaluations of student work. Rather than summative feedback, which provides a static judgement on student performance, formative feedback situates student performance as part of a wider process aimed at making visible how students can improve their work. Following a formative feedback protocol that combines general summary, task-level, facilitative, and direct feedback, I allow students to connect and build from the feedback they find most helpful.

[77] For example, collaboration might involve contributions to our course playlist that plays as students filter in before class or using presentation applications such as *Mentimeter* and *Kahoot!* to illicit real-time anonymous feedback from students on how the course is progressing.

the necessity of student-centered learning methods and reciprocal relationships with both learning and one another.

Final Thoughts

It is my hope that this dissertation has offered valuable insight into the role contemporary Indigenous literature plays in cultivating and contributing to Indigenous resurgence. As these constellations demonstrate and as Hanson reminds us, "Indigenous literatures matter because, through literatures, Indigenous people are creating resurgent communities" ("Reading for Resurgence" 276). These communities act as coalitions that resist the disconnection perpetuated by settler colonialism. In this work, I have also sought to underscore the importance of examining diverse Indigenous novels for scholars in Indigenous literary studies broadly, and global Indigenous literary studies specifically. In closing, I want to briefly stand back and look at the cluster of constellations gathered in this dissertation. From this perspective, it is possible to see this cluster telling another story about how storytelling, language, and relationships with land are deeply interrelated; that nothing in this world has an independent existence. This holism is asserted by several characters from this dissertation's nine novels. For example, Toko possesses a special knowing, a way of seeing the world that understands its interrelated nature and allows him to experience reality "as if everything is now" (Grace 52). Lisa's access to the spirit realm similarly asserts a holistic understanding of the land, one that does not end when a person joins the spirit world. Kelonikoa, Pono, and Jess's reciprocal relationships with the sea—as healer and home—are expressions of their awareness of the greater context within which people are enmeshed and to which they will eventually return. In her own way, Alofa works to mend the holistic relationship between the "I" and "we" in her Samoan worldview by negotiating with

Euroamerican egocentric perspectives whose individualism requires everyone's disconnection from an interrelated reality to function. Like Frenchie, Gimur's holistic understanding is slowly learned: first, from her Elders in Mebo, and later, from Kajinsha as she enmeshes herself in her new context: "This is the secret that has hidden itself from me for so long. We are one" (Dai 71). Understanding that nothing in this world operates independently, these novels remind readers of the mutually constitutive relationship between literature and life, a relationship that asks readers not to forget that reading, like storytelling, has always been a reciprocal practice.

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