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"Water is Sacred! Womxn are Sacred!": Indigenous Womxn's Embodied Knowledge on the Frontlines

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SANTA CRUZ

**"Water is Sacred! Womxn are Sacred!";**
**Indigenous Womxn's Embodied Knowledge on the Frontlines**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

SOCIOLOGY
With an Emphasis in FEMINIST STUDIES

by

**Yvonne P. Sherwood**

September 2020

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Acting Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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## Abstract

"Water is Sacred! Womxn are Sacred!":

Indigenous Womxn's Embodied Knowledge on the Frontlines

Yvonne P. Sherwood

*"Water is Sacred! Women are Sacred!": Indigenous Womxn's Embodied Knowledge on the Frontlines* engages with the issues of gendered environmental violence by exploring the ways Indigenous peoples, especially Indigenous womxn, continue to fight for sovereignty and environmental wellbeing of the Fourth World. The issue of U.S. colonial state attacks against Indigenous Nations and lands have made it mainstream, and the politics of Indigenous Knowledge begs the question of how to best support activists' work to transmit environmental knowledge while not erasing the connected issue of localized colonial violence that affects, though differently, every major region in the world. To help make sense of the intersections of gendered violence and environmental degradation, *"Water is Sacred! Women are Sacred!"* explains why and how IK is mobilized, both as an enactment of anticolonial relations and an identity-knowledge-object, in different forms across the frontlines.

I supplemented participatory observations in Indigenous lead activists' spaces with archival research and 30 in-depth interviews with Indigenous activists, mostly womxn. The in-depth interviews, ranging from 1 to over 2 hours each, include mothers supporting the movement through digital activism to internationally known leaders in the United States and Canada. I gathered supplementary materials from

Indigenous lead conference proceedings, online archives, and the Freedom Archives in San Francisco.

*Water is Sacred! Womxn are Sacred!* proposes that to reinvigorate knowledge production as an anticolonial process and strengthen our abilities as radical environmental justice pedagogues, scholars must reimagine Indigenous ways of knowing as more significant than and beyond an intervention to sustainability. In documenting Indigenous womxn's embodied critiques embedded within their analysis of environmental degradation, the dissertation recasts the seemingly new narratives about recognition and decolonization in mainstream sustainability as modes of extraction. The foundational claim is that U.S. American research bent toward the arch of radical transformation must consider settler colonialism as an ongoing process, especially with understandings of knowledge, law, and power.

# Acknowledgments

*a. čn lemt.* The existence of this dissertation owes both its completion and shape to my frontline aunties and sisters. Their theoretical praxis has collectively shaped my approach, my framing, and topics of choice. Upon returning from an international protest zone, it became more difficult for me to connect how graduate school served our communities and if it genuinely deserved my attention. It was at this time when Auntie Deb pulled me aside at a meeting and said it was important that others hear what I had to say, "Tell your story," she said. Turning us toward the outspoken individuals, mostly men, at the meeting, she suggested, that even if they went, we did not all have the same stories. I have great respect for Aunty Deb, and so I sat with her words. Having failed at speaking at that particular moment and later in failing to answer academia's growing expectation of producing a "collaborative research project," I take the opportunity through *a* (acknowledgment) to show profound gratitude and respect for how my aunties and sisters instruct my work. As such, I would like to acknowledge the critical work of the following especially: Deborah Abrahamson, Twa-le Abrahamson Swan, Renea McCrea, Melodi Wynne, Yvonne Swan, Christine Nobiss, Tracy Molena, Candi Brings Plenty, Nancy Tahmalawash, Emily Washines, Donell Barlow, Teresa Andrew, Nancy Shippentower, Mary Crowe, Virginia Redstar, Natalie Swan, with others unnamed or named in detail below. I do not attempt to speak for these womxn, but I do acknowledge that their Indigenous and Native feminist praxis shapes me and this dissertation.

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**To the Land** that remains materially, subjectively, and spiritually significant, however, and wherever we find ourselves, thank you for accepting my prayers. Thank you for caring for us, for your teachings, and your love.

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*lemlmtš*

with deep gratitude

## DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to all the frontline womxn, especially my mama, who taught me to both listen and speak up when and where appropriate.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

I was 20 years old when I was diagnosed with stage four sarcoma tumor which is the worst that you can have.

For me, it wasn't connected to muscle or bone like it's supposed to be. It was in my subcutaneous tissue, which is just a fancy word for my stomach fat. And they were able to remove it. And I refused any kind of chemotherapy or radiation because I knew I wanted to have children one day.

...I realize that it really shouldn't be sitting here. It's got like a 97 percent rate of killing people.

I have friends that aren't here and most of them are women, they've got a lot of like uterine cancers and things like that, that have happened in my community. The first attacks that I saw on our women were on the reproductive systems, and fibroids, and cysts, and all these things that are happening in our womxns' bodies.

I went into Natural Resources and Park Management thinking that we were going to save ourselves, and our planet, and then it's always a lot of men in positions of power that were making decisions and stuff around like *parks*. And I thought this isn't what I really wanted to do. So I went back to school to work in environmental management, and that's how I found out about the Indigenous environmental network who I am now with, and have been with for 11 years, and I have learned so much about what my community is facing.

I didn't know what climate justice was and environmental justice. I didn't grow [up in it]. I wasn't born into it. I was in a community on the frontline facing extraction issues and being sick. But I didn't know that there was all these communities around the world, that were mostly indigenous communities and women that were facing it too, until I hooked up with [the network] and started learning more and more about it and, was like, maybe this is why I'm still sitting here.

And so I started going to a lot of different places: Canada, included going to the tar-sands, going to a lot of different continents and finding out that women were leading the struggle and the resistance…

And now in 2006 after the coal, after the uranium, all that kind of extraction, we got fracking and, until that point, we hadn't really experienced man camps in the way that we started experiencing them in 2006, in the Bakken formation..."

This is the voice of Kandi White, a Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara womxn.1 2 She is an Indigenous womxn organizer, and she shares her words at a conference titled *Protecting Mother Earth*. Today Kandi and several other women were leading a workshop titled "Living Earth Living Bodies." A group of womxn and I gather along with her under a tent and in a circle, huddled together to discuss from the standpoint of Indigenous womxn the ways environmental justice and women's lives intersect. Kandi's personal story might push up against the typical sanitized environmental meeting. Many individuals draw from their personal experiences when discussing their experiences of environmental racism. Kandi, in her unique way, stories her organizing and relation to the topic of the ways that land and bodies intersect with the mostly womxn group, wiping away tears, sometimes chuckling at herself, and always making connections. Sometimes she reflected "in," as in "maybe this is why I am here," and sometimes "across," as "cancers," "attacks," and "man camps" and "communities across the world."

Drawing from Michelle Jacob's (2020) aunty-ing as a methodology, I understand Kandi's story-ing as aunty-ing on the frontlines. At this moment, Kandi draws our attention to both the subtle and blatant manifestations of the extractive industry. She draws on different nodes of experience: of cancer and illness, environmental ruin, and its connections to our bodies, particularly womxn, and man camps, the sites of disappearance and sexual violence. She challenges the double bind of Indigenous erasure and energy development and challenges a simplistic understanding of how and where education happens.3 As she moves across these

otherwise seemingly divergent frontlines, what Fanon calls the battle line, her statement about these intersections raises essential questions about knowledge, law, and power.4

I was and am moved, informed, and guided by Kandi and so many other Indigenous womxn's storying of their experiences that the settler colonial context cannot contain. In addition to these foundations, I draw from a diverse set of scholarships, which may or may not be recognized as Indigenous or Western. As Linda Tuhwai Smith (2007) explains:

> I would argue that 'we,' indigenous peoples, people 'of colour', the Other, however we are named, have a presence in the Western imagination, in its fibre and texture, in its sense of itself, in its language, in its silences and shadows, its margins and intersections (14).

Reading through silences and shadows, I draw from settler-colonial studies, Indigenous studies, cultural studies, post-colonial studies, poststructuralism, Native and women of color feminisms, critical race studies, and sociology proper and, in doing so, utilize the different perspectives and dimensions necessary to participate in a sense-making that speaks back to the academy and "from, with, and toward the Fourth World" (Sherwood 2016). A sense-making that is grounded in my day-to-day experience and, as such, cannot be contained by a citational practice that corners me into one discipline or another. I suggest that we acknowledge the ways that the "west" and "rest," to use Stuart Hall's (1992) language, is enacted in the U.S. disciplinary boundaries and citational ploys that confine us in ways not useful.

During my time outside of the mainstream classroom, I worked with and learned from different peoples engaged in the fight against the extractive industry. I

participated in tribal government office spaces to movement protest spaces, and regardless of which frontline, I was reminded of our sacred responsibilities. I believe it is this sacred responsibility to place (including the elements and our relatives – both human and other-than-human) that makes visible the normalized violence that undermines our abilities to live as The Peoples, however each Nation defines that sacred identity.

*From the Sociology of American Indians to Indigenous Sociology*

It has been written that sociology, whether studying a "subordinate group in a multicultural society or that of the society as a whole," proposes its objective to "identify and describe patterns of behavior that represent the culture of the group being studied" (Koppelman 2016:112). When considering American Indians or other marginalized populations, we often also have these discussions as one of measuring "risk." Yet, what often happens through this sort of sociological approach is that cultural Others often get blamed for "their" issues.[5] This blame can be focused on the individual or the entire community, with the latter not being equipped or "readied" for intervention strategies. "[T]oo much focus on deficit-based programming and health disparities can perpetuate stigma and discrimination that American Indian people encounter in the current public health system" (Kelley, Fatupaito, and Witzel 2013). Issues with poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual violence, and even "tribal quarrels" are attributed to lack of "proper" cultural and material infrastructure, without considering the dispossession of land and culture as a "mode of life." When colonialism is recognized as a contributing factor, it is often narrated as a past act

from which tribal communities are having difficulty recovering (Coulthard 2014). In any case, mainstream narratives frame Native peoples as *the* problem and government programs work to assuage Indian problems without every proposing to get at the foundational issues, like settler colonialism, racism, heterosexual patriarchy (Dhillon 2017).

From a different angle, George Manuel (1974) pointed out, some of these programs are designed with the best interest of the people in mind. What happens, Manuel wrote, was that in their application, state bureaucrats translate programs to answer *their* problems (129). He continues:

> Put another way, every field worker who was sent out had to decide whether he was there to sell his Indian community on the solutions for which the government wanted to find acceptance, or whether he was there to serve the community, and help it find ways to give voice to its own felt needs" (129).

In either case, Indian problems are conceptualized and essentialized as belonging to "the Indians." As Jaskiran Dhillon (2017) finds, state government programs evade directly addressing the issue of ongoing settler colonialism. This still too often is the case. By going beyond the sociology of the American Indian and taking a cue from scholars like Leanne Betasamosake Simpson ( 2014b; 2017a), Audra Simpson (2014b, 2014a), Glen Coulthard (2014) and Frantz Fanon (1952, 1963) I set out to undermine the pathologizing of Indigenous peoples, particularly within sociology. In doing so, the goal is to move with others toward an Indigenous sociology that forefront a community's, to use Manuel's words, "own felt needs."

Equally so, I want to push back against the division of Indigenous thought into a "reservation-ized theoretical" domain. Proposing a methodology of ~~oppressed~~, Sandoval (2000) writes about the racialization of theoretical domains:

> This divisive and debilitating phenomenon plagues intellectual production, and it is not unlike the division that plagues the rest of the social world, the academic manifestation of which can be recognized as a 'racialization of theoretical domains,' itself another symptom of the twenty-first century biopolitical race and gender ward predicted by Foucault.

From this vantage point, to propose Indigenous Knowledge is essentially indigenous is to racialize The Peoples' knowledge and enclose it. As an enclosed space, Indigenous Knowledge, its figured, has something to say about environmental sustainability but not about law, policies, justice. Indigenous Knowledge, operating from this contained space, has been constructed as a purchase on securing indigenous peoples' buy-in into development. I suggest we refuse the containment of Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous womxn, the production and racialization of identity-knowledge-objects, and instead advocate for a reading of our circumstances that pays attention to the subjective *and* material settler-colonial backdrop in which we, both writer and reader, find ourselves. As a knowledge space, it is time we let ourselves "out" of controlling definitions.

I turn to Michelle Jacob's (2020) aunty-ing as a methodology to not necessarily extend aunty-ing to the frontlines but to recognize its unique place in understanding the everydayness of resistance embedded in aunty-ing. As a scholar who takes aunty-ing seriously, as one who has been "auntied" and who cherishes my role as an aunty, I understand aunty-ing as enacting the responsibility I maintain to

my community, both human and the more-than-human that moves beyond the definitions of Native or Indigenous that we've been provided. "Being a good relative" is sometimes articulated as a pearl of ancient wisdom entitled specific to Indigenous communities. Within our communities, more often, these responsibilities, though we may not always embody them, are cherished as practical teachings and sacred.

These teaching guide us toward acting as "the best of us."[6] In contradiction to the way that "the best of us" is often articulated in mainstream spaces, I understand the finest of aunty-ing as a collective expression of the care and protection our aunties on the frontlines are best known for, and I discuss this more in a later chapter. In short, my project is not to share with readers anything essential to Indigenous Knowledges, particularly Indigenous Womxn's knowledge. Moreover, I suggest aunty-ing on the frontlines as an embodied resistance to settler-colonial patriarchy, heteronormativity, and violence.

Our brilliance is beyond the static categorizations, "either/or" we are currently allowed to imagine. An Indigenous womxn's embodied knowledge refuses containment of the racialized boundaries set forth by colonialism; aunty-ing is a responsibility that happens in community. It is not my project to examine Indigenous Knowledge as a static category, knowledge among other Knowledge, a knowledge that can only figure in opposition to the grand white European science. It was the process of colonialism that figured our people, for example, the Sqeliz and the Mamachatpam, into the generalized Indian, Native, Indigenous. Fanon (1952/2008), "that those who are most responsible for this racialization of thought, or at least for

the first movement toward that thought, are and remain those Europeans who have never ceased to set up white culture to fill the gap left the absence of other cultures" (212). I will not commit myself to the same processes of the racialization of "cultural knowledge," Indigenous womxn here are not and will not be the Other to "the west." When I attend a talk in the university on sustainability and Indigenous Knowledge and then hear it said, "We all want to be Indian," I know our lives and Indigenous Knowledge have been deeply confused with a figure made possible and contained within the settler-colonial context. What this action signals for me is a warning that Indigeneity is consumable in late modernism as much as it was in modern history.

It is not a question of whether "Indigenous Knowledge" exists, for me, but in what ways have representations of our people and our capacities been overdetermined by settler institutions of law, politics, and education as an antithesis to white settler colonial cultural knowledge. While the west may have racialized knowledge, as Fanon points out, the Native has also used this opportunity as a tactic for the opposition.[7] My refusal to the racialization of knowledge should not be read as a flattening of difference. It is subjective and material *truth* that there are differences in the ways our bodies, cultures, and lands have been arranged in the condition of settler colonialism. Our knowledge and material realities inform our be-ing.

Refusing to look for the essential characteristics of Indigenous womxn, I have learned of the importance of understanding the context in which we strategize and act within as Indigenous womxn. From the spaces on the frontlines, both where the movements bubble up and where the aftermath of settler colonialism seems to almost

have settled, I have moved with those aunty-ing on the frontlines to center our commitments and care for one another. Thus, rather than an analysis of the voices of the relatives in which I learn from, you'll read them and life on the frontlines as my grounding from which I theorize from.

## METHODS

I conducted interviews with activists, overwhelmingly womxn and Native, who were at Oceti Sakowin or were involved in supporting the Standing Rock Movement in other ways that bodily presence. I used open-ended questions that dealt with their exposure to the movement, their framing of what was happening at Standing Rock, why they chose to attend, what happened for them once they arrived, and their experiences before and after staying at the camp. For the two individuals who did not physically attend the camp, I asked about their involvement, why they organized locally, and why the movement was important enough to them that they used their limited resources to support from a far. Initially, I used snowball sampling and began in the Pacific Northwest. After an initial set of interviews, I began reaching out to noted individuals within the broader anti-colonial movement and conducted interviews at organizing spaces, marches, and by phone.

It was after learning from and with these spaces that I felt I could better analyze mainstream institutions, important sites for understanding the process of knowledge and power formations. The subsequent chapters focus on different fields, the juridical, the embodied, and higher education. Throughout the dissertation, I ask

readers to focus with me on not how structures simply constrain but to think with me about what they allow.

The dissertation is a compilation of different cases of the frontlines, and I have taken what I've learned from the community of theorists who I worked with across sites to then apply to issues like environmental justice, education, and law. My particular approach to Indigenous Knowledge on the frontlines of protest came after I witnessed a panel of scholars discussing Standing Rock as a race-based movement, while others were arguing for its fundamental anti-capitalist orientations. Informed by what frontlines activists were "casing," and I then applied a settler-colonial analysis to the case, highlighting the political context in which actors mobilized controlling narratives. Since my point is not to analyze Indigenous womxn's embodied knowledges, I think of my work similar to Burawoy's (1998) explanation of his extended case method, my point here is to connect the conflict to larger macro systems. Taking this direction, the point in doing so is less about saying what the "Environmentalist," "activists," "educator," or the "Native" should do legally, but rather about connecting conflicts and struggles to the broader sociohistorical and legal context.[8]

## DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The next chapter will introduce the places from which the dissertation emerges, or to use the words of Madonna Thunder Hawk, where things "bubble up." As a participant-observer, I discuss my relationship with each of these places. Sometimes I speak as a longtime resident and relative. Standing Rock called

Indigenous nations from around the world to support their efforts to combat the black snake, and the places to which I belong heard this call and responded. In addition to exploring the histories of extraction and development, I also begin to make connections to other actions of violence experienced by (I and the) communities. I suggest it is crucial to understand how the violence of extraction also affects or bodies, and that these experiences are racialized and gendered.

In chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, I set out to empirically demonstrate the largely theoretical insights that are derived from Native and Women of Color feminist theorizing on the co-production of land and body through case studies drawn from different "frontlines" across the United States. Chapter 2, "The Fourth World and the Frontlines of Energy Development," takes up questions of power and place, including places of extraction and where resistance "bubbles up." Chapter 3, "The De/Colonial Possibilities of the Rights of Nature Movement," examines the case of the Colorado River v Colorado, demonstrating how IK is imagined as an "object of possession" at the same time leaving Indigenous Nations further threatened with precarious legality. Chapter 4, published as "The Political Binds of Oil versus Tribes" exposes how the mainstream binds posed as environment versus energy and, in this particular case, pro-coal energy and pro Indigenous women, double binds that mark Indigenous sovereignty as both protected by and superfluous to the settler state and its citizens. Chapter 5, "Education as a Frontline," applied analysis of settler-colonial in educational spaces, particularly service-learning narratives, to demonstrate the still-present legacy of "missionization." The final significant chapter, "Aunty-ing on the

Frontlines," makes the case that Indigenous womxn's embodied knowledge/s are a pedagogical praxis that evades capture while transmitting to and producing with relatives a web of kinship on the frontlines.

The dissertation is a study of the conceptualization of Indigenous Knowledge across the frontlines of Indigenous resistance. I join others who argue that different processes construct and turn Indigenous Knowledge into an identity-knowledge-object, racializing, and disembodying a very nuanced and complicated onto-epistemological system. Within the settler-colonial context, this production is often explicitly for the benefits of state reform. Smith (2007) has written, "The values, attitudes, concepts and language embedded in beliefs about spirituality represent, in many cases, the clearest contrast and mark of difference between indigenous peoples and the West. It is one of the few parts of ourselves which the West cannot decipher, cannot understand and cannot control…yet" (74). Though the spiritual is deeply wedded to the political, practical, and material cultural modes of existence, this work is not an attempt to decipher the spiritual difference of ourselves for the colonial gaze.

Overall, the dissertation seeks to contribute to Native feminisms, settler-colonial studies, Indigenous sociology, and anti-colonial and abolitionists transformation by studying the politics of indigenous knowledge on the frontlines of protest where, so far, I have learned, confirmed, co-created with participants three critical points:

1. Seemingly disparate issues, like the Pacific Northwest Fish-ins (in Nisqually Territory in WA state), Standing Rock in the North Dakota, or Mauna Kea

in Hawaii, are not distinct events – spectacular in form, they index *ongoing* dispossession and resistance. They are acts of refusal and love, and center one specific issue: Land.

2. Frontlines are *broader* than usually conceived and *include* everyday lived experiences. In other words, anti-colonial resistance, as demonstrated in Standing Rock, was and is happening all over the Fourth World. This fact is what brought many to Standing Rock to join a movement that touched our respective communities. Moreover, anti-colonial resistance is importantly happening in our day-to-day lived experiences, whether that means caretaking our loved ones experiencing domestic violence, rape, being push out from educational systems, homelessness, foster care, adoption, gang violence, or resisting environmental degradation.

3. In contrast to conceptualizations of IK that reify and romanticize it to the point of disembodying it, Indigenous embodied knowledges refuse erasure and index ongoing and everyday experiences of militarization and slow violence, at the same time, like the movements and gathering places that caretake us, indigenous embodied knowledges are sites of love and survivance that refuse the dehumanization. What we mean is the de-spiritualization of our nations and our more-than-human relatives. That is, we are not only sites of historical violence and trauma but are sites of that refusal that reaches and embraces life in all its forms, as our sacred elements have taught us.

The thread that draws through the dissertation: Indigenous womxn's embodied knowledge/s on the frontline of protest suggests that our bodies are sites for

basic modes of action and produce a radical understanding of –and resistance to- the environmental and gendered violence of settler colonialism. Indigenous womxn's embodied knowledges reorient Indigenous Knowledge toward a different horizon. The research project pushes back against a deficit model of representation while refusing the silencing and flattening mechanisms of globalization, at the same time reaching from, with, and toward a Fourth World.

Chapter Endnotes:

[1] The term “womxn” acknowledges in our communities two-spirit womxn and womxn of color relatives. As such, womxn is a term used to highlight and push back against the power dynamics that are expressed through languages, cultures, and institutions that situate women as an extension of men, and men as the natural category of human.

[2]As an environmental justice advocate, Kandi is soft spoken, powerful, and forceful in her activism that focuses on a transition away from fossil fuel industry. She has worked on engaging tribal colleges to incorporate local environmental programs to internationally advocacy, including participating at the United Nations Forums.

[3] While there is no agreed upon universal definition of Indigenous people, the often cited United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) defines Indigenous peoples as those who self-identify and are accepted as a member of one or more Indigenous communities (UNPFII 2006 PARA 3 FOR DEFINITION. Point found on M.N. Tom et al pg 4. M.N.). Tom et al. (2019) write that the perhaps most salient definition is Indigenous people self-definition and reference. Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel who write “The communities, clans, nations, and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centers of empire. It is this opposition, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossession and demeaning

fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world (Alfred and Corntassel (2005:597).

The right to self-define is an important one, considering the history of U.S. invasion and the way that settler defined for Natives who and, more often, what Natives are. Tribal Nation's self-definition is, however, also unsettled, as tribal laws and recognition of its own members has proved to sway as much as colonial courts.

[4] As Dr. Glass pointed out to me, Mary Louise Pratt attempts to undo this "conflict" and develops the idea of "contact zones." Contact zones, Pratt explains, are the "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or the aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today." Transculturation, Pratt explains, is used "to describe processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by dominant or metropolitan culture" (36). From Pratt's perspective, transculturation, along with autoethnography, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, and more, are part of the "literate arts of the contact zone" (37). I hope to spend more time with the Pratt's concept and think it's important for flushing out the nuances of both settler colonialism and Indigenous resurgence. In the dissertation, however, what I hope to do is turn our attention to the processes by which "dominate groups" select and invent from marginalized cultures. I want to think about what it means when dominant culture "stream" Indigenous Knowledge, not to suggest that cultural "exchanges" do not happen but to ask, under what conditions and towards what ends?

[5] Vine Deloria Jr. (1998), in a review of the Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies, takes to task a group of scholars who he says question the romanticism of Indians and tribes as "legal fictions." Deloria Jr. points out that the scholars are more concerned with "control[ling] definitions" and that what needs to happen is the placement of their arguments in the "proper political context" (68).

[6] This idea of the "best of us" has been used by both Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Cornell West. Simpson has written of the brilliance of Nishnaabeg intelligence, and Cornell West about black brothers and sisters at the center of empire who, "after 400 years of being traumatized" refuse to make a "black version of the Klu Klux Klan." Instead, the best, bouy love. West made this statement after the killing of George Floyd and how his funeral demonstrated practices of ongoing black resistance that turn to love as a guiding value. West stated, "It was a heavy day my brother, yet I was bouyed up because I saw in the hearts of the souls of not just of the Floyd family, beloved church, beloved music, the preaching, a love. Not one reference the hatred or revenge. It was all about love and justice. It's in the great tradition of the best of Black people. A people that have been hated, chronically, systemically, for 400 years but have taught the world so much about love and how to love. You saw John Coltrane's Love Supreme in that church service. You saw the love of the children in Marvin Gaye's What's Going On, and Toni Morrison's Beloved. You say mama's Raisin in the Son of Lorraine Hansberry. White Americans better give Black people a standing ovation for after 400 years of being terrorized we refused to create a Black version of the Klu Klux Klan. After 400 years of being traumatized, we want to dish out healers.

That's Fredrick Douglas, that Martin King, that's Curtis Mayfield, that's Fanny Lou Hammer. What is it about these Black people, so thoroughly subjugated but want freedom for everybody? That's a grand gift to the world, right at the bowels, at the center of American empire that has enslaved, Jim Crow, Jane Crow, lynched them, still dishing out these love buoys." Find at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkdRdrg3

SsA&t=1008s

[7] Glen Coulthard (2014) writes, "In effect, Fanon claimed that the pathway to self-determination instead lay in a quasi-Nietzschean form of personal and collective self-affirmation."

[8] The womxn with whom I spoke discussed their work as a continuation of sacred relations to their Land, their relatives, and their ancestral leaders. Thus, my reading of Indigenous Knowledge on the frontlines was informed by what some call a "grounded theory" approach, where "ethnonarratives" construct the field (Tavory and Timmermans 2009). On the other hand,

## Chapter 2: Fourth World and Frontlines of Energy Development

> Events are events. But the bottom line, again, goes back to: We are Indigenous to this land. It is ancestral memory that feeds our resistance. So, resistance is here [in Nisqually]. It's all over [makes bubbling signal with hand] where it bubbles. Because we are the land, we don't need to be convinced to resist.
> (Madonna Thunder Hawk).

> The Fourth World is not, after all, a Final Solution. It is not even a destination. It is **the right to travel freely, not only on our road but in our own vehicles**. (George Manuel 1974:217).

When I describe the three places from which this dissertation emerges, I do not mean to freeze them as static places. Instead, I mean to describe what these places mean to me in terms of responsibility between our human relatives, more than human relatives and with the land (Goeman 2008). In this chapter, I will explore their significance in our day-to-day lives, and their relationship to global society, especially one that is bent toward capital development and extractive industry. Social and political narratives have produced places that often overemphasize places as either included or excluded to resource networks. To say that my research is grounded and moves from, with, and toward a Fourth World is to speak against these narrow conceptualizations of connection and instead focus on the connections, movements, and technologies that nurture our relationships to place/s and its peoples. During a conversation about the relationship to lovers, kin, and land, Kim Tallbear once put it, in a world full of relations, "We are never single."[1] The Fourth World, I maintain, introduced sociology to a retelling of the stories that are beyond the capitalist,

racialized, settler, heteronormative state and closer to arrangements of lands, peoples, and our more-than-human relations.

George Manuel (1974) laid out the position that it is not the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from so-called "development" nor merely the shared experience of colonialism that links indigenous nations to one another. What was important to George Manuel, who penned the Fourth World an Indian reality, was the "common Indigenous identity and global connections" (Coates and Mitchell 2012). This point is similarly stated by (2005).

As important as the experiences of exclusion, for Manuel, was that the Fourth World is an enduring value that resists erasure. As such, as a global web of Indigenous Nations that recognize our interdependent realities, Fourth World praxis is a recognition of Indigenous ways of life that provides place-based critiques of imperial development through the very modes of Fourth World-ing. Following, I suggest that Indigenous Knowledge is inherently wed to these lived enduring values. It is not the case, for Manuel and others, that Indigenous peoples detest "development," but rather that indigenous peoples are articulating a desire to improve their lives through our technologies (Coulthard 2014; Manuel and Posluns 1974; Sherwood 2016; Simpson 2017a). Thus, I turn to our technologies or storying our relation and reminding myself and readers about the possibility for frontlines to illuminate the violence we experience as well as our radical hope, love, and care for our places and peoples.

The act of grounding my research through my homes and the broader Fourth World is difficult because of how our stories of place are read by "outsiders" and even told by some of us "insiders." I am suggesting in what follows that the colonial gaze has renamed the places that I am about discuss, their pauses made permanent, held down and dis/figured into vessels for extraction. Nevertheless, equally so, I am suggesting that Indigenous womxn's praxis, gendered material presence, demonstrates the ongoing resurgence of our peoples and places. It is as Toni Morrison explained about her writing of the Black experience. The attempt is to lean into our sovereignty and refuse the white gaze.[2] As Audra Simpson stated in her 2014 talk, "It's a series of activities about decidedly not being American, not being Canadian, and in this it's holding those nation-states in a position of doubt. And sometimes interrogation. And sometimes refusal."[3] Refusal is not simply a turn away from settler state juridical recognition but a commitment to other relations.

The importance of place, Coulthard (2014) explains, not only includes the fact that Indigenous peoples "hold a strong attachment to their homelands" but also that land occupies "an ontological framework for understanding *relationships*" (60). This ontological framework was and remains foundational to an indigenous struggle for self-determination. The fight for the recognition of Indigenous culture, as Coulthard explains, is a fight for recognition of a "mode of life." It was this "mode," as Marx himself understood the interrelated social processes *of social and material arrangements,* which was the foundation from which colonial sovereignty and capitalist accumulation were critiqued (13). It was this mode that indigenous activists

and scholars deployed the term “cultural recognition” as it relates to a mode of life (65). Coulthard suggests, it was and is this mode that continues to ground our relations to our lands and relatives.

## POWER, PLACE, AND SPACE

Elsewhere, theorists discuss the construction of place as it relates to other places and spaces. Tuan (1997:6) wrote:

> What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value….The ideas ‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, it we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place. (Creswell 2011:133).

Thus, Place needs Space to be understood, and vice versa.

As we have learned from our elders, land includes other elements and relatives in that place – present, past, and future. We bury both the forms that pass just as we bury the umbilical that ties our future to our lands. This practice is an understanding of space and place that is both subjective and material, an enactment of lived relations, a lived making of place and place-ing.

Leanne Simpson (2017b) demonstrated these connections when she shared a story about Kiizhigo a Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg. Kiizhigo, she explains, refused Canadian colonial domination, and re-imbedded himself in Nishnaabewin by going to live out his life on an island in Curve Lake. As she writes, “Everyone thinks of Kiizhigo and his refusal as we drive or paddle by his island. His refusal is now encoded on the land ”(Ch.2, Kwe as Resurgent Method). This lake now holds his

name. This story demonstrates how the storying place is connected to material significance, and in this material signification that our lives and places come to represent cultural relations, as in this case, Kiizhigo's refusal. However, these stories can also be submerged, if not at least layered over, by dominant telling.

*Where the West Still Lives*

Toppenish, a city hub on the Yakama Reservation, for example, is advertised by city officials and, at times, tribal businesses, to tourists as "The Place where the West still lives." The idea of "the West," Stuart Hall (1992) explains, "has never been free of myth and fantasy, and even to this day they are not primarily about place and geography" (185). Imperial expansion led to everything outside of the west as frozen and inferior (Said 1985). This is undoubtedly the case for tribal reservations and, in this case, Toppenish, WA. Mishuana Goeman (2008) highlight the tension between reservation/and non by highlighting how the reservation is a place of settler containment that, by its presence, helps the settler state come into existence.

In the case of Toppenish and "Where the West still Lives," the "West" does not signal "developed" but rather a romantic west where the Indians and cowboys continue to live alongside one another. In this case, the "west" is presented as a romantic notion of the past, and "the west" holds onto this past through the presence of the Indian. Toppenish is 74.8% white, 4.3% American Indian, and 86.4% Hispanic or Latino, with only 1.5% responding as belonging to two or more races (Census Quick Facts 2019). The frontier is made of the tension between the Cowboy and Indian and the frontier, and fails especially in this case, to exist without this tension.

This cowboy and Indian tension, in the multicultural U.S., is the method by which tourists can escape to the frontier and continue to play Indians and Cowboys.

As Stuart Hall explains, the "west" is itself not heterogeneous. The "west," not a specific geographical landmass, was consolidated through the material and social construction of "the rest" (Hall 1992). Hall proposes that the "west" and "modernity" are necessarily the same concept as the west is geographically unspecific, and the "west' is used to point out a "developed" place that "the rest" are trying to "catch up" with (Hall 1992). While the representation of Toppenish as "the where the west still lives" provided by the city council is not necessarily a representation of modern western development, the "west" is still imagined, represented, and practiced through its relation with the cultural Other. In other words, in the case "where the west still lives," the Indian serves for ideas of civilization to "transit" (Byrd 2011).

I write about these places within these ever-present discourses of power. As Hall (Hall 1992:225) warns, the "west" with its image of itself and "'others,' it's sense of 'us' and 'them,' its practices and relations of power towards the Rest," are still present, even in sociology.[4] Sociology, heavily drawing from Marx as a "founding father," often uncritically takes up the notion that primitive accumulation happened long ago and was a sad necessity in civilizations move toward freedom. At this point in my writing and thinking, rather than attempting to "avoid these pitfalls" I lean into them, calling them out where I see them, hoping to dislodge them through capturing their significance.

These places of which I write then are considered overdetermined by settler-colonial structures, in Althusser's sense of the word, but they are also the energy from which our communities organize.[5] As Goeman puts it, "This grounding, even while considered abject space by the settler state, is of utmost importance to the imaginative geographies that create the material consequences of everyday existence for Native people, even while the historical onslaught of legislation continues to rip that grounding out from under [us]." Resurgence is about ongoing resistance, a stubbornness that pushes beyond mere survival. Storying is as much about re/telling the past as it is about re/imagining a tomorrow and its places. As Audra Simpson puts it: a refusal of death.

*Places as where things bubble up*

Sitting at a conference dedicated to Indigenous resurgence, I asked Madonna Thunder Hawk to help me to tease out the connections between the Nisqually Fish-ins, Standing Rock, and larger American Indian issues. She responded:

> Events are events. But the bottom line, again, goes back to: We are Indigenous to this land. It is ancestral memory that feeds our resistance. So, resistance is here [in Nisqually]. It's all over [makes bubbling signal with hand] where it bubbles. Because we are the land, we don't need to be convinced to resist.
>
> So, what happened at Frank's Landing, the same thing - not the same thing, but the resistance was going on in the Kinzua Dam and the Six Nations, the Black Hills in South Dakota. The same things going on at the same time, ok? The reason that [the Fish-ins] at that time got the media they did was because they were physically attacked - with clubs and everything else. And this is what you call a more populated area. More notoriety... so the press that got, that went out national. Where in South Dakota, we didn't see anything.

David Archambault II (2019:39) similarly stated it about the anti-DAPL protests:

> It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1841 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

The 1851 treaty of Traverse des Sioux, under Governor Alexander Ramsey, is considered one of the most crucial events in settler history, especially as it opened up Sioux lands west of the Mississippi (Hughes 1905). However, ten years prior, in 1841 a the Doty treaty was made to not open it up for settlement but to put the Winnebago, whose lands were taken in 1837, a "permanent home; and, secondarily, to furnish reservations for a number of other tribes similarly situated" (Hughes 1905).[6] As Archambault puts it, the government broke these treaties and others, "before the ink was dry" (39).

We can assume that from many indigenous peoples' perspectives, our movements, or "where things bubble up," highlight an ongoing resistance that has continued, though perhaps not given attention at the time, against colonial encroachment. Over and over again, Indigenous communities, the land, has bubbled up to resist the extraction of young children, of sacred elements, the fracturing of relations, of life. For Madonna, there was no essential difference in terms of movement activities between Frank's Landing and the Black Hills in South Dakota. What was different was the media coverage that covered or did not cover what was always already happening simultaneously. History is a method of telling stories, and who gets their stories told are often not Indigenous Nations.

From Madonna's perspective, at least during our talk, it was the media that framed Standing Rock and the Northwest Fishins as events of the moment.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of Indigenous activists, the fight against settler colonialism has long been the issue in which communities have organized. Moreover, it was important for Madonna, as she made a bubbling motion with her hand, to point out the energy present in each of these places. It is here, it is all over, it bubbles, and we are the land. As she spoke these truths, I understood her as saying that each of these sights had potential and that it always remained for Indigenous people about the central question of relations to place, "we are the land." Regardless if this relation is captured by dominate representation, or even an Indigenist representation, the energy that connects the Peoples to the land, is always already present, developed, and transforming. It bubbles.

Glen Coulthard (2014) calls the ontological framing of space as a place of relation, "grounded normativity." While we might in another storying share what is unique to each of these places for the Peoples (particularly the Spokane, Yakama, or Standing Rock Sioux), this dissertation is a pause to highlight their collective significance in terms of extractive industry, Indigenous erasure, and ongoing violence but also the ongoing refusal that some call Indigenous resurgence. This is not to homogenize the Fourth World but rather to speak back against the stories that have worked to place us opposed to understanding ourselves as interdependent Nations. This storying is an enactment of refusing to forget the ongoing violent nature of settler colonialism and a storying to remember our ongoing anti-colonial resurgence.

## STORYING AS A METHODOLOGY OF ANTI-COLONIAL PRAXIS

My research is produced by and works with frontline spaces, making use of the time that is granted to me in this academic setting to speak on the issues and reflect on my experiences as an Indigenous scholar, a girl from the rez, and mother.

My approach is grounded in what Luana Ross (2016) refers to as methodology as storying. I know that it is unorthodox in sociology to story, for some. Nevertheless, Ross writes that stories educate and empower. "Stories are an important means of passing on traditions and strengthening communities… The stories of our past help us to make meaning of the present and help us to plan for the future" (2). Like Ross, my personal methodology is to "interlace stories from my family and community with sociological data and historical accounts because my personal life is interwoven with my professional" (2). In storying my methodological approach, I hope to foreground how storying relationships are a lived experience and that onto-epistemologically is an essential part of theory building – especially anti-colonial theorization and praxis that is outside categorical designations and starts from the live-ing.

In her landmark book aimed at developing indigenous peoples as researchers to speak back to the academy, Linda Tuhwai Smith (2007) suggests that the term modernity is just a different way to talk about imperialism. Writing both about imperialism and colonialism is a significant part of indigenous peoples' ongoing experience. The experience of imperialism is something that indigenous peoples know well, and our lived experiences inform this understanding:

> Imperialism still hurts, still destroys and is reforming itself constantly. Indigenous peoples as an international group have had to challenge,

> understand and have a shared language for talking about this history, the sociology, the psychology and the politics of imperialism and colonialism as an epic story telling of huge devastation, painful struggle and persistent survival…. The lived experience of imperialism and colonialism contribute another dimension to the ways in which terms like 'imperialism' can be understood. This is a dimension that indigenous peoples know and understand well (19).

The storying of this painful struggle and survival is a lived storying, and this lived storying contributes an understanding to the dominant ways imperialism and colonialism are conceptualized.

Smith explains why for so many indigenous peoples, "research is a dirty world." Research is a dirty word because of the legacy of research "through imperial eyes," an approach "which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life, and of human beings" (56). As a Native researcher, when I think or speak of the individuals who were a part of my travel to Standing Rock, I think of not only them as individuals but of the entire space and connections that were and are "the rez." I think about how our homes are labeled as violent, poor, and needy. Moreover, I think about how I experienced that, and my family continues to be threatened by normalized violence. Furthermore, I remember, when I write as a "researcher," that too often, we are the "researched." I do not think I have accomplished here the best of our Indigenous ways of research, but I have done my best with what I have and hope to learn along my way. I do my best to write about both the violence and the love I have

experienced, to hold the complexity of who we are, who I am, in my hand, and my storying.

In addition to the strength that I see in my extended kin, I also think about the grief and trauma that we share, and through the process of research, I search for places to remind myself and others about how we lift each other up. I think about my sisters, whose names I will not place here, who have committed suicide. I think about my sisters who have experienced sexual violence, and some who have gone missing or murdered. When one of my closest sisters who is now gone was "here" with us "in the flesh," she would catch me up on things happening at home, as some like to say, the latest rez-gossip. When I would feel overburdened with navigating the racist, colonial university, she would urge me to stay in school, telling me each time, often after sharing the news of the latest death, skirmish, or hook-up, "nothing new is going on here, better to stay there." I would hear from her about the latest car wrecks, stabbings, and suicides until one day she took her own life. Her death was not inevitable, but from a sociological perspective, it almost was. When I say, we carry this trauma, I do not share these stories lightly. When I say that we attempt to lift these burdens, I do not say so lightly. When I say we are attempting to find a good road, I do not mean alone.

## WHITE SWAN, WA, THE YAKAMA RESERVATION, AND THE HANFORD NUCLEAR SITE

I grew up in White Swan, WA. I am not considered a "status Indian" or a "enrolled Native," but I do know who my family is and who helped to raise me. This is the reason that I draw from our tribal ways of knowing that reach beyond colonial

tribal inscriptions. I grew up on the Yakama Nation Reservation, and even as I study in another state, it remains my home, and White Swan, my family, my home, is a frontline. The town, my brothers, and sisters are often depicted as poverty-stricken and violent. After a string of murders on the reservation in 2019, the tribal council chairman declared a state of emergency. I will not hide from these issues. As a young person, I was often framed as these issues. As a people, we remain to be "the problem." As a researcher, I deconstruct these issues. These issues are not essential to our lives and deaths. We are *not* a problem.

The conditions in which we find ourselves, as many have pointed out, are effects of a complex web of social relations and their harsh effects. To quote Coulthard:

> As a result of this relationship, adverse social indicators such as poverty, unemployment, substandard housing conditions, infant mortality, morbidity, youth suicide, incarceration, women as victims of abuse and sexual violence, and child prostitution are much more common in Indigenous communities than they are in any other segment of Canadian society, whereas educational success and retention, acceptable health and housing conditions, and access to social services and economic opportunity are far lower.

This is also the case in what is currently known as the United States and in White Swan, and in each instance we grieve. It was not until I was in the university and away from home that I learned that for many outside Native communities that death isn't the norm. Whether it is the fast spectacular violence or the ordinary and slow, these issues and lives taken are at the center of why I write. There is no romantic escape here.

At the same time, what is hidden by these sorts of stories of White Swan in particular and the Yakama Nation Reservation more broadly is the history and ongoing resilience our community enfolds into the people and place. The gently sloping hillsides that surround the valley are where we, as Jacob's writes, are taught by Pyaxí "the power of the collective," just as others have for centuries before us. The gravel roads are where one of my dads would teach me how to drive manual on an old Chevy truck. With friends, I would travel these same old dirt roads, and they would lead us to summer swimming holes and where you can see the softest stars in the dark of night. White Swan Pavillion is where my firstborn was welcomed to the circle of dance. On the rez is where I witnessed my mother's home open over and over to family members and friends who found their luck and love had run out elsewhere. In a small creek just outside of town, my sister and I collected water to take to Standing Rock. We are "grounded" to this place and each other.

We are also familiar with what violence and contamination can do to people. White Swan, my home, is also just 55 miles east of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the western hemisphere's most nuclear-contaminated site.

Most folks are not familiar with Hanford or its nuclear and toxic sludge. A woman asked Barack Obama during his presidential campaign what his solution was to Hanford's pollution and the government's failure to pay adequately for its cleanup. Obama responded, "I'm not familiar with the Hanford Site. And so I don't know exactly what's going on there" (Flenniken 2015) He then promised to learn about it on the airplane.

*The Yakama Nation and the Hanford Nuclear Reservation*

If you were in a plane, you would have the best view to see that the most contaminated site in the western hemisphere (MCSiWH) is just five miles from the Pacific Northwest's largest river, the Columbia River, and 13 miles from the ceded lands of Yakama Nation reservation.[7]

In Yakima, WA, just north of White Swan, the Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Program and its employees are tasked with the responsibility for providing consultation to the United States federal government in an international attempt to clean the MCSiWH.[8] The Yakama Nation utilizes its authority granted through the Treaty of 1855 and the Comprehensive Environmental Recovery and Compensation Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Washington State Dangerous Waste regulations (WAC 173-303) to participate in the process of cleanup and restoration of hazardous and nuclear waste on the Hanford Site. The program is where I begin my professional exploration of the intersections of environmentalism, the politics of knowledge, and settler colonialism.

I interned with ERWM in 2015-2016, then under the leadership of Russel Jim, to better understand the background of the Nuclear Hanford Reservation Facility and prepare for a larger project with the Center for World Indigenous Studies (CWIS). The Center for World Indigenous studies is an outgrowth of the work of George Manuel, a Shuswap theorist and political leader of Fourth World liberation. Dr. Rudy Ryser and atwai (deceased) Russel Jim, both of the Center for World Indigenous Studies, planned to begin a community action research project on the social and

epidemiological effects of nuclear contamination of the Yakama Nation. In addition to being a principal investigator on the research team, Jim and Ryser planned for me to be their social justice and community outreach coordinator.

It was our belief, with Jim at the lead, who traveled the world discussing the effects of nuclear contamination, that Hanford negatively affected tribal residents' health *and* that the effects were cultural and intergenerational. We planned to research these effects and, through collaborative research with the community, build awareness. However, our research was never completed due to several reasons. One of the major reasons included the loss of our respected leader. Despite this momentary failure of our project, what I realized in the process of background research was that without the state ever dropping a bomb in Washington State, they made Yakama Nation into a "nuclear sacrifice zone."

Lori Lambert (n.d.) expounds on several publications to show the impact of both Hanford and the Columbia River Basin agriculture industry on the wellness of tribal members.[9] As she reports:

> The study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concludes that members of the Four Treaty Tribes in the basin, most of whom eat large amounts of fish, have a high risk for cancer and other diseases compared with the general public. The risk to their children is even greater.

The risk to entire communities, including children, was and remains a central concern of the Yakama Nation. Lambert also discusses the tribal and cultural relationship to salmon in the Columbia River, as well as the impact of the dams, and the first wave of colonial energy extraction.

Conducting background research, I studied the ways that government leaders understood the facility. To my surprise, there was a lengthy ongoing discussion that the public, myself included, were unaware of the contamination if we were not directly engaged in nuclear issues.

Government representatives had demonstrated significant concerns over Hanford specifically and nuclear contamination generally. In 1986, for example, Jim Weaver of the Subcommittee on General Oversight, Northwest Power, and Forest Management of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives shared in a hearing on the Hanford N-Reactor his fear as he opened up the meeting by stating that he was doing so "with a great deep trembling in myself because of the awesome dangers of nuclear power."[10] To capture the concern with which the chairman speaks, I quote him at length (my bold):

> I hold this hearing, and it only the beginning of a long series of hearings, with great **deep trembling in myself because of the awesome dangers of nuclear power**. WE have in the nuclear age opened up the secret soul of matter. WE do not know what will happen. We are not able to predict the results. **Playing with a nuclear secret risks not only our health and lives but that of our unborn children**, the genetic future of our race. We go against our own creation. God's anger was seen at Three Mile Island. It worsened at Chernobyl. We have been warned.

Chairman Weaver presented on May 19, 1986, sharing his concerns over what could happen if there was not be an accident like one already experienced on April 25, 1986, in Russia at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

Three scientists joined the meeting from universities in the state of California.[11] All three of these scientists highlighted the potential threat of the N-Reactor and Hanford. Each of the three scientists made critical remarks about the

potential fallout from a nuclear accident at Hanford, one of those being the alleged remoteness of the Hanford N-Reactor (my bold):

> Mr. Lawrence [of the Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office] told us yesterday that the N-reactor is relatively far from human habitation. Although 14,000 people work at Hanford, only 35 residences exist within a 10 mile radius. What is not evident from these statistics, however, is the fact that the Hanford N-Reactor is **located on the bank of a major river** – **the second largest in the U.S**. – that forms a natural conveyor belt possible for possible radioactive contamination of the entire Columbia River Basin downstream from Hanford. **Already radioactive contamination from the normal operations at Hanford have created substantial radioactive contamination that extends into the Pacific Ocean**. Radioactivity from normal operations at Hanford has been detected as far south as San Diego. What we have learned from Chernobyl – whose effects were felt globally – is that **in the nuclear age, there is no such thing as "remote."** Chernobyl may seem far away – but radioactive rain from Chernobyl nuclear accident fell on the Pacific Northwest. Hanford may likewise seem remote, but in the calculus of nuclear accidents, the N-Reactor is located on Portland's doorstep (. W. Jackson Davis, professor of Biology and Environmental Studies).

There is no such thing as remote. Scientists have already found that the potential of global nuclear contamination by nuclear fallout is a cold hard fact. Throughout the meeting, government leaders, scientists, and tribal leaders showed great concern about the effects of a nuclear meltdown of the N-Reactor at Hanford.

Yakama Nation's Nuclear Waste Program founder and director, Russell Jim, and the Chairman of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Allen Pinkham, also presented at this meeting. Jim pointed out that he and the Yakama Nation asked the Department of Energy to furnish the tribe with information about the N-Reactor similarly to the committee, but they did not receive the information. Jim then introduced to the committee a discussion about windfall patterns and a series of accidents that already occurred at Hanford. In Jim's words:

> November 1955, a ruptured fuel element burned at the Hanford C reactor, resulting in the emission of 2000 curies of radioactivity that spread contamination over about seven square miles around the plant.
>
> In September 1956, a fuel element burned for 6 minutes at the Hanford C reactor, resulting in the emission of an unspecified amount of neptunium-239, which decays to plutonium-239 and is among the detectable radionuclides released from the Chernobyl plant, which also burned mixed fission products.
>
> In September 1957, a ruptured fuel element burned for ten minutes at the C reactor, releasing a reported four curies of mixed fission products to the atmosphere.
>
> April 1959, a ruptured fuel element burned at the Hanford K West reactor, spreading airborne contamination that was measureable for miles along the slope.

Issues of ruptured fuel elements are unknown by many in the community. The attendees thanked Jim for the information that they were unaware of, pointing out that they had much to learn from him.

In our conversations, Jim often pointed out the risk of contamination to future generations. Jim himself had suffered from throat cancer and stated during an interview in (2014) with Michelle Tolson of the Earth Island Journal, “Personally, I am convinced that much of the illnesses, thyroid problems and cancers are from Hanford.” He added, pointing out “radionuclides can damage our bodies and the salmon” and that he was also worried about the high rates of anencephaly in three counties near Hanford.

Even before there was a formal Environmental Restoration and Waste Management program (ERWM), Jim and the Yakama Nation in 1982 were able to stop a new nuclear reactor from being built (1987:27). The Department of Energy was also moving forward with an Executive Order to place a high-level nuclear waste

dump on the Hanford Reservation. The tribe's and Jim's direct efforts contributed to the placing of provisions that tribes "who had user and possessory interests or a reservation at a proposed repository site could exercise overview rights of the federal government's action" in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (1987: 27).

After the tribe secured the "affected tribe" status, Jim and others had to work on securing funds to support their ability to exercise overview (1987:28). Jim explained, the Department of Energy, not paying much attention to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act was moving forward with the first steps in the process to make the nuclear waste dump. As Jim (1987:28) reported:

> Although considerable effort had already been expended, including installing one of the largest drill rigs in the world, YIN intervention resulted in the drilling being halted before an extensive drilling effort could be mounted and thus, halted possible irreparable damage to the underground environment or baseline study material.

Jim and others worked hard to secure this success, and it was our plan in 2016 to begin educating the broader community as to why treaty rights were important documents that could be used against nuclear colonialism.

*Hanford Nuclear Military-Industrial Complex*

The Hanford Site was commissioned in 1943 by the U.S. government as part of the top-secret Manhattan Project. [12] The Manhattan Site was a U.S. top-secret program to produce the first atomic bomb.

While physicists had been working on splitting the atom for decades, it was the case that on December 21st, 1938 that Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman, two German radiochemists, stumbled upon the extremely volatile splitting of uranium

nuclei (Rhodes 2004:17). This "stumbling," of course, was made possible by research around the globe on the atom years prior.[13]

Many describe the splitting of the atom and subsequent production of an atomic bomb as inevitable. Richard Rhodes (2004: 18) writes:

> If Hahn and Strassman hadn't discovered nuclear fission in Germany, others would have discovered it in some other laboratory somewhere else. Here was not Faustian bargain, as some even all these years later find it comforting to imagine. Here was no evil machinery one or another noble scientists might have hidden from the politicians and generals. To the contrary, here was a new insight into how the world worked, an energetic reaction older than the earth that science had finally devised the instruments and arrangement to coax forth.

The discovery made its way across the world's scientific community, including scientists who were said to escape fascist Europe.[14] Physicist discussed and tested the findings, and acknowledged what could be done with such a reaction, particularly its military application.[15]

Following the military applicable discovery, and the world engaged in WWII, scientists around the globe would warn their respective governments of the possibility of enemy nations developing a nuclear arsenal. After hearing of such news, President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United States authorized the Manhattan Project on October 9th, 1941. The Manhattan project would later be measured as a historical effort to secure the nuclear arms race.

The U.S.'s Manhattan project (though not necessarily within these city boundaries) included three primary locations: Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Richland, Washington, and, Los Alamos, New Mexico. The reason most historians say that researchers placed Hanford near Richland, WA, on the Columbia River, was that it

was a 1,000 square-mile track of isolated land, particularly one along a river that could be used to power and cool the production facility. This space, however, was not empty. This place was home to the Wanapum and white farmers.

While many readers may not be familiar with the Wanapum or the Yakama Nation, they will most likely be familiar with Little Boy and Fat Man, the two bombs that the United States military detonated over Japan in 1945. In this so-called isolated stretch of land, the home of the Wanapum, Hanford produced the plutonium that was used to manufacture the atomic bombs. These two bombs immediately killed thousands of Japanese people. On August 6th, 1945, U.S. forces detonated Little Boy on Hiroshima and killed approximately 40,000 Japanese citizens. By September 1st, less than a month later, 70,000 Japanese citizens would die, later more would die because of radiation in the years to come. The justification was the ending of the war and, yet, now the Cold War had begun, and groups of Indigenous peoples and their lands would be marked as "national sacrifice zones."

In addition to these two well-known explosions dropped on the people of Japan, the U.S. nuclear scientists between June 1946 and November 1962 conducted 1,054 nuclear *tests*. More than one *detonation*/*explosion* would sometimes be counted as one test. Where did these tests occur?

The U.S. Nuclear Weapons Testing Program would test a majority of the nuclear bombs within the continental United States (Alaska, Colorado, Mississippi, New Mexico and Nevada), and between the majority of those were at the Nevada Test Site (NTS), later renamed as the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS). At

different times between June 1946 and November 1962, there were also atmospheric and underwater tests conducted at the Marshall Islands, Christmas Island, Johnston Atol in the Pacific Ocean, and over the South Atlantic. According to Daniel Endres (2018:253), "Although none of these tests matched the death and destruction inflicted by Fan Man and Little Boy on the citizens of Japan, the cumulative effects of nuclear testing in the American West, and globally, have exacted other forms of death and destruction, not just to people and cities but also to the earth's ecosystems." Regardless of where testing happens, the world has been exposed to nuclear radiation. Most often, the destruction of Indigenous Peoples and their places goes unnoticed.

The cumulative effects are essential to consider and, yet, it is equally important to think critically about where and who exactly was on the frontlines of this testing.

One would not think about lands within the United States state boundaries as places bombed, but Danielle Endres (2018) points out that "The American West is the most nuclear-bombed place in the world" (253), and adds that while the 2000 total nuclear bomb tests have effected the entire globe, "the people, flora, and fauna of the American West have been disproportionately affected by nuclear weapon testing" (254). Popular accounts do not say that the Nuclear Weapons Testing "bombed" places like the Marshall Islands and instead use the terms that are said to reflect the "types of testing": airburst, airdrop, balloon, barge, rocket, surface and tower for those above ground, and for those below terms crater, shaft, and tunnel.[16]

However, the broad categorization of the west lacks specificity and attention to the colonial context. Out of the 1,054 tests conducted from July 1945 through September 1992, the United States detonated 928 nuclear bombs on the lands of the Shoshone and Paiute. Regardless, that is, if the United States refers to these places as the Nevada Test Site (NTS), these are Indigenous lands. To the point, the majority of these U.S. tests *bombed Indigenous lands*.

The first nuclear test conducted was a single detonation at the U.S. "Trinity Test Site" in New Mexico. Nuclear bombs, again made from the plutonium produced at Hanford, were also dropped over the jolet jen Anij, or what the Indigenous people of the place would call the god-given sanctuary. [17] The the jolet jen Anij, or otherwise called Marshall Islands (named after the English explorer John Marshall), were bombed by the United States over 60 times. The Marshallese Peoples have lived with the islands since 2nd millennium BC, or at least 2,000-3,000 years ago. Having faced different waves of colonization - the Spanish in the 1520s, the German's in 1885, and Japan at the beginning of World War II – the islands were taken by the U.S. with the ending of World War II. Then, throughout the Cold War, the U.S. would bomb the Marshall Islands atolls named Bikini[18] and Enewetak more than 60 times.

The lands of the San Ildefonso Pueblo were used to manufacture the nuclear bombs. The U.S. government would call this site the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). Ward Churchill (2003:116) citing Valerie Kuletz writes, that the land was "supposedly reserved for the exclusive use and occupancy of the San

Ildefonso Pueblo" (Kuletz 1998: 15-16). The local community referred to the space as Pajarito Plateau.

The Department of Energy's report United States Nuclear Tests from July 1945 through September 1992, states:

> The word "site" is defined as "the land area withdrawn for U.S. government testing purposes (e.g. NNSS, NTTR, Project Shoal) or the area secured to ensure no inadvertent public intrusion (e.g. Amchitka Island and Rulison test vicinity)." Almost all nuclear tests were conducted **within an area withdrawn from public domain;** however, this is not true for Amchitka and Rulison underground nuclear tests, where no formal land withdrawal was recorded. (2015:viii)

Popular references to Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, and Hanford and even the Marshall Islands name these places different "sites." These places for Native communities are not simply government property. These are our homes. These are our people. These are the frontlines.

There were both historical and contemporary settler colonial processes that "opened" the land to government occupation. In the case of Los Alamos and discussing both Native American and non-Native, Lucie Ann Genay (2016:33) in her dissertation describes the local experience with nuclear science as a "third conquest." Genay writes, that following the "Spanish and American conquests," whereby inhabitants were politically and economically dominated by the settler states, local are now colonized by nuclear industry.[19] Despite that place names of the Marshall Islands and Los Alamos are now colonial names, Indigenous peoples continue to assert that these places and their relationships to them are sacred.

From extraction, to production, to testing, the nuclear industry has driven destruction across the globe, particularly amongst Native Peoples in the United States. Environmental scholar, Steve Lerner (2012) discusses the uneven distribution of pollution and coined the term sacrifice zones. Sacrifice zones "are often 'fenceline communities' of low-income and people of color, or 'hot spots' of chemical pollution where residents live immediately adjacent to heavily polluted industries ore military bases" (Bullard 2011). Ward Churchill (2003) and Winona Laduke (1986) discuss the history of sacrifice zones as they relate to Native peoples in the U.S. and describe its specificity in terms of radioactive colonization.

Now decommissioned from war time plutonium production, the Hanford Nuclear reservation serves as a dump site and a nuclear power generating station. The Bonneville Power Administration bought steam from the Hanford N-Reactor through the WPPSS. The Columbia Generating Station produces, as all nuclear production facilities do, significant amounts of highly toxic radioactive waste. The waste from Hanford has and continues to make its terrible marks on the lands, waters, and peoples of the Yakama Nation.

And, again, this is my home.

Where though did the uranium come from that served the Hanford site? Hanford's early fuel came from the Navajo reservation. Yet, in 1954 this would change when the Dawn Mining Company would lease the uranium rich land from the Spokane Tribe of Indians and individual land owners in Wellpinit, WA. As Warren Cornwall of *The Seattle Times* reported:

> Washington's Hanford nuclear reservation, toxic birthplace of the bomb that set off the atomic age, routinely makes headlines. The Midnite Mine, just 100 miles to the north, is all but forgotten, a combination of denial, neglect and willful amnesia.[20]

All but forgotten doesn't mean gone. It so happens that while I was born and raised on Yakama lands, my mother's tribal reservation is this Spokane Reservation. Here a uranium mine sickens our family members and the land.

## THE SPOKANE TRIBE AND THE MIDNITE URANIUM MINE

I did not learn about environmental struggles on the Spokane Indian Reservation until meeting Deborah Abrahamson of SHAWL Society. Though my mother is an enrolled Spokane tribal member, and though I lived and went to Wellpinit High School, I was born and raised most of my life on the Yakama Nation Reservation. Deborah, someone aunty-ing on the frontlines in Wellpinit, WA (and many other places), is a fierce protector of our Spokane tribal people and the land.

I first met Deb in 2009 when I was an undergraduate student at Eastern Washington University. We worked together on a police accountability campaign after one of our community's members was shot in the back of the head by an off-duty police officer. With Deb, I joined with the Peace and Justice Action League (PJAL) in an attempt to pressure the city to hire an independent police ombudsman. An ombudsman position was started in 2008, but it remains to be made independent, and attempts to do so continue to be undermined by the Spokane Police Guild, the police officers' union (Ryals and Thomas 2015).

In the city of Spokane, officer Jay Olson, an intoxicated white, male off-duty police officer shot then 29 year-old Shonto Pete, in the back of the head on October

26, 2007. Pete said he asked Olson for a ride and was confused by his reaction, but the officer accused Pete of attempting to steal his truck. Olson chased Pete through a Spokane residential neighborhood and fired five bullets, one of which hit Pete in the back of the head. An article in *The Inlander* explained, "Olsen was drunk and chasing Pete down an embankment in Peaceful Valley when he fired five times from his personal 'mini Glock' pistol. Olsen says **he feared for his life when Pete turned to face him**. But a bullet hit Pete's head from behind" (Ryals 2017). Two years after the shooting, a jury acquitted Olsen of assault and reckless endangerment charges, and Shonto Pete, who was shot in the back of the head, was left to foot the medical bills (Taylor 2011).

It was while working with Deb and SHAWL on police accountability that I began to learn about their work on Midnite Mine, the larger of two uranium mines on the Spokane Indian Reservation. The Spokane Reservation is bordered to the south by the Spokane River and to the west by the Columbia River. The reservation sits approximately 50 miles northwest of the city of Spokane, the city that sits upon the traditional grounds of the Spokane.

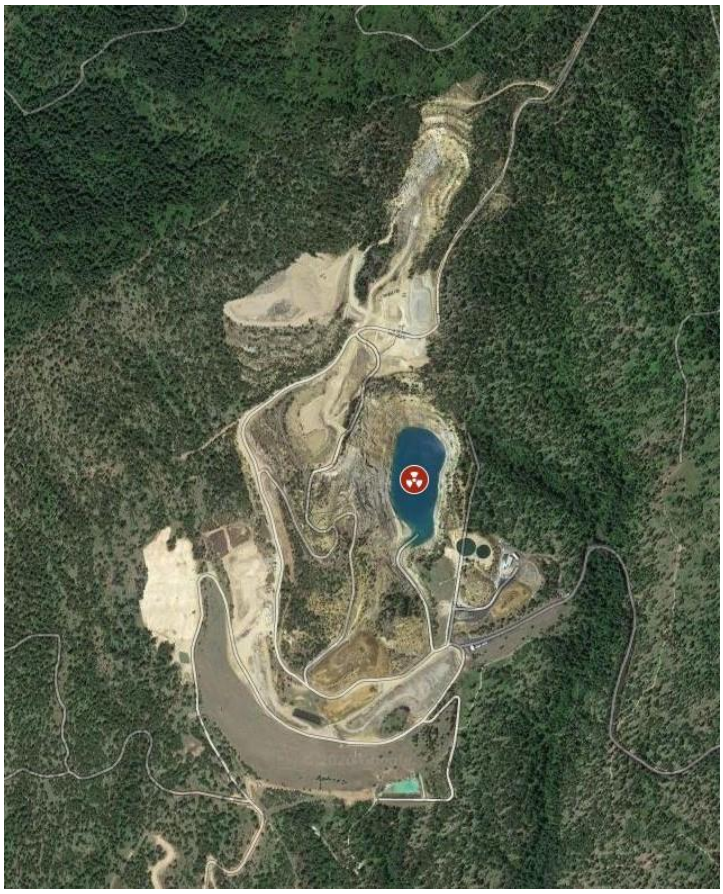
Amidst settler encroachment and wars between the tribal Nations and the whites, in August of 1887 those of our people that were referred to by European settlers as the "Lower Spokane" were forced from the area of present day Spokane to the area now known as the Spokane Reservation. In 1877, Slough-Keetcha (babtized with the English name Spokane Garry), wrote in response to the settler state proposal

to move our people from our lands, “What right do you have to dictate us? This is our country and we will not leave it” (Kershner 2008).

Four years later, by executive order on January 1881, the United States President Hayes declared the territory a reservation. In March of 1887, our relatives, the “Upper and Middle Spokane,” after being forced into a “peace treaty,” were moved to the Colville, Flathead and Coeur d’Alene reservations. In 1939, the Columbia River was damned by the Grand Coulee Dam and the rivers behind the dam flooded our lands and cultural sites. The salmon could no longer run up the river and, for many, our lived relationship with the fish was lost. The frontlines are sometimes better pictured as ongoing wars; and, in this case, the Midnite Mine is one battle amid a slow precession.


“Uranium Mines, Wellpinit, Washington” Map. Google Maps. Google, 2020.

2020 Terra Map Data c2020 Imagery TerraMetrics



"Midnite Mine, Wellpinit, Washington" Map. Google Maps. Google, 2020.

2020 Terra Map Data c2020 Imagery TerraMetrics

*The Search for the Glow at Midnite*

During the Cold War, the government was "scouring the country for radioactive metal, raw material of the nation's growing nuclear arsenal" (Cornwall 2008). In 1954, heeding the call for uranium, Jim and John LeBret found the rock on their Spokane reservation. It's been told that the brothers found the uranium with a black light under the dark of night, and so the name Midnite. From 1955 to 1981, the mine operated under the Dawn Mining Company LLC and Newmont USA Limited.

"Over the next 27 years, workers dug 38 million tons of rock and radioactive rubble from the ground at the Midnite Mine. Later, workers also dug at the nearby Sherwood Mine, open for just five years" (Cornwall 2008). The environmental protection Agency describes the Midnite Mine this way:

> Two open pits, backfilled pits, a number of waste rock piles, and several ore/protore stockpiles remain on site. In addition to elevated levels of radioactivity, heavy metals mobilized in acid mine drainage pose a potential threat to human health and the environment. The site drains to Blue Creek, which enters the Spokane Arm of Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake. Contaminated water emerging below waste rock and ore piles is currently captured for treatment in an on-site treatment system.

Spokane tribal members, especially those who were financially struggling, seen the pit as an opportunity to work. Kramer (2011) writes, "Aside from logging, uranium mining was the only steady work on the reservation, said Connie LeBret, whose father and brothers also worked in the industry."

The Midnite Mine's uranium was sold to the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (Kramer and Conklin 2011). During the mining period, the ore would be tracked through the reservation in uncovered trucks to the Dawn Mining processing facility in Ford, WA. At the facility workers would turn the uranium into yellow cake for nuclear weapons and then nuclear power plants (Kramer 2011). Harold Cramer worked at both mines and his father worked at the nearby mill site in Ford, WA. Campbell, recovering from prostate cancer, told a reporter he remembered his dad coming home dusty from the processing site and as a kid he would play with the "pretty green rocks" his dad would bring home (Kramer 2011). Deb shared a similar story of her dad bringing home green balls used to crush the uranium, and the kids

played with the balls throwing them against the wall. I've heard community members discuss how gravel from the mine was used to make local driveways, fire places, landscaping and, once the mine was closed, materials were reused for housing and sheds. After the fall of uranium prices, the mine closed in 1981. Yet, it remains an open pit, a scar in Wellpinit (Kramer and Conklin 2011).

In 2000, the same year that my oldest son was born, the mine was finally awarded superfund status. Now, "Under orders from the federal government, Dawn Mining collects and treats water from the site before pumping it into Blue Creek, a tributary of the Spokane River" (Kramer and Conklin 2011). Randy Connolly, the Spokane Tribe's Superfund Coordinator said:

> The treatment removes radioactive materials and heavy metals. But the tribe's monitoring indicates that pollution levels are still high enough to kill aquatic insects in Blue Creek (ibid).

Blue Creek, flowing between the Midnite Mine and the Sherwood Mine, carries the toxic aftermath of uranium contamination. In 2005, the EPA reported that the closest resident lived three miles from the site. The same report identified that soil, groundwater, surface water, sediment, and plants in the area contained "chemicals above risk-based screening levels and/or background concentrations" (3-1).

Deb Abrahamson and, her daughter, Twi-la Abrahamson-Swan, work tirelessly against the contamination of these spaces, the lands and the bodies of the Spokane. Deb, once telling me that is was inevitable, is now fighting her second round of cancer.

*Multiple Fronts*

In was not until doing this research in 2020 that I realized that 18-year-old Tasheena Craft, Shonto Pete's younger sister, was killed in 2007. Tasheena was visiting family and her boyfriend when she was attacked a friend of her younger sister's boyfriend. Tasheena's body was found in Arlee, Montana (Devlin 2007). I won't describe her violent killing here; readers can find the details in the settler state's newspapers. What readers will not find in these same papers is the connection of her death to the ongoing violence of settler colonialism.

I met Deb, someone best known for her work on the mine, through a police accountability campaign. It was not until looking back through the experience of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Womxn's activism, that I would notice Tasheena's death as centered in the experiences of settler colonial violence. It would not be until looking back and exploring our frontlines that I began to see in retelling my research story the ways that community organizers were dealing with multiple fronts.

DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE AND THE CALL FOR WATER PROTECTORS

For many, the relation between the violence against the earth and the sexual violence against Indigenous womxn is quite clear. Some of Sacred Stone's earliest visitors, young women from the Fort Berthold Reservation explained their presence at Standing Rock prayer camps as focused on stopping the sexual violence that accompanied extractive industry. Fort Berthold Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikira, or Three Affiliated Tribes is a three-and-a-half-hour drive north of Standing Rock and

they're home is heavily fracked. Sarian Fox, in a documentary interview, asked a group of young girls why they thought it was young women leading the movement.[21]

One of the young women, though unnamed in the documentary but nevertheless aunty-ing on the frontline, responded that she could remember when their own home started to change. The young girl stated that when going into New Town, a larger city inside of their reservation, that the oil wells were now everywhere you looked, and destroying their land. From the young womxn's perspective, tribal leaders did not care to stop the fracking because of the money that accompanied it. In her words:

> "We don't feel safe in our communities anymore because of all the men that the oil brought in, because the economy and the jobs and everything [that an oil economy brings].

Another girl adds, "You just… You can get just picked up off the sidewalk or wherever you are. Someone can just steal you… You can get raped, you can get killed, or sold." Moments later, the first girl circles back, "That's why I'm doing this, that's why I'm standing up. And I wanna use my voice 'cause it can't continue to go on how it's going [on] up there…" The documentary provides context and Sarian as the narrator says that in Forth Berthold there is a 168% increase in violent assaults against women.

There are now many newspaper articles and even books that describe the movement at Standing Rock. Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon (2019) introduce the movement against the Dakota Access Pipeline:

> **It is a prophecy.** A great Black Snake, Zuzeca Sapa, will spread itself across the land bringing destruction to the land, the water, and the people. The Black

> Snake is the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), a $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline that transports half a million barrels of oil a day across four states (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois) and under the Missouri River twice and under the Mississippi River once. A rupture jeopardizes the drinking water of millions of human souls and countless other-than-humans who depend on the river for life. While the Black Snake prophecy portends doom, **it also sparks hope**.

The Dakota Access Pipeline (known as DAPL) was originally proposed to cross just five miles north of Bizmark-Mandan, North Dakota.

City residents, worried about potential contamination of their water source, contested the plan. The route was then moved 500 feet north of the Standing Rock Reservation. As Ladonna Brave Bull Allard explained in an online interview, a break in the pipeline would hit the early headstart in 2 seconds, the elementary in 5, and in 45 minutes it would take out the tribe's major water intake. Bobby Joe Three Legs, one of the young women who later organized a 500 mile Run for Your Life Relay in April of 2016 said, "It pretty much just makes us feel like, "Oh, it's just Indians," you know? We're humans too. We're human beings."[22]

Before the run and before the camp, there were meetings taking place about the proposed threat. During one of these meetings, a group of young activists experienced with the Keystone XL pipeline resistance, asked for support to host a prayer camp in the route of the DAPL. Madonna Bravebull Allard, the Standing Rock Tribe's historian, stood up in a local meeting and volunteered her families land to the young people. The next day they would meet and the movement against the Blacksnake would grow and bubble up on the banks of the Missouri River. The camp would be named Sacred Stone and as the days and then weeks would pass, the space

would grow to over a thousand people visiting and resisting corporate extractive industry from all over the globe.

## COMING TOGETHER

I accepted my auntie Melodi's invitation in late September of 2016 to attend a small community gathering in Wellpinit, WA that was organized to discuss the potential for Spokane tribal members joining Standing Rock. The organizers, a group of young people from Wellpinit, asked Deb and Twi-la Abrahamson of SHAWL to help prepare them for the trip.

I arrived late in the evening and an hour or so later, after Deb and Twi-la arrived, we began our discussions about traveling to Standing Rock. A group of young children played and ran through the chairs just before we readied ourselves with dinner. Standing Rock had put out a call for tribal nations to join them. I remember sitting in the community center and reflecting on the last time I had seen my friends who were already joined awaiting the discussion. I had spent time in my youth drinking, brawling, laughing, and crying with these individuals. Some of them, though they wouldn't know it, are part of my own identity, especially as a "girl from the rez."[23] Years away from home and now as a graduate student, I was happy to see everyone. They, like my own mother, taught me how to "fight," how to survive, and get back up after you have been knocked down.[24]

Now we were brought together for different reasons to attend another sort of gathering. Deb and Twi-la asked a man who participated in the 1999 World Trade Organization protests, referred to as The Battle in Seattle, to join us. He shared his

experience with us, particularly his experience with police and their militaristic strategies used against activists. He also focused greatly on his resulting post-traumatic stress syndrome that he still suffered from and warned us that we would potentially be sharing in this same experience. During the conversation, one of the young men expressed his anger about the situation at Standing Rock and willingness to be on the frontlines in North Dakota. He finished with a war hoop and some of the other men joined him. I smiled.

Later, a young woman several months pregnant, held her belly and said she was worried about her little one's future. I looked down at my youngest, a couple of months old, who sat in my lap. Theresa, a partner to one of the young men and mother to some of the children playing in community center, linked the threats between the violent threat of the pipeline near Standing Rock Reservation to the history of extraction in Wellpinit, and stated, "If we don't stop them now, they'll keep coming until they're here at our door." We all shook our heads in agreement.

During the meeting we strategized about how we would get ourselves to Standing Rock to join others and how we would do so in a way that prepared us for potential physical and psychological trauma. Twe-la emphasized that we needed to ensure that we would not burden the limited resources at the camp and to be prepared for winter. With information in hand, I would return to White Swan and the Yakama Reservation and organize a fundraising event with a small group of friends, including my sister Nancy Tahmalawash. My friends and relatives would come and support. Before, during, and after the fundraising, family members would ask me why I was

not already over there in Standing Rock, clearly supportive if not expectant of me joining the Water Protector encampment.

The group in Wellpinit would rally the Spokane Tribal Council, receive funding and support, gather more supplies, and prepare to meet up in Cannonball. After collecting funds and supplies, I would leave my two oldest school-age children with their dad and my mother, and I and my seven-month old son, who was still nursing, would begin our drive to meet the caravan at Oceti Sakowin. On the afternoon of the third day of driving, I would look out over the camp as we approached Cannonball River and say to my little one, "Look baby, it's a water powwow!" My seven-month old would join the frontlines. In doing so he would make his contribution to our growing resurgence, bringing joy to participants and, as they would tell him, "Thank you for reminding me of why I am here." The rest I'll save for another story.

Chapter Endnotes:

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[2] Morrison, Toni. "Toni Morrison Beautifully Answers an 'Illegitimate' Question on Race (Jan. 19, 1998) | Charlie Rose." Video Hosting Service. YouTube, January 19, 1998. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kgq3F8wbYA. (Toni Morrison responds to the question "Why don't you write about something other than Black people."

[3] Simpson, Audra. The Chiefs Two Bodies: Theresa Spence and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty. R.A.C.E. Network, 2014. https://vimeo.com/110948627.

[4] The development of these social fictions are present in maps. John Roberts (1985) explains, map makers once placed Jerusalem, the center of Christendom, at its center; later after the age of "discovery" in the 1500's, Europe would be placed at its center, with Africa and Asia spread across the remaining space; and, most recently, with the "discovery" of America, contemporary "world maps" had to give more space to North and South America (Hall 1992: 200). These changes in what and who was central, Roberts proposes, are "fictions" that "represent changes in our reality" (ibid). The changes in their reality depicted in the changes of imagery were also entangled in the changes of how they understood themselves and the rest of the world.

[5] Elizabeth Cook-Lynn writes a beautiful story *The Clearest Blue Day* where she draws from and reimagines the saying "the more things change the more they stay the same."

[6] In this same review of the treaties, Hughes (1905) writes, "In short, it was designed to create of the Sioux country a second Indian Territory, into which to dump all the odds and ends of Indian tribes still left east of the Mississippi. Fortunately, however, this treaty failed of confirmation by the Senate, and thus this vast and fertile territory was saved to a grander destiny." Thus, what the Standing Rock treaty council chairman is pointing out is that this original treaty was replaced by the 1851 treaty that was set on opening these lands to settlers as they drove their country west.

[7] MCSiWH – I am only half joking with this acronym, the Most Contaminated Site in the Western Hemisphere is used often, making it nearly a moniker of the Hanford Reservation. However, while it is used at least once in most public descriptions of the site it doesn't hold throughout an entire review. I push this repetition because I am asserting that it should be repeated over and over again. Don't forget reader, it is the Most Contaminated Site in the Western Hemisphere. How can a United States President not know this?

[8] Despite that the U.S. government can only enter into treaties with sovereign nations, scholars have overlooked the United States as holding "international" agreements with Indigenous Nations enframed by the United States of America. I do not overlook this point and, in fact, assert the position that Indigenous Nations are uniquely positioned as having nation to nation agreement with the United States of America.

[9] Lambert also turns to a Seattle Times article by Duff Wilson (1997) that reveals the ways manufacturing industries turn their waste into fertilizer. One of these methods includes simply spilling toxic waste through a silo and into a different container. As

Dick Camp, President of Bay Zinc, explains, “When it goes into our silo, it’s a hazardous waste […] When it comes out of the silo, it’s no longer regulated. The exact same material. Don’t ask me why. That’s the wisdom of the EPA.”

[10] This and the following excerpts are taken from the government hearing, titled: Management, United States Congress House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs Subcommittee on General Oversight, Northwest Power, and Forest. “N-Reactor at Hanford Reservation, Washington: Safety and Environmental Concerns : Oversight Hearings before the Subcommittee on General Oversight, Northwest Power, and Forest Management of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, Second Session, on N-Reactor at Hanford Reservation, Washington: Safety and Environmental Concerns: Hearing Held May 19, 1986, Portland, Or; June 16, 1986, Washington, DC.” U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986.

[11] The scientists were from the University of Southern California and the University of California, Santa Cruz. Dr. James C. Warf, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, University of Southern California. Mr. Daniel Hirsch, the Director of the Stevenson Program on Nuclear Policy at the University of California, Santa Cruz and an adjunct lecturer on nuclear policy at the same institution. Dr. W. Jackson Davis, Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies, members of the Stevenson Program on Nuclear Policy, at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

[12] Succeeding the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC) and prior to the official creation of the Manhattan Project, the Office of Scientific Research

Development (OSRD) was created to conduct military research in 1941 and headed by Vannavar Bush at Columbia University. See: Stewart, Irvin. 1948. *Organizing Scientific Research for War: The Administrative History of the Office of Scientific Research and Development.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

[13] Genay (2016: 117-118) has an interesting rendition of this history as she starts with origins of chemistry, then to Plato, through a range of scientists, and ends with German chemists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman.

[14] Encyclopedia Britannica explains the following about Fascism, "Although fascist parties and movements differed significantly from one another, they had many characteristics in common, including extreme militaristic nationalism, contempt for electoral democracy and political and cultural liberalism, a belief in natural social hierarchy and the rule of elites, and the desire to create a Volksgemeinschaft (German: "people's community"), in which individual interests would be subordinated to the good of the nation." https://www.britannica.com/topic/fascism

[15] From my reading there are two reason given for the nuclear race: 1, an atomic bomb could be used by the U.S. to deter the axis power. 2. An atomic bomb, like other weapons used, would end a war more quickly than whatever previous technology was used and, therefore, save lives. Both rationales are provided by Rhodes 2004, see pg 19 and 21.

[16] For example, the Britannica reports, "The site was chosen, in 1942, for its isolation from heavily populated areas and for the availability, in large quantities, of cooling water from the Columbia River and electric power from the Grand Coulee Dam and

Bonneville Dam hydroelectric installations."

https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hanford-Engineer-Works

popular Wikipedia websites includes the language, "Safety and security required a remote, isolated and unpopulated area."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_(nuclear_test)

[17] The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is historically referred to in folklore as "jolet jen Anij" (gifts from God). A God-given sanctuary apart from the harshness of other areas is therefore part of the socio-cultural identity of the people. However, they are now often referred to as a "front line state" with regard to the climate change issue."

[18] The U.S. popular cartoon Spongebob Square Pants is thought to live on "Bikini Bottom" and created by the nuclear continuation.

[19] Genay conflates the tribal nations with American citizens, presenting them together as "Three cultures of the land" and proposes that together they face "the same struggles as their ancestors…" What I find truly useful about Genay's analysis is the way that employment, as a resource, places each group into intense competition at the same time it opens them up to exploitation by the nuclear industry. The plateau, as Genay explains, was historically first the home of Pueblo tribes and revered as sacred (54). Later New Mexicans would consider themselves as local and the land as a source of life (56). Due to settler colonialism, the first group, the Pueblo, would numerically not match those of the latter, the New Mexicans. The New Mexicans,

therefore, would be the majority of the expatriated residents but be hardly noted due to the fact, Genay proposes, they didn't fit the "authentic" figure of the Native.

[20] Cornwall, Warren. "Radioactive Remains | The Forgotten Story of the Northwest's Only Uranium Mines." The Seattle Times, February 24, 2008, sec. Pacific NW Magazine. https://www.seattletimes.com/pacific-nw-magazine/radioactive-remains-the-forgotten-story-of-the-northwests-only-uranium-mines/.

[21] Dewey, Myron, Josh Fox, and James Spione. Awake: A Dream from Standing Rock. Documentary. Digital Smoke Signals, International WOW Company, 2017.

[22] (ibid) Dewey, Myron, Josh Fox, and James Spione. Awake: A Dream from Standing Rock. Documentary. Digital Smoke Signals, International WOW Company, 2017.

[23] As is well accepted across the social sciences, our identities are co-constructed with the social worlds to which we belong.

[24] And I mean this quite literally. I am not here romanticizing the violence that happens "on the rez" and amongst our families and in our homes. Nila NorthSun (1984), in *Gathering of Spirit* edited by Beth Brant, has a poem titled reservation girls. Auntie Nila starts, "we've got some tough girls here one when she was 12 shot her girlfriend who didn't want to play with her she hasn't shot anybody sense but she stabbed a boyfriend in the arm," and later "this other girl got into 5 fights while she was pregnant two of them were with her 250 lb. husband he knocked a couple teeth loose 3 fights were with long time rivals & even though they kicked her in the stomach she ended up the winner chasing them down the road…" Many, though

perhaps not all, learn early, as Nila suggests, on the rez the importance of knowing how to fight, or as she ends her poem, hanging with those who do, and with the constant threat that they might turn against you. It would not be until away from home that my understanding of the situation as reverberation between strength and trauma. The theme "fight" is carried throughout the dissertation and exposes the limited nature in which "frontlines" has only been applied to the most politicized of arenas. I'm suggesting, following Fanon and others who refuse to pathologize our communities, that understanding these zones as situated in the larger settler colonial context, historical trauma, and ongoing violence our communities experience.

## Chapter 3: De/Colonial Possibilities of the Rights of Nature

> "Much in the same way that African Americans and women became 'visible' to courts in the 1800s, courts and legislatures now are making ecosystems visible to the institutions of government" (Colorado River Ecosystem v. State of Colorado).

This chapter engages more closely on the topic of Indigenous Knowledge. Indigenous Knowledge, because of the racialization of Indigenous peoples, gets thought of and boxed as a racialized knowledge. I suggest that when Indigenous Knowledge as a lived and living knowledge systems is categorized by a knowledge tradition that marks a dichotomy between the West and rest, the categorization enacts epistemological and material violence against Indigenous peoples. Why is this the case? As a racialized knowledge or an identity-knowledge-object, we tend to think of Indigenous Knowledge as this thing that exists in relation to racialized bodies, something out there and easily graspable, and as such extractable. As we know, it is the settler-colonial project to know the other, write the other, and catalog it. Let me approach from another direction. The mobilization of Indigenous Knowledge without recognition of their efforts to establish recognition of their sovereignty suggests their bodies in relation to their Land do not matter. Thus, the racialization and disembodiment of a very nuanced and complicated onto-epistemological system for the benefits of state reform is not redemptive, as some suggest. To better understand my claims, this chapter deals with the issue of place, environmental law, and Indigenous erasure by exploring the case of the Colorado River v. Colorado State, a

rights of nature case meant to recognize the inherent rights of the Colorado River without recognition of sovereign rights of local tribal nations.

The enactment of the legal recognition of Nature's inherent rights is now commonly evoked within the environmental justice movement. Environmental justice advocates reference Indigenous worldviews as foundational to the recognition of nature's inherent rights and propose that the rights of nature environmental laws that foreground Indigenous ontologies are a way to protect nature by shifting the consciousness of would-be polluters. I extend the case of settler colonialism and examine the logic of the rights of nature movement by looking across a series of foundational texts, websites, and legal actions, to better understand the strengths and limits of focusing on the recognition of a river's inherent right.

## BACKGROUND

On September 25th, 2017, a federal lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Denver asked a judge to treat the Colorado River as a person rather than property, therefore recognizing the river and its's ecosystem right "to exist, flourish, regenerate, and naturally evolve" and for the ability to sue if these rights be violated. The Colorado River v. State of Colorado (herein, *Colorado River*) was considered the "first-of-its-kind," as it sought to not only change environmental law, but to produce a paradigm shift in everyday relations. A leading U.S. paper reported that if the lawsuit filed in Colorado was successful, "[f]uture lawsuits in its mold might seek to block pipelines, golf courses or housing developments and force everyone from agriculture executives to mayors to rethink how they treat the environment."

The Colorado River v. Colorado State is a case considered as part of the Rights of Nature movement, and rights of nature is a concept made famous by the work of the Community Legal Defense Fund (CELDF). Thomas Linzey and Stacy Schmader, founders of CELDF, explain that the rights of nature build on the work of earlier environmentalists, including John Muir, Cristopher Stone, Roderick Nash, Thomas Berry, and Cormac Cullinan. They suggest that it goes further than its predecessors because the movement seeks to mobilize a juridical paradigm shift that moves nature from mere property to a rights-bearing entity. The organization served as legal advisors to *Colorado River* declaratory complaint, and they explain elsewhere that they draw from an Indigenous stream of knowledge in their work to change the propertied status of nature. Though the court dismissed the case, the case indexes the most recent expression of a rising international movement, referred to as the Rights of Nature (RoN) movement. The U.S. based movement sets out to stop the extractive industry and global environmental change allowed by national governments like the United States.

This chapter will examine the role of the RoN movement in creating legal changes that they say draw from Indigenous wisdom. Despite CELDF and the complaints attention to protect the rights of nature, I suggest that the movement in general and this case, in particular, more closely mirrors the genocidal National Parks era, where settler law forcibly disposed National parkland from Indigenous peoples so that settlers could experience uninhabited nature (Finegan 2018). In the movement's assertion that the land belongs to no one and its simultaneous turn to the state, the

RoN movement threatens Indigenous peoples' relationship to sacred places and positions tribal nations' potential claims as criminal. Moreover, in a settler-colonial context where "constitutional recognition" has been used by the state to dispossess Indigenous peoples, I suggest that the juridical recognition of nature is subject to the same settler-colonial underpinnings of the recognition of Indigenous peoples. Not only does the Rights of Nature movement romanticize and abstract Indigenous Knowledge through its claims to draw the essence through their "streaming" of Indigenous Knowledge, it further entrenches the settler-colonial juridical apparatus directed by capital because it turns toward the state for a recognition that first relies on dispossession and land in an alienated form.

## METHODS

I traveled to the International Treaty Council Conference, the Saving Mother Earth Conference, and a number of marches and protests throughout the fieldwork process in order to first explore and then later build with these spaces my arguments about the reification of Indigenous Knowledge in mainstream spaces through an aggregation of observations and encounters. I learned from the ways people spoke about Standing Rock, about water protectors, and how Native activists, organizers, and community members framed the movement and spoke about what it meant to be Native in this moment. I listened closely to the stories people told.

When analyzing the specific case of the RoN movement, I began building an archive of RoN related materials, including texts from their websites, popular news articles, conference proceedings, and legal documents. I supplement these archival

materials by speaking directly with a leading organizer of the movement. I also attended panels dedicated to the Rights of Nature within an Indigenous lead organization and spoke with Native activists either directly involved with legal reform action or those that were part of the larger organization and familiar with the movement, but were mostly watching from the periphery.

"Stories Educate and Empower," according to Luana Ross (2016) who writes that "Stories are an important means of passing on traditions and strengthening communities… The stories of our past help us to make meaning of the present and help us to plan for the future" (2). Like Ross, as I have discussed earlier, my personal methodology is to "interlace stories from my family and community with sociological data and historical accounts because my personal life is interwoven with my professional" (2). In storying my methodological approach, I hope to foreground how storying relationships are a lived experience and that onto-epistemologically is an integral part of theory building – especially anti-colonial theorization. Similarly, stories invite reflection, as Kovach in Indigenous Methodologies explains. Thus, my writing is not only a co-created piece of knowledge that incorporates what I have learned in the field as a researcher, but also what I've learned as a Sqeliz womxn, mother, and scholar. In co-creating knowledge," as Kovach writes, "story is not only a means for hearing another's narrative; it also invites reflexivity into research. Through reflexive story, there is an opportunity to express the researcher's inward knowing. Sharing one's own story is an aspect of co-constructing knowledge from an Indigenous perspective." My methodologies and approaches to research are meant to

privilege Indigenous knowledges, voices, and experiences" (L.T. Smith 2005: 87) at the same time attempt a political queering of autoethnography in discussing women's embodied knowledge as politicized memory and storytelling. I heed Goeman's (2013) call to think about storying as a mapping. Goeman does a beautiful job of thinking about Indigenous womnx's texts as a practice of mapping place. In this chapter, I am going to think about how the Right of Nature does its sort of mapping through the storying place in legal texts.

*Contextualizing Colorado River Basin*

In the United States, as in Canada, in Australia, and across the Fourth World, there is a long history of settler-colonial militarization and dispossession of indigenous peoples from the land. One of the codifications where the environment and law meet was the Wilderness Act. As Finegan (2018) explains, "In the United States, for example, human-nature divide has been codified into federal law through the Wilderness Act, which proclaimed that wilderness is a place where 'man does not remain' (88th Congress of the United States, 1964, para. 1). The Wilderness Act (1964) also states:

> [These wilderness areas] shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of the wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness… (Sec 2. A).

Before the European colonization of the Colorado Basin area, Indigenous peoples lived in the area for centuries. Some of these Native peoples placed their

emergence through the earth itself, as a child to its mother. Furthermore, since that birth, the people have caretaken that place for thousands of years. This relationship was threatened with the emergence of park systems, just as it is threatened with the constitutionalizing of nature in other ways.

In Colorado, sacred place names developed over thousands of years by indigenous peoples were wiped away and replaced with the name "Colorado" by Europeans. First, the Spanish colonizers (Colorado is a Spanish word meaning red) and then later the U.S. state asserted their ownership of land through their naming practices. After the Mexican-American War in 1846-1848, the U.S. and Mexico agreed to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and Mexico relinquished 55 % of what it believed to be its property to the United States. It was only in the last 300 years that settler claims and legal action transmuted that specific land into property.

Also, in the 1850s, gold was found in the Rocky Mountains, and an estimated 100,000 gold-seekers amassed in the region. They found minerals and influx of whites (potential voters) lead to the area being recognized by the U.S. as an organized territory and then later formally admitted in statehood in 1876. During this time, as in times before, Native people were criminalized for refusing white settlement of their homelands and occurred an armed conflict between several Native nations and the United States, referred to as the Colorado War from 1863-1865. What would then occur is what is known as the Navajo Long Walk, removing the Dine Nation to the present-day reservation. This occurred between 1846 and 1863. The United States "cleared" land through forced removals. As Sarah Deer points out, the *Trail of Tears*

and the *Navajo Long Walk* were violent removals where "The American legal system, if ever, responded to rapes" (All Apologies, section: The explicit truth of rape).

It was also during this time that the now-famous Sand Creek Massacre occurred in 1879. Helen Jackson (1994) published archival letters written to the New York Tribune that documented the testimony of officers who were present at the Sand Creek massacre. I quote two excerpts to provide readers an idea of the settler-colonial history of the Colorado River Basin that is often forgotten by those working on behalf of a sanitized notion of environment. What follows is violent and detailed:

> Robert Bent testified: I saw one squaw lying on the bank, whose leg had been broken. A soldier came up to her with a drawn sabre. She raised her arm to protect herself; he struck, breaking her arm. She rolled over, and raised her other arm; he struck, breaking that, and then left her without killing her. I saw one squaw but open, with an unborn child lying by her side. (344-45).

> Major Anthony Testified: 'There was one little child, probably three years old, just big enough to walk through the sand. The Indians had gone ahead, and this little child was behind, following after them. The little fellow was perfectly naked, traveling in the sand. I saw one man get off his horse at a distance of about seventy-five yards and draw up his rifle and fire. He missed the child. Another man came up and said, 'Let me try the son of a b---. I can hit him.' He got down off his horse, kneeled down, and fired at the little child, but he missed him. A third man came up, and made a similar remark, and fired, and the little fellow dropped. (345).

This violence against women and children, as others have pointed out, is part of the settler-colonial processes. Here, a mother was beaten, and her child violently let from her body. A little one "dropped" and the soldiers of war, like those of today, are socially acquitted laborers of the nation-state. Angry and unforgiving of the violence, in deep grief, I place these images in the hands of the reader not to harm but instead refuse to forget.

I suggest the trauma from these actions, that cannot be marked anything other than genocidal, remain with us as Indigenous peoples to this very day.[1] These sorts of histories are buried in archival books, erased in popular storying of this nation, and left for us alone to carry. My writing is a call to carry these stories with us, they are not ours alone. They make "visible" the longer history of settler colonialism and white supremacy in the Colorado area. Native scholars understand that while we refuse to forget, we are not contained or made by these histories. Narratives cannot be closed.

Communities in Colorado River Basin went through a coerced process that leads to the signing of treaties with the U.S. government in order to "reserve" and protect the lands for tribal nations and their future children. Despite treaty negotiations, in 1966, the Glen Canyon Dam was built on traditional Southern Paiute territory and flooded San Juan Paiute farms, native plants and animals, and sacred sites. Tara Zagofsky (n.d.) writes that after the dam was built, the white scientific community was concerned about the ecological impacts they were witnessing. This lead the interior secretary to establish the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program workgroup then program (ibid). The AMP and a host of U.S. departments acknowledged their responsibility to "fully and meaningfully engage with the appropriate tribes in the decision-making process regarding activities that may affect resources of tribal concern" (4).

Discussing the local tribes' relation to the Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River, Tara Zagofsky (n.d.) points out, "The tribes believe their cultural and legal

mandate is to protect the land, vegetation, and fauna, which are considered sacred; and many wish to live within the natural limitations of the land. This contradicts starkly with the American government's decisions to manage local resources, including moving the tribes off their traditional lands, building the Glen Canyon Dam… to provide hydroelectricity and to regulate the flow from the upper Colorado River Basin, and promoting tourism development." The Glen Canyon Dam, as all dams do, negatively affect both the upper river and down river areas. As Zagofsky asserts, damns negatively affect Indigenous peoples' relations to their lands. There are many issues with the AMP and as tribal people know, with the state's understanding of "consultation." In its best times, as we have seen the Yakama Nation, Spokane Tribe, and Standing Rock, consultation often takes the form of informing and not consulting. Nevertheless, the tribes remain involved in their attempts to protect as they understand their legal and sacred mandate.

This history is essential to understand within discussions about environmental laws and rights. I share with you this brief history not to traumatize readers, not to categorize Native peoples as victims, but rather to contribute of how rights are taken, given, and on whose terms. The stories of the basin must be told and read together because the basin's history, including its people's history, is essential to remember when environmentalists suggest that the River belongs to no one within a settler-colonial context.

## THE RIGHTS OF NATURE MOVEMENT

### *CELDF and their Founding Fathers*

As stated in the introduction, the "Rights of Nature," as a phrase and movement, was made famous through the work of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF). Thomas Linzey and Stacy Schmader, founders of CELDF, explain that Rights of Nature movement builds on the work of earlier environmentalists, including: John Muir, Cristopher Stone, Roderick Nash, Thomas Berry, and Cormac Cullinan but, they argue, goes further to mobilize a paradigm shift, both in law and in the broader culture. John Muir, one of the movement's "founding fathers," is connected to the racist underpinnings of the development of natural parks (Robbins and Moore 2019)

Drawing from earlier environmentalists as foundational fathers, CELDF proposes that the recognition of nature's rights follows the legal progression of the rights more generally. They suggest that the recognition of nature's rights follows the recognition of women and Blacks as entities who have moved from property to rights-bearing. CELDF associate director explains, nature must follow as another entity that rightfully demands inclusion. Mari Margil (2018), citing Christopher Stones (2010) published article, Should Trees Have Standing, argues that nature is a logical step in the juridical recognition of entities with rights. Margil and Stone place nature, following after women and slaves as entities who have moved from property to rights-bearing, as another entity that rightfully demands inclusion. In CELDF's own words, "When we talk about the Rights of Nature, it means recognizing that

ecosystems and natural communities are not merely property that can be owned. Rather, they are entities that have an independent and inalienable right to exist and flourish."

The movement leaders are also evident on their inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge. Focusing on expanding the legal rights of nature by asserting an agenda they say advances an Indigenous vision, one that foregrounds relations to an earth community, where human beings are interconnected or interbeing with the rest of nature. Ecuador is cited as the first country to recognize nature's inherent rights in their constitution with, it is proposed, Indigenous peoples, leading the way.

Despite media's attention to Indigenous peoples affirmation of the juridical recognition of the Rights of Nature, CELDF, the organization spearheading the RoN movement, is a legal counsel organization based in the United States that started their work in Pennsylvania with small white conservative farming communities.

CELDF's first case was in 2006 in Tamaqua Borough, Pennsylvania, where they passed their first "new environmental" law that banned the dumping of toxic sewage as a violation of the rights of nature. Again in Pennsylvania, in 2014, the East Run Hellbenders Society from Grant Township reached out for assistance to help block a Fracking project proposed by Pennsylvania General Energy Company (PGE) and permitted by the Environmental Protection Agency. CELDF drafted with the East Run Hellbenders a Community Bill of Rights Ordinance that prohibited the injections and established local-city governance. As a CELDF webpage reports, "In November of 2014, CELDF filed a motion for the Little Mahoning Watershed to intervene in the

lawsuit. This is the first time an ecosystem is the United States sought to defend its rights as a recognized in municipal law. Its intervention is meant to defend its legal right to exist and flourish. That case is ongoing."[2] Since these early drafts, CELDF has extended its reach both across the country and into international terrain.

CELDF worked with several countries to establish the rights of nature. With organizers in Bolivia, they helped to establish the rights of nature in its legal system in 2010. They also worked with Nepal and drafted the constitutional amendment to incorporate the rights to a healthy climate. They worked the Maori nation in New Zealand to make the sacred river as a rights-bearing entity. And, CELDF helped create the GARN (Global Alliance for Rights of Nature) and created the International Rights of Nature Tribunals to adjudicate the state and corporate crimes that violated the rights of nature. More on this tribunal later.

The Pachamama Alliance is also a central part of this movement. Pachamama is based in San Francisco, and from their perspective were invited by Indigenous peoples guided by the Eagle and Condor prophecy to join them and ensure the existence of humankind. As they tell it, Pachamama, the Eagles representing intellect and mind, were to join with the Achuar and broader Indigenous communities, who were the Condor's and represented wisdom and heart. In 2008, Natalia Green, who was then a climate rights activist at the Pachamama Alliance, called for Thomas Linzey and Mari Margil to participate in the constituent assembly to the recognition of rights of nature. In 2010, together, CELDF and Pachamama created the Global

Alliance for Rights of Nature in Ecuador. I will come back to Ecuador in a minute, but for now, let us stay with CELDF.

So, again, the Rights of Nature's environmental law advanced by CELDF is an extension of the environmental scholarship of Muir and others into the legal arena. Besides connecting their lineage to racist environmentalists, RoN does make important points about current environmental laws, particularly in the U.S. Environmental laws, as they explain, are based on the right to own property and to regulate the amount of pollution that is allowable within that property, whether federally, state, or privately owned. For example, Under the current laws, things like fracking, uranium mining, and radioactive releases are legally regulated. Shannon at Movement Rights, another Rights of Nature organization, points out that the EPA's inability to protect resources is not an accident. The constitution, having much to do with the ownership of property, is doing as its writers intended, as Shannon puts it, to "protect the elite white men and their property."[3] What Shannon is *importantly* pointing out is that because land, water, minerals are understood as commodity investments, it is property, land in the form of a commodity that is protected, and not the Land itself. Shannon explains to me that despite the problems of law, the recognition of nature's inherent rights is essential to pursue alongside the rights of tribes. However, that is not what we see unfold in *Colorado River*.

The response by RoN to "land as an individual commodity" is to say that land belongs to everyone or, more precisely, no one. This, RoN organizers propose, is in line with Indigenous ontologies that assert life in the form of our Earth and more-

than-human relatives cannot be owned. My goal in this chapter is not to argue Indigenous ontologies, but I will point out that this is not the first time that settler institutions have proposed that land belonged to "no one." In this case, the assertion potentially criminalizes tribal peoples.

As Moreton-Robinson (2015) points out in the case of British dispossession of Australia, British immigrants landed on the shores of 1788 and claimed the land under the "legal fiction of *terra* nullius – land belonging to no one – and systematically dispossessed, murdered, raped, and incarcerated the original owners…. In all these contexts, the lives of Indigenous people were controlled by white people sanctioned by the same system of law that enabled dispossession" (4). In other words, land belonging to "no-one" was used by colonists to violently dispossess Indigenous people from the land. Land is life.

I am not proposing that RoN has plans to practice any explicit violent acts. What I am suggesting is that what gives RoN actors the ability to say that land belongs to no one is their failure to address the violent dispossession of Indigenous lands directly. For RoN to turn toward the state to assert that land belongs to no one sanctions further Indigenous dispossession and legitimates a system of law involved in that dispossession. Moreton Robinson (2015:7-8) writes in the Australian context, "these power relations are themselves based on the denial of original dispossession." As she explains about Read, a "white Anglo middle-class male" who considers himself "native-born," his belonging is based in the erasure of ongoing settler-colonial dispossession. Moreton Robinson suggests, it is his "denial of original (and

continuing) dispossession that forms the foundation" of his " belief that his sense of belonging is based on an equal partnership with Indigenous people." She continues, "There can be no equal partnership while there is illegal dispossession" (7). Thus,, it is not that Rights of Nature movement actors fail to reference the capitalist threat to Indigenous lands, they sometimes do, but what is not happening is the recognition that this violent dispossession was not a singular event. It is ongoing and legitimated through the settler state, the state they turn to sanction, once again, a terra nullius.

One might argue that case of RoN is different in that unlike settler logics analyzed elsewhere, the RoN movement is directly challenging the rendering of land as property. In other words, it might be argued that RoN is unsettling the logics of property. RoN could be seen, from this perspective, as relinquishing white entitlement through a renunciation of land as property, and theoretically freeing both land and indigeneity from settler colonial logics. CELDF suggests, quite compelling, land belongs to no one and we are all Indigenous. However, I argue, RoN cannot free land from capitalism's grip through law. Law does not direct capital, rather the logics of law are directed by capital. Furthermore, it is within a logic of capital, as Moreton Robinson explains, that law, land, ownership, and belonging congeal.

## STREAMING THE VISION

The first country in the world to constitutionally recognize the inherent rights of nature was Ecuador in 2008. Ecuador's constitutionalization of the rights of nature is often heralded as an Indigenous victory, with RoN actors proposing the movement is rooted in the "wisdom" of Indigenous peoples (not science, by the way). In one

text, the Rights of Nature begins their argument, titled "Notes for the debate," by first outlining an Indigenous peoples deep respect and an "inter-being" with all members of the Earth community. The document on therightsofnature.org site explains,

> "The indigenous stream does not speak of 'rights' directly, as the legal concept of 'rights' as such does not exist in indigenous cultures, but the essence of the indigenous vision underpins the whole approach of the Rights of Mother Earth. The concept of 'rights' is a construction that comes from outside the indigenous context, and therefore the development of 'rights' of Mother Earth or 'rights' of nature in indigenous communities is expressed in different terms. The terms of 'rights' are expressed more explicitly in other streams."

In a different post, the RoN text proposes, "The Rights of Mother Earth is like a river made up of different streams that are flowing toward the ocean, but have not reached its shores." Made up of different streams, "The Indigenous Stream" meets up with the "Scientific Stream," the "Ethical Stream," and the "Juridical Stream."

> The Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature website states that,
>
> "The fundamental principles encapsulated by Rights of Nature ─ of Mother Earth ─ are deeply rooted in the ancient wisdom of indigenous peoples. The Achuar and Kichwa peoples of the Upper Amazon of Ecuador maintain their ancient traditions living in harmony with their rainforest home. It is no accident that in 2008 Ecuador became the first country in the world to recognize Rights of Nature in its Constitution."[4]

However, I suggest it was not the fact that Indigenous peoples "maintain their ancient traditions living in harmony with the rainforest" but their political activism and assertion of recognizing their positions as nations. Akchurin (2015:937–39) in a study that explores how social groups inform institutional change investigates how and why Ecuador became the first country to extend legal rights to nature. Akchurin suggests that it was not merely that rights of nature proponents, mostly lawyers, and technical

scientists, acted during a key political moment, but that the time was made ripe by the long hall of environmental organizations and Indigenous movements. Nevertheless, Akchurin overlooks that point that Indigenous movement's organizing around plurinationality is an assertion of their sovereignty as much as it -than-human relations, the living earth. Thus, an assertion of the importance of Indigenous movements plurinationality cannot be conflated with calls of multiculturalism. I will return to this point below.

For many scholars, the ultimate question is whether RoN can be truly fulfilled. For the most part, scholars, assuming an "alternative knowledge" that exists outside hegemonic regimes, have discussed the institutionalization of different manifestations of the RoN movement, particularly in international spaces. Ecuador is a case in point. Rewriting its constitution in September of 2008, Ecuador was the first to recognize the inherent rights of nature when it ratified by referendum. Whittemore (2011:661), focusing on the Rights of Nature movement in Ecuador, explains that RoN's constitutional amendments are unlikely to be realized because of the legal and political environment (that include the president's false intention, lack of government accountability, lack of standing doctrine, and history of judicial corruption and dysfunction). Whittemore proposes that to counteract the barriers to implementation, "Ecuador needs to award lifetime tenure to its constitutional court judges, codify its standing doctrine, and create an independent body for enforcement of environmental court ruling" (661). In short, so that Ecuador's constitution can include Indigenous Knowledge and the recognition of nature's inherent rights, Whittemore's

recommendation is to entrench the settler state further and expand its bureaucratic reach.[5]

Ariel Rawson counters the claim that Indigenous peoples are at the center of the RoN movement. In her master's thesis, Rawson (2015:1) forcefully pushes back against the positioning of the rights of nature movement as Indigenous lead and inspired, and points out that the movement is a white mainstream environmental movement that constructs Indigenous peoples for its purposes. The movement, like other environmental movements, has figured the Indigenous in its motives, without supporting Indigenous political claims. In Rawson's words, "it is the same self-referential voices, from the same places, and the same organizations producing both the sensibility and visibility of this truth" and the mainstream environmental activists and legal actors, she contends, provide "both the means and the ends" (8).

Acknowledging the work of Indigenous actors is essential, especially in a context where the state often seeks to overlook their contributions to political orders. However, it is a dangerous mistake to incorrectly frame Indigenous activists and organizers efforts toward plurinationalism as one of "multiculturalism." Steinman (2016) argues that the naturalization of minoritization of Indigenous concerns falsely conflates "rights issues" with Indigenous claims to sovereignty. Though Steinman is discussing the naturalization of Indigenous peoples as racial minorities in the United States, the point is applicable across settler-states that occupy Indigenous territories. The Rights of Nature frames Indigenous Knowledge as "cultural knowledge," and cultural knowledge is not "scientific knowledge" but is instead an ethnic knowledge –

one easily co-opted by liberal multicultural democracy. Additionally, RoN acknowledges that rights as a juridical concept are itself a social construction, though they fail to say by who, for what reason, and what terms that construction had been developed. In short, settler-colonial nation-building is not referenced.

The RoN framing of the juridical recognition of nature as "streaming" Indigenous Knowledge from communities is in itself concerning. Similar to Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's (2012) critique of educators referencing "decolonizing education" or "decolonizing student thinking," the Rights of Nature movement reference their inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge alongside other streams of knowledge yet do so with no mention of Indigenous peoples, their struggles, recognition of sovereignty or Indigenous efforts to resist settler state occupation and degradation of their lands. As Tuck and Yang write, "this kind of inclusion is a form of enclosure, dangerous in how it domesticates decolonization" and, as they continue, "It is also a foreclosure, limiting in how it recapitulates dominant theories of social change" (3). Extending their critiques within education to the rights of nature movement, I suggest that the movement orients Indigenous Knowledge toward liberal juridical reform and, by doing so, foreclose Indigenous plurinational resistance. Equally important, I suggest in doing so, RoN ultimately undermines indigenous knowledge grounded in lived modes of existence.

For Indigenous peoples, the land (which includes air and water and more-than-human relatives) is equally about material and cultural survival. Attention to traditional ecological knowledge as place-based fundamentally incorporates

Indigenous concerns that are often sidelined, undermined, and even erased in mainstream environmental movements in favor of multicultural futurities that promise (and have yet to fulfill) just distribution. In these sorts of figurations, Indigenous is "added" as a sort of stream that is incorporated and contributes to, but never undoes, the colonial track.

During a speech at the Tulane Law School's Rights of Nature Symposium, Natalia Green (Pachamama Alliance in Ecuador) framed both lawyers lack of insight and Indigenous peoples' involvement of the unfolding of the Ecuadorian constitution.[6] It was difficult for lawyers, she explains, to first accept the rights of nature framework. The lawyers would say, she delineates, "What are you trying to do?... "Law 101 told us that a subject of rights is a person, and maybe a corporation, but not nature." Lawyers were a problem, and Green juxtaposes their inability to see nature's inherent rights with Indigenous peoples' assumptions that law already recognized such rights, and suggests that indigenous people knew no better about western law. She says, "However, when we spoke about law with indigenous peoples they asked the question," Don't you guys, white western people, have it already?" It was absurd, she explains, for indigenous people to know that these rights were not already part of law. She goes on,

> So, what we were doing with rights of nature in Ecuador is we were really **taking into account a lot of the cultural considerations**, of really recognizing **what our indigenous people were saying**, that nature is our mother and that it needs rights, and that we, the white people, were not taking those into consideration and that's why we needed it into law. (ibid).

Green's storying was, like others who rely on Indigenous Knowledge as a fixed and racialized category bent toward liberal reform, fixed on "cultural considerations" and providing a seeming voice to the marginalized peoples. Perhaps her possessive use of "our Indigenous peoples" was a simple slip of the tongue. Alternatively, Green's words, "our Indigenous peoples," reflect broader taken for granted understanding of Indigenous people assertions of the recognition of their inherent rights as nations in an ever-encroaching state dependent on extractive industry.

## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, POWER, PEOPLE, PLACE

The Indigenous Knowledge debate first strongly emerged in the field of development. In the field of development, the conversation focused on the difference between knowledge "from above" and "from below," or between "science" and "local knowledge" (Weiler 2009). Barnhardt (2005), informed by a politics of inclusion and multiculturalism, and addressing this hierarchy of knowledge and the colonial history of cultural eradication, proposes that non-Natives and Natives have much to learn from one another, where each other's knowledge is respected for its strengths and differences. One way to overcome hierarchy, an argument often proposed, is to simply respect that all knowledge is incomplete and can benefit from a range of perspectives. The case is made, especially the case in sustainable development discourse, that we have everything to lose unless Indigenous knowledge is brought to the table of development and mainstream society listens and learns how to "become one with the earth." The perspective, though importantly highlighting the power

differentials between Native and non-Native cultures and peoples, draws a hard line between the west and rest.

When indigenous knowledge is actively sought by scholars, local placed based knowledge, like the mutual respect between people and place, is excavated for universal truths and meant to assist a range of stakeholders, from large NGOs to very communities from which this knowledge is extracted. What happens in this process is the commodification of knowledge. O'Donoghue and Neluvhalani (2002) argue "that the idea that knowledge is a systemic commodity that people possess also closes off an appreciation that much of our human cultural capital of knowing in and every day is not always expressed as explicit facts of matters" (Van Damme and Neluvhalani 2004:364). Considering knowledge as a product that is produced by particular peoples and utilized for development, in other words, is not only limited in its uses but does a disservice to the very communities it proposes to "empower."

In this next section, I move us from the broader Rights of Nature movement and its organizers to focus on the case of the Colorado River v. the State of Colorado. I focus on here how organizers suggested that juridical recognition of the Colorado River Basin, but particularly the Colorado River, might be protected by the overconsumption of its waters. The basin is facing a severe water shortage.[7]

## FROM PROPERTY TO RIGHTS BEARING

On September 21, 2017, CELDF's International Center for the Rights of Nature Director, Mari Margil, filed a press release announcing that CELDF was serving as a legal adviser to the first-in-the-nation lawsuit where a river was seeking

recognition of its legal rights. The lawsuit was seeking a ruling that that river and its ecosystem "possessed certain rights, including the right to exist, flourish, evolve, regenerate, and restoration." Moreover, the claims further asked the federal court to hold the State of Colorado liable for violating those rights – they charged the state of Colorado dammed and polluted the river.

*The Colorado River v. State of Colorado*

*Colorado River v. Colorado* begins by condemning the failure of the law to protect the natural environment and continues by outlining the complexity of the Colorado River ecosystem and asserts, very poetically, the inability of language to capture the collection of relationship" the river represents. I cite it at length to demonstrate the complainant's assertions:

> 1. No ecosystem is more responsible for the facilitation of life – human and non human – in the arid Southwest than the Colorado River.
>
> 2. Human language lacks the complexity to adequately describe the Colorado River Ecosystem. Any attempt to define it or account for the sheer amount of life made possible by it will necessarily be arbitrary.
>
> 3. Nevertheless, we are asked to bring an accurate description of the Colorado River from the vastenn of the real, physical world into the small confines of a courtroom. We shall start with this: The Colorado River Ecosystem is best understood as a complex collection of relationships.
>
> 4. These relationships are nearly infinite. The most fundamental include the attraction between hydrogen and oxygen: the liquid, ice, and gas that water and heat create together, the irresistible paths fashioned by the interplay of mountain gravity; and the climate born form the intercourse of the Sun's energy and the Earth's atmospheric gasses.[8]

It begins by saying that the river is more complicated than Human language can convey, but because on the terms of the courtroom, the submits and continues:

> If we begin with water, we see – high in the sky – water dancing as vapor on wind currents. When the dance brings enough water together, clouds form…. Before the construction of the dams and large scale diversion, the Colorado flowed 1,450 miles into the Pacific Ocean near Sonora, Mexico. Since the completion of the Glen Canyon Dam in 1963, the Colorado has rarely connected with the sea.(ibid).

The document details how the Colorado River extends beyond the bounds of the riverbanks understood as the "Colorado River," and, in its ability to irrigate both what is now considered American and Mexican cropland, discusses how the river extends beyond the state.

The *Colorado River* argument follows CELDFs general outline of the issue: law fails to protect nature, nature is more complex than what law understands it to be, and the extension of recognition to nature follows the extension to others historically excluded. Furthermore, at the very same time, *Colorado* seems to have forgotten the Indian from which it builds its case throughout the world. It does not explicitly reference Indigenous Knowledge as essential to changing the culture of extraction, nor does it rely on indigeneity to normalize settler presence.

In contrast to CELDF's dominant framings of Indigenous peoples and their "cultural considerations" of Indigenous peoples, the implicit threat of the Indigenous figure and tribal sovereignty are instead used in *Colorado* to rationalize that the river "owns itself." To provide some context, water rights in the basin have long been a contentious battle between environmentalists, big ag, farmers, tourist industry, and tribes. Just speaking recently, the Bureau of Reclamation conducted a Tribal Water Demand (2012) scenario, and it stated that Federally recognized tribes hold quantified rights to a significant amount of water from the Colorado River. Approximately 2.9

million acre-feet of annual diversion and, much of the time, the tribe's rights are senior to other users.[9] It was also the case that some tribes had not yet held quantified rights or claims. The scenario also indicated that tribes could still at some point secure quantified rights though those were not estimated in the study.

The *Colorado River,* nestled between an explanation that the river's distribution exceeds average rainfall and another point that discusses the overconsumption of water by the ag industry, suggests that tribal communities are a potential threat to the river. It maintains that thirty-four Native American reservations exist within the Colorado River Basin and, many of these thirty-four Native American reservations are still seeking guaranteed water fights that were not already figured into the established (and overdistributed) 1992 Colorado River Compact.

Though CELDF, again the legal advisor to the case, highlight their solidarity with Native tribes elsewhere they position the tribes as another group of people, inappropriately so, demanding water. The threat and failure of the Indigenous figure, savage, and ecological savior, is present across cases. In the case of Aotearoa, Biggs (2018:25) writes:

> The Tuhoe wanted was to be truly reconnected with the land that is the very source of their cultural identity. Tamati Kruger, chief negotiator of the Tuhoe's groundbreaking Te Urewera settlement said, "When negotiations began, the Crown had no intention of giving away title to the park. They thought it would be enough to offer us some money and a few seats on the park board." Knowing the Crown would not cede ownership to the Tuhoe, Tamati's team suggested that nobody retain ownership of the park land — rather, the land would own itself. This change shifted more than just governance of the former national park — it was also seen as a step toward sovereignty for the Tuhoe people whose identity is inseparable from the land.

The crown would not cede ownership to the Tuhoe; thus the nation suggested the "river would own itself." Biggs reading these movements asserts that the tribe moves closer to sovereignty had they not relinquished their assertion of "ownership" of the land because the tribe's identity was closer to a different sort of relationship. Yes, as Coombes (2020:1) asserts, " it is uncertain whether recognizing Indigenous rights by tying them to the rights of nature will be enforceable and effective. In Te Urewera, Treaty claims emerged more from land loss than disrespect for biocultural values, but the granting of person rights was intended to avoid the return of ancestral land to the local tribe, Ngai Tuhoe." The point that citizenship was granted as a mechanism to dispossess tribal peoples from the land is also true in the United States and is this citizen dispossession is appropriate to remember as a backdrop of nature inscription as a rights-bearing entity. Todd (2016) suggests that indigenous onto-epistemologies cannot be divorced from Indigenous legal orders. It is through these legal orders that Indigenous peoples are fighting for sovereignty, "fighting to assert their laws, philosophies, and stories on their terms" (18).

## JURIDICAL RECOGNITION OR JURIDICAL REPRESENTATION?

> "Much in the same way that African Americans and women became "visible" to courts in the 1800s, courts and legislatures now are making ecosystems visible to the institutions of government" (Colorado River Ecosystem v. State of Colorado).

The rhetoric that women and African Americans have been set free by their "visibility" also figures in *Colorado River*, like more general assertions made by CELDF. As stated earlier, CELDF proposes that the juridical recognition of nature logically follows women and slaves as entities who have moved from property to

rights-bearing. Nature on this continuum is another entity that rightfully demands inclusion. Like more general CELDF remarks of this move, *Colorado* specifically references the visibility of African American peoples and women while sets the terms of the debate by erasing tribal nations. Tribal nations' interactions, their "ancient wisdom" is not referenced once in *Colorado River*. That is odd because there are about 29- 32 tribes and thousands of Native peoples that live in the Colorado River Basin.[10] The case somewhat opportunistically references the visibility and importance of the rights of African Americans and Women, while it re-inscribes tribal politics as non-existence, an absence from the land, except as a threat to the already scarce river water.

Before discussing more at length, the issue with freeing enslaved Black peoples and women being made "visible" to nature as rhetoric, it is appropriate to turn toward a critical Black feminist scholarship that deals specifically with Blackness and the law. Saidiya Hartman (1997:12) directly takes up the question of juridical recognition of slaves' rights in her discussion of racialized subjection. She outlines how the emancipation of slaves in the U.S is "riddled by inescapable ironies, the foremost of these being the discontinuity between substantial freedom and legal emancipation." For Hartman, Black freedom was not effectively won through emancipation. As Anita Patterson (1999:685) writes, "Hartman's main argument is that emancipation did not do away with racial subjection; instead, the nominal extension of civil rights to freedmen was simply a point of transition between different manifestation or modes of subjection." I will explore this further in similar

critiques made by Indigenous scholars. Saidiya Hartman (1997) writes, "Legal liberalism, as well as critical race theory, has examined issues of race, racism, and equality by focusing on the exclusion and marginalization of those subjects and bodies marked as different and inferior. The disadvantage of this approach is that the proposed remedies and correctives to the problem - inclusion, protection, and greater access of opportunity - do not ultimately challenge the economy of racial production or its truth claims or interrogate the exclusions constitutive of the norm but instead seek to gain equality liberation, and redress within its confines" (234). In short, Hartman redirects claims of emancipation by critically investigating the foundations of freedom and recognition.

Similarly, Michelle Alexander (2012) delineates how racial discrimination tethered to the rhetoric of colorblindness further exacerbates and hides the ways that slavery continues through mass incarceration, even to this day. Incarceration rates in the United States far exceed any other country in the world. Similarly, released in 2016, Ava DuVernay's documentary 13th outlines for her audience how the constitution itself is used for political gain and profit by allowing for the continuance of slavery as punishment of a crime.[11] This "loophole" for slavery, built directly into the constitution's 13th amendment, is one of the main reasons there is a resemblance between the historical plantations and today's prisons. (ibid).

The legal-cultural systems of recognition continue to fail to grasp the complexity of legal subjects in which it is to represent (Armstrong, Gleckman-Krut, and Johnson 2018; Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; Crenshaw 1989, 1991).

Kimberly Crenshaw famously argued that Black women's experiences could not be captured solely by race or gender. To understand their experiences, she asserted, an intersectional approach that takes into consideration of power in its varied forms. The categories of "women" and "Black" are marginalized in dominant conceptions of race and gender. Rather than self-encapsulated and apart from one another, race and gender are intersections of power that inform the experiences of Black women differently. When women of color, particularly Black women, assert their needs to be included in discussions of power, too often, their voices are simply "included." Thus, Crenshaw (1989) built on her seminal work about the ways "race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences" and then went on to emphasize that women of color are included in white feminist analysis and activism in a way that Black women's experiences are simply added, "into an otherwise unaltered framework" (1244). Black women or more broadly women of color, the point is, cannot merely be "included" into white feminism without a restructuring of the terms in which those identities are juridically conceptualized and lived.

Native and Indigenous scholars have similarly challenged popular imagination that proposes constitutional inclusion equates with freedom. The "making visible" of Indigenous peoples through constitutional recognition was a direct act of genocidal and assimilation policies and goals. In the case of Canada, for example, "The Graduate Civilization Act, passed in 1857, sought to assimilate Indian people into Canadian settler society by encouraging enfranchisement." As Canadian Prime

Minister John A Macdonald (1887) was quoted, "The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change."[12]

Women's rights and the abolition of slavery figure centrally in the case, articulated as premises for liberal inclusion of Nature into the field of political recognition. As such, the lawsuit fails to acknowledge that categorical inclusion of women and Black is limited in its focus on "inclusion, protection, and greater access to opportunity"(Hartman 1997), evades the issue of ongoing mass incarceration made possible through the constitution, and elude any real engagement with the limits of inclusion. *Colorado River* provides a critique of the corporate state and western values of private property and consumption, and I suggest it does so through the narrative of a colorblind society. We cannot forsake what this country is made of and continues to extract from Black lives and women of color. We must also not let these sorts of appeals foreclose a discussion of the ongoing reality of settler colonialism.

As I have stated earlier, tribal politics are figured in the case as non-existence except as a threat to already scarce river water. Building on critical Native and Black Feminist critiques of *stratification*, that is, not only is inequality "bad", but its attention demands more than a course of inclusion, I posit an analysis of *occupation* of Indigenous lands, how it is practiced and legitimated through wars, erasure, and environmentalism, and justification of state democracy. It is essential to realize that racism and democracy are not necessarily "conflicting beliefs, but they are part of a general system of American values" (Spring 2007:8). Put differently, democracy in

the guise of "constitutional recognition" does not undo racism, white supremacy, and settler colonialism. The complaint sets the terms of the debate of nature's inclusion by erasing Indigenous peoples from the Colorado River Basin and their interaction with its ecosystem.

Taken together, these elements of the case point not only to how nature is made property by law but also the historical failure of the court to recognize the rights of African Americans and women, two groups now imagined as fully included in the liberal democracy. As others have pointed out, while Indigenous struggles draw from "rights language," Indigenous politics is not about liberal rights within a colonial democracy. What I highlight is that the constitution is about protecting rights to property and, as such, settler colonialism.

In a conversation on patents on Indigenous Knowledge systems and following my question about the limits of the Rights of Nature movement insistence of the juridical recognition of rivers in settler courts of law, a young man insisted that we seemed " damned if we do and damned if we do not [ engage in the legal systems]." He asked in energy that one recognizes when a friend is ready to hit the streets in protest, "What should we do next?" One of the speakers responded, shifting in his chair and leaning back with arms stretched. The man, greying hair pulled back into a ponytail, outlined that there was much work to do, and seemingly stuck between a rock and a hard place, encouraged, you have to "recognize your own sovereignty." Then, sitting forward into the circle, went on to explain:

> One of the perplexing things is that a lot of the [Rights of] Nature movement doesn't look at indigenous people issues and **sovereignty** issues as integral to

> that. But **you can't have one without the other** and that's something that I think it's a lot of work […]And so one of the challenges is to get them on board with understanding that those issues are **interconnected**. You **can't separate the people from the land**.

There is a relationship between our breath and our lives, a sacred relation to the birthing of our nation, our modes of existence as Indigenous peoples. When Native peoples speak of their connection to the land, it is not romantic. It is as Megan Bang and others have offered, "Land is. Therefore, we are."

## LIMITATIONS

Engaged in broader discussions about Indigenous Knowledge, the rights of nature, and treaty sovereignty, I have drawn together the above analysis that engages with broader discussions about the rights of nature and an environmental organization's attempt to gain legal recognition of the Colorado River. Regardless of my attempts to turn my attention toward juridical maneuvers, it remains my responsibility to reach out to the Native womxn and communities on the frontlines of this local battle, and that work involves more than I could complete during this dissertation process. In terms of the overall dissertation and my dedication to work with those directly engaged in local issues, this chapter is in the early stages, considering these commitments, is severely limited. Despite these limitations, I assert here that what many would consider different arenas of organizing, for Indigenous peoples, are deeply entangled, and often this entanglement points to the reality of ongoing dispossession.

## CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

I began the investigation into the Rights of Nature movement I was both cautious and hopeful that juridical recognition could protect the river and basin to which I belong, the Columbia River Basin. As I finish this chapter, I remain hopeful.

I remain hopeful in the struggle to continue our modes of existence that are not easily captured by streaming Indigenous Knowledge. Rights of environmental laws are proposed as legal methods to enact Indigenous ontologies and, in doing so, are a way to protect nature and shift the consciousness of would-be polluters. Despite my critiques and as a rare example of a focused extension of environmental research into the legal arena, the RoN movement demonstrates the importance and reach of scholarship. It is also a living and practical demonstration of praxis, as it makes an effort to put into law the recommendations of environmental justice scholarship.

I suggest that despite environmentalists' goal for new environmental law to expand the consciousness of would-be polluters, the recognition of Nature's rights that is centered on recognition through state courts furthers liberal multicultural narratives at the same time entrenching the colonial legal apparatus. Specifically, I suggest that CELDFs treatment of "nature's rights," despite their referencing of Indigenous worldviews as foundational to the recognition of nature's inherent rights, is another assault on Indigenous sovereignty and wellbeing. *Dispossession opens land to speculation like it opens up Native bodies for criminalization.*

Chapter Endnotes:

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[1] See Kwan, Yvonne Y. "Encountering Memory and Trauma: Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma in Cambodian Americans." Dissertation. University of California, Santa Cruz, 2015. ProQuest LLC. (Kwan discusses how trauma can be triggered by the affective haunting of place, and that these triggers can be passed through generations without the use of words.)

[2] https://celdf.org/advancing-community-rights/rights-of-nature/

[3] Researcher's telephone interview with Shannon Biggs 08/08/2018

[4] Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature. "Rights of Nature – Amazon Rainforest Wisdom Immersion." Non-Profit Website. The Rights of Nature (blog), October 12, 2013. https://therightsofnature.org/amazon-rainforest-immersion/.

[5] As critical recognition scholars point out, this happens elsewhere when activist call for the settler state to recognize the genocide against Indigenous Women, and within the Black Lives Matter movement the call for increased surveillance. Like within the RoN, the MMIW and the BLM concerns are highlighting the maneuvering our communities must do when faced with immediate threat.

[6] Natalie Green. (2017) Pachamama Alliance. Rights of Nature Symposium. Tulane Law School. Ohio.

[7] Berwyn, Bod. "New Study Projects Severe Water Shortages in the Colorado River Basin." InsideClimate News, February 20, 2020. https://insideclimatenews.org/news/20022020/severe-water-shortages-colorado-river-basin-snowpack-albedo. (the newspaper clipping reports that a study showed global

warming is impact the river more than previously expected, with water evaporation being one of the major contributors to the predicted severe shortage.

[8] Colorado v. Colorado State, 1:17-cv-02316-RPM (2017):3 .

[9] U.S. Bureau of Reclamations, Tribal Water Use Scenario (2012), 1.

[10] United States Bureau of Reclamation provides a list of 29 federally recognized tribes in their Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study Appendix 1B. The United States Bureau of Reclamation, "Lower Colorado Region" webpage reports: "The Study, which began in January 2010, was completed in December 2012. It defined current and future imbalances in water supply and demand in the Colorado River Basin and the adjacent areas of the Basin States that receive Colorado River water for approximately the next 50 years, and developed and analyzed adaptation and mitigation strategies to resolve those imbalances." https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/programs/crbstudy.html. There was significant pushback by tribes because their needs were not included in the first report. The "In Drying Colorado River Basin, Indian Tribes are Water Deal Makers" in the Water News of *Circle of Blue:Where Water Speaks* (2015), reports that there are 29 federally recognized tribes and that 13, including the Navajo Nation, have rights that are not yet quantified.

[11] DuVernay, Ava. 13th. Documentary, Crime, News. Forward Movement, Kandoo Films, Netflix, 2016.

[12] *Indigenous Foundations*. (2009)."The Indian Act," Educational Website. Retrieved on July 18, 2020. https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act/

## Chapter 4: Bodies: Water and Womxn on the Frontlines of Extraction

In late 2018, while researching the connections between environmental justice and Indigenous womxn's activism 1, I was invited to story about how water might respond to environmental injustice and racism. In preparation, I thought about how the lands and peoples to which I belong struggle against "slow violence" brought on by the toxic effects of uranium contamination and nuclear pollution (Dillon 2015: 1; Nixon 2011). I also reflected on the ways that activists across the hemisphere have pointed out the connections between the struggle in Standing Rock and their local, ongoing battles against state extraction. In these sorts of cases, I wondered, what would the water say? It was an exciting and inspiring proposition to think with. However, as an Indigenous womxn familiar with the romanticization of Indigenous peoples' abilities to act as mediums between the environment and humans, the call to imagine what water might say sat uncomfortably with me.2 I thought I had better leave the medium work to someone more qualified and instead explore the state's stories to ask, "What stories does the state tell, and how does it tell them?" So I dove in and began to unweave how political actors—in this case, Senator Heidi Heitkamp in her re-election bid—told stories about their responsibility to the nation, Native Americans, and the environment. What tensions were proposed to be undone by her story? What binds might remain? To ground this incursion, after the introduction of key terms, I begin with the story of Senator Heidi Heitkamp and how she proposed to

support both women and big oil. I then briefly explore Indigenous womxn activists' reassertion of their relations to land and water through the expression: "We are Water! We are Sacred!"

Working from the premise that both racialization and settler colonialism are always gendered processes, I reflect throughout this story on the way that white supremacy—the valuing and ordering of racial hierarchies—and settler colonialism—the occupation of Indigenous lands through the erasure of the Indigenous peoples—are underlying structural conditions that are performed and reproduced through the ways that political dilemmas and legislation are articulated. Furthermore, I suggest that these structures are the problem and that they create untenable sets of options that place energy extraction and humans, pipelines, and Indigenous womxn at odds. Nevertheless, as the story will reveal, these tensions are falsely constructed sets of options and conditions that are dependent on the very structures that promise to get us out of these sorts of binds.[3] We must, then, reassert our relations otherwise.

## WHITE SUPREMACY AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

White supremacy is a structure of power that is the foundation of white privilege (Bonds and Inwood 2016). It is different from but related to, the concept white privilege, which focuses our attention to the benefits of whiteness. White privilege, in order to operate, needs white supremacy, the ideological and material domination by white subjects over people of color. White supremacy, as Leonardo (Leonardo 2004:139) explains, "does not form out of random acts of hatred, although these are condemnable, but rather out of patterned and enduring treatment of social

groups. Ultimately, it is secured through a series of actions, the ontological meaning of which is not always transparent to its subjects and objects." In other words, white supremacy is secured through historical and ongoing acts of racial domination, even when these acts are not recognized as securing power over people of color, particularly through anti-black beliefs, laws, and actions.

White supremacy is also spatial. To understand the spatiality of racism, Pulido (2000) asks her readers to imagine the comparison between industrial zones versus suburbs and who lives in which. White supremacy, then, is a process of domination that shapes landscapes and bodies in particular ways. Whiteness, as a relational category, has its origins in the ways that Black and Native peoples were and continue to be differently racialized in relation to property (Harris 1993). Natives were massacred for property and Blacks made enslaveable to work that property; arguably these sorts of practices continue (ibid).

Anti-blackness is made possible through its confluence with settler colonialism. Settler colonialism is a specific colonial formation that includes the ongoing attempt to permanently settle a territory through Indigenous erasure, assimilation, or the outright murder of Indigenous peoples (Tuck and Yang 2012; Veracini 2017; Wolfe 2006). Further, it influences the way we think about and react to race and gender, for example by privileging whiteness and discriminating against women and queer family structures (L. B. Simpson 2014c; Smith 2005, 2012a). The goal of settler colonialism is furthered by imagining certain bodies and lands as disposable, as sacrifice zones. These logics—white supremacy and settler

colonialism—enmesh to form a network of power that make them inseparable. To better understand how they interact and bolster one another, I now turn to the story of Senator Heidi Heitkamp and her maneuvering of the oil versus people bind.

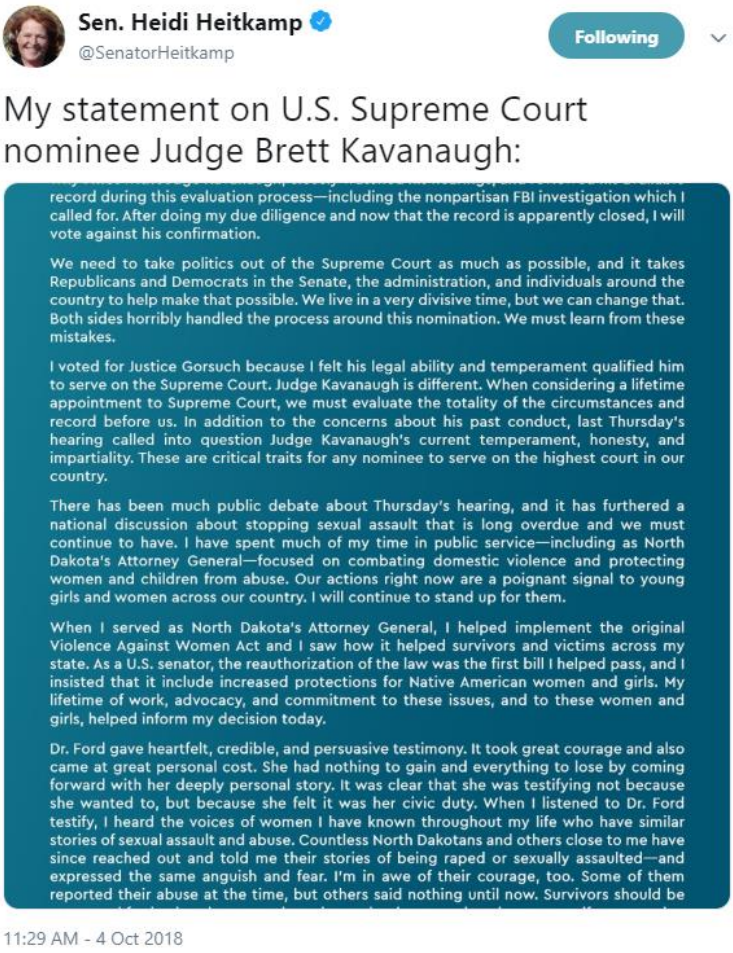


Image 3: Heitkamp makes a statement on her history of protecting Native American Women.

Senator Heidi Heitkamp publicizes her vote against then U.S. Supreme court nominee Judge Brent Kavanaugh as being guided by both concern about his past

conduct and her experience combating domestic violence and protecting women and children from abuse.

## PROTECTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM ABUSE

Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) tweeted in October of 2018 a call to the Senate and others across the country to "take politics out of the Supreme Court." In this tweet, the North Dakota senator provided an explanation of her vote against the confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh. In addition to pointing out Kavanaugh's questionable "temperament, honesty, and impartiality," Senator Heitkamp noted that her vote against his confirmation was informed by her time in public service that "focused on combating domestic violence and protecting women and children from abuse" as North Dakota's Attorney General. Heitkamp goes on to explain:

I helped implement the original Violence Against Women Act and I saw how it helped survivors and victims across my state. As a U.S. senator, the reauthorization of the law was the first bill I helped pass, and I insisted that it include increased protections for Native American women and girls. My lifetime of work, advocacy, and commitment to these issues, and to these women and girls, helped inform my decision today.

For many, Senator Heitkamp has, across her years of service, pursued a clear goal to eliminate violence against women, particularly for Native women.[4] The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994, the first comprehensive federal legislative package to address domestic violence, was and is a big deal. I remember my undergraduate student discussions in both Chicano/a Studies and American Indian

Studies about its potential impact in our communities. The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund, Legal Momentum (n.d.), has called it a "triumph for women's groups" and acknowledged the four long years of networking and lobbying that enabled the movement to produce a "paradigm shift in how the issue of violence against women is addressed."[5]

As Senator Heitkamp indicated, VAWA was extended over the years to reach underserved communities. The VAWA 2000 and 2005 reauthorizations expanded the initial mandate that focused on criminal justice responses to also include prevention and "protection for battered immigrants, sexual assault survivors, and victims of dating violence" (Legal Momentum n.d.). The 2005 reauthorization, which Heitkamp helped to pass, was meant to improve the original legislation "by providing an increased focus on access to services for communities of color, immigrant women, and tribal and Native communities" (Legal Momentum n.d.). Further, the 2013 VAWA reauthorization extended access to LGBT communities and reaffirmed tribal authority to assert jurisdiction over non-native perpetrators. Heitkamp (and, by extension, the state) joined efforts with others to eliminate violence against women.[6]

Yet despite Senator Heitkamp's lifetime advocacy for ending violence against women she is also a long-time supporter of gas and oil pipelines: she served as an external director at the Dakota Gasification Company until her election to Attorney General of North Dakota. North Dakota's production and export of oil is second in the nation.[7] The extraction and production of energy that serves the state (both at the

local and national levels) and industry disproportionately burdens communities of color. [8]

## ON THE FRONT LINE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION

That is worth repeating: people of color and low-income communities often bear the largest burdens of environmental contamination and within those communities, women's and children's bodies are particularly susceptible (Bullard 2000, 2003; Bullard et al. 2007; Mohai, Pellow, and Roberts 2009) The Environmental Protection Agency reports that tribal communities live in close proximity to the nation's most polluted sites and "environmental mitigation for these communities lags significantly behind that for nontribal communities" (Hoover 2017:8). Infant mortality, a basic measure for public health across the world, decreased for all racialized groups in the U.S. from 2005–2014 *except for Natives* (Mathews and Driscoll 2017). As Barbara Rose Johnston's (1994) research makes clear, the price for consumption and environmental degradation is not paid equally.


Image 4: Reminiscent of graffiti on Alcatraz Island, Indian Land is written across a concrete divider. Dividers were used as barricades to stop water protectors nearing construction of the DAPL pipeline. Image courtesy of Alex Flett.

Indigenous lands are more likely to be "sacrificed" and as such, Native women's bodies are more likely to experience the embodiment of environmental toxins. This is what is meant by saying these logics literally form our bodies, human and non, in particular ways. It was a conscious and strategic choice to reroute the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) away from its first permitted water crossing north of Bismarck, North Dakota to just upstream of the Standing Rock Sioux tribal reservation. It is also true that Indigenous women experience gender-motivated violence more often than any other racialized group and environmental ruin has been correlated to violence against women. 9 Like rape as an outcome of militarization, intense sites of development can similarly manifest violence against women (Falcón

2001). Paraphrasing Bea Hanson, former Principal Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence against Women (OVW), the OVW 2014 Tribal Consultation Report to Congress informed readers that the "rapid development for oil production in the Bakken region has brought a massive influx of itinerant workers and a sharp increase in crime and law enforcement issues, including sex and human trafficking" (Department of Justice 2015: 3). Furthermore, the 2014-2015 Violence Against Women Act Conferrals with Stakeholders reported to congress that funding was increased to Native communities in the Bakken region because of the increase in violent crimes associated with the population boom tied to gas and oil exploration (Department of Justice 2017). The response by the OVW reported in these documents, however, goes only as far as to provide services to affected ommunities and does not address the underlying issues of settler colonialism and white supremacy.


Image 5. Regina Brave (background), also present at Wounded Knee 1973, picks up around the camp at Oceti Sakowin. The sign outside her camp at Oceti Sakowin reads, "Article VI – Treaties are the Supreme Law of the land (U.S. Constitution). Treat Territory. You are in violation! State has no jurisdiction." As others were readying for a "mandatory evacuation deadline," Brave was asked if she was going to relocate to another camp. She responds, "I will not relocate. I'm staying right here."

Despite the disproportionate environmental burden on communities already marginalized, Senator Heitkamp framed energy development, whether in the form of extraction or transportation, as for the nation. As Spice (2018: 40) points out, the state often legitimizes its settler projects through the reference of "critical infrastructure," the material and technological energy networks like oil pipelines meant to support the state and its citizens. This critical infrastructure for the nation-state and its citizens approach is explored and reframed by Anne Spice (2018:44) to show how critical infrastructure is, in fact, "invasive infrastructure." As she writes, "In North America, the expansion of oil and gas networks is tightly linked to the continued displacement, pacification, and expropriation of unceded and treaty-guaranteed lands historically inhabited and cared for by Indigenous peoples" (Spice 2018:45). [10] What is *for the nation*, in other words, is often *not* for Indigenous peoples.

PICKING SIDES

Senator Heitkamp, considered an ally to both Native women and big oil, was pressured to pick sides. With the DAPL protest supposedly behind us, the press and the public discussed Senator's Heitkamp's second-term run for Senate as being stuck in a bind between North Dakota's tribal vote and pipeline supporters. [11] In 2018, associated press member James Macpherson quoted Dave Archambault saying:

> Former Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault, who was the face and voice of the fight against the Dakota Access oil pipeline, said he met with Heitkamp when the pipeline was first proposed and long before the protests "to let her know this was going to be an issue for us."

> "I think she was caught in the middle. But when her hand was forced, she chose the pipeline," Archambault said.
>
> "She always said she supported Indian Country, but when all of Indian Country from across the nation was at Standing Rock—she didn't show up…. She didn't truly listen to what Indian Country was saying," Archambault said. "Now she's in a bind."[12]

My highlighting of Heitkamp's bind is not an attempt to undermine the Democratic Party in general or Heitkamp in particular nor to diminish her contributions; after all, many other government leaders across the two-party system have far less progressive records and there are substantive differences across the parties. [13] Though she lost her re-election bid to senate, her self-positioning in relation to oil and gendered violence remain important to consider. Furthermore, I focus on Heitkamp as an agent of the state more than personally because I believe her to be sincere in her concern for women in general and, in particular, Native women and children.

Heitkamp, in fact, and here is the rub, said she supported oil pipelines *and* supported women. Yet for the senator to overcome the bind, Native womxn find themselves in the double-bind of being protected while simultaneously being threatened. The point that the state cannot protect Indigenous people broadly, and Indigenous womxn particularly, from threat of its presence makes obvious that decolonization is not about sincerity and commitments to democracy (see Tuck and Yang 2012). When *any of us* commit to turning to the state to redistribute resources we are limited to particular strategies that cannot be truly transformative of the settler

state and thus cannot undo the inherent and interconnected oppressive logics of settler colonialism and white supremacy.

## INTERSECTIONS OF POWER CREATE PLACE

Heitkamp's bind, as described above, highlights intersections of power that literally inform the construction of land and water in particular ways. As a set of ongoing material practices, white supremacy and settler colonialism are not things of the past nor some rare extreme position (Bonds and Inwood 2016). Rather, these ongoing ideologies and practices lay the foundation for differently constructed land and bodies. As Cheryl Harris (1993) writes, race and property are deeply interrelated concepts. She explains that whiteness, initially constructed as a form of racial identity, evolved into a form of property historically and presently acknowledged and protected in American law. The state, as distributor of resources and enforcer of laws that are based on hierarchies of race, is itself a racial project. Citing Pulido (2006), Bonds and Inwood (2016:728–29) make the point that movements challenging unfettered accumulation and racism must recognize settler colonialism as a material condition that was foundational for "differentially racialized geographies" to occur in the first place. That is to say that the material conditions of settler colonialism inform the way that land, including the people that live on it, are both imagined and produced.

As such, white supremacy is not a problem to be solved outside of ourselves, but rather a socially and politically productive force that must be countered (Bonds

and Inwood 2016). The actions of our allies and leaders, then, speak louder than words; quite simply, what you do to our lands you do to our bodies.


Image 6. Highlighting the link between the Water Protector movement and the MMIW movement, Ann Ford (Coeur d'Alene) at the Indigenous Peoples March in Spokane, WA 2019, holds a march poster that reads, "I stand with Standing Rock and Want to Bring Awareness of Missing Indigenous Women in our Country." Image courtesy of Rawhide Press, Spokane Tribe, February 18, 2019.

MAKING THE "INDIAN PROBLEM"

From this perspective, Heitkamp's work with VAWA and simultaneous dismissal of Standing Rock's sovereign right to refuse the pipeline is not a double-bind. Rather, it is an extension of the long-running maneuvering of the state to deal with the "Indian Problem" ( for discussion on maneuvering in education see Lomawaima and McCarty 2006). The "Indian Problem," from the perspective of the state, began with Indigenous interference of westward expansion. This perspective on

interference of westward expansion motivated the doctrine of "Killing the Indian and Saving the Man," the goal to culturally eliminate Indigenous peoples from the so-called Americas (Churchill 2004). The "Indian Problem" later manifests in locating dysfunction in the form of violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide as inherent to a community, and especially of our youth. Our youth are marked at risk and become the problem that needs to be solved through state-led interventions (Dhillon 2017). We continue to be perceived as a problem and Indigenous nations across the world, particularly their leaders (like Berta Caceres), are strategically targeted and murdered for their refusal to allow attacks against the people and land.[14]

In the context of Heitkamp's bind, tribal nations in the U.S., particularly their voters, are read as something that needs to be out-maneuvered. When Heitkamp refused to speak up against the violation of Indigenous sovereignty during the Indigenous-led protest to DAPL, reporters warned she could potentially lose too many votes from the Native community to secure her second term. Along these lines, a reporter wrote that Heitkamp had a "Native voter problem."[15] I argue, based on what has been outlined here, the problem is the structure, actually, of settler colonialism.

Not only is it important for allies to come to terms with settler colonialism, but environmental justice advocates need to equally address the ways in which environmental justice practices have supported the logic of Indigenous erasure. In fact, through Heitkamp's legislative moves, she perpetuated a failure common in much environmental scholarship that "seeks a path to justice through the state" and


Image 7. Two womxn rest next to Community Gardens water tank at camp. Image courtesy of Kyra Antone.

fails to recognize the relationship between environmental degradation and settler colonialism (Pellow 2018: 5). As Dhillon (2016) firmly asserts, settler colonialism is connected to environmental ruin. Yet settler colonialism is a difficult thing to acknowledge and discuss for many people. Heitkamp, we learn, is not alone in this struggle. The state, really not represented by any one senator, is borne through our daily actions and practices. We have to tell different stories about who we are and how we are related.


Image 8. Groups of Water Protectors march through camp with banners that read ‘Mni Wiconi’ and ‘Indigenous Sovereignty Protects Water.’ Image courtesy of the author’s.


Image 9. Marches north on Highway 1806 to the Backwater Bridge militarized barricade and back through camp were part of actions to hold prayerful space and bring attention to the threat of the Dakota Access Pipeline. November 1, 2016. Image author’s.

## REASSERTING RELATIONS TO LAND

So, I was asked, "What story does *water* tell?" I want to say that I don't know. That we are all related? Perhaps. It is a powerful assertion but one that is often appropriated into mainstream environmental activism to assert belonging while forgetting what it means to be a good relative. Despite co-optation, Indigenous teachings and counterimagery continue both because of and in spite of settler colonialism (LeFevre 2013). Importantly, Water is Life, an aphorism that became increasingly popularized during the Standing Rock campaign, continues to be accompanied by related expressions: We are Water and Womxn are Sacred.

Gathering Native and non-native womxn into a teepee at Standing Rock and surrounded by onlookers including myself and my seven-month-old, Melaine Stoneman (Sicangu Lakota) explained the long-theorized relation between these expressions by asserting:

> People ask me how they can help. I tell them your first responsibility is to reconnect with the water. Water is Life. Your presence here is of no help if you do not first connect to water. And remember that women are Water Carriers, we give life. We hold life for nine months in water, and through water each of you entered this world. See that little one there [she points to my child intonating in my lap], we do not "shush" him; we recognize him; we acknowledge him; he is sacred. Mni Wiconi is not just a phrase to shout across camp. It…is a prayer.

At Standing Rock, where thousands from across many different Nations gathered, where protest and prayer came together, womxn activists highlighted the sanctity of life and the important relationships we hold with water and, even if just by extension, with our children and with each other.

Well aware of feminist scholarship that refuses to frame women as sacred and critical postmodern feminism that questions the very category of women, I want to make my reasoning clear here of why I hold up the importance of the statement made by Indigenous womxn activists that water, womxn, and children are sacred. The point is not to reproduce or hierarchize a particular category of sex or gender or erase important differences; instead the words reassert Indigenous womxn's place in the sacred web. This assertion made by Indigenous womxn across Turtle Island and echoed by Melaine Stoneman is not meant to partake in the construction of Indigenous womxn as "caretakers of the land" that occludes the violence both inside and outside of our communities (A. Simpson 2014a:148). The two-spirit nation, as Candi Brings Plenty (2016) points out, continues the long history as frontline healers and warriors and now must fight against the derogation of queer Indigenous peoples both inside and outside of Indian Country.[16] In this vein, as my first section showed, the point is to assist in the work that moves beyond any one category of innocence and instead to reassert our relation to land, self, and other. Water is Life was not shared as a new rallying cry to produce a flat, colorless, disembodied reality, but rather was transmitted as an embodied practice that asserts our connections to land, water, and others within a context that separates our existence.

Image 10. Tribal treaty flags standing against the evening sky. Standing Rock is noted as a time when Indigenous nations from across the country and world came together in an unprecedented united front. Image courtesy of Rawhide Press, Spokane Tribe.

As outlined earlier, these prayers are made within and against a space that arranges us in particular ways, and diverts and harvests energy toward capitalist ends. This story continues and these words, then, call us both to participate and to responsibly *move* from, with, and toward a different world (see Sherwood 2015). A world of different belonging where we are not made sick. A different belonging where to live we are not forced to violently extract energy from our rivers or other sacred elements. Where Black lives matter, women are sacred, and children are not ripped from their families for the sake of a corporate-state border war. Where we don't have to cite statistics like "On some reservations, Indigenous women are murdered at more than 10 times the national average" and testify that this violence follows the violence experienced by our First Mother—like the violence passed through my great grandmother, to my grandmother, to my mother, and through me.[17]

As these womxn have taught me, and Tamara Bernard (2016) reassures, we are so much more.[18]

## THE LAND SPEAKS THROUGH OUR BODIES

When we and the land are more than property and the state is inherently white supremacist and settler, it can be problematic when anti-violence movements depend on the state to solve the problems of injustice. As important as the focus is on providing multicultural services to survivors of violence, it is limited. Said differently providing "culturally appropriate" services for tribal communities to address gendered violence evades the foundational issues in which this arrangement, called nation-state development, is unlivable for *all* of us. As youth from the Native Youth Sexual Health Network put it: we need to talk about and work from these connections because the land speaks through our bodies.[19]

And so I close by turning toward a young Native womxn who organizes with other youth against suicide in their community. Jasilyn Charger (2016) was asked to comment on the fight against the Black Snake, understood as both DAPL and as a greed that feeds into our communities, and why she ran over 2,000 miles with others from North Dakota to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C. to draw attention to the violent threat posed by the DAPL pipeline against the Missouri River. She explained:

> We wanted to run for our lives. We connected the past and the future and we put them together. Because the past is what we're leaving behind for our youth, and the future is us. What better voice for the past, than the future…because we are the embodiment of both. We carry our past and our future with us. And that's what we have to pass down to our children as a

> legacy.…It's our lives that are on the line.…We need to make way for our future.[20]

For Jasilyn, this future is a very real embodiment of both her ancestors and the children to come.

## CONCLUSION

To overcome the bind of energy development versus Indian tribes, Heitkamp said she supported both big oil *and* protecting Native women. Given the fact that increases in sexual violence and assault have been shown to increase where energy development is enacted, the double bind, a declaration of conflicted statements, exposes itself in the proposition that we, Indigenous peoples, are both superfluous to the nation-state project and protected by it. More particularly, what the story of Heitkamp's choices demonstrates is how liberal attempts to overcome supposed binds ultimately fail to get at the foundations of the gendered structures and processes of white supremacy and settle colonialism. As such, water politics and activists' strategies must be understood against the background of these logics if we are to ultimately undermine environmental ruin and put back into order our sacred relations.

When asked by young men of the Red Warrior camp to help provide direction in the days approaching the evacuation deadline given by the state of North Dakota, young womxn responded by organizing an Honoring our Grandmothers Gathering and practiced a ceremonial raising of the teepee, explaining to participants its relation to the womxn, family, and stars. The womxn hurriedly but steadily dressed the teepee as militarized police approached, who warned that they would disassemble the teepee and remove it from Highway 1806. Image courtesy of the author.

I started this story by explaining my hesitancy to story what water might say or do in response to environmental injustices. In reflection, I realize I cannot escape storying water or my responsibility as a medium. In fact, we all share this responsibility. As this article has demonstrated, in more ways than one, the land and water speak through our bodies. We are water. We are Sacred.

Chapter Endnotes:

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[1] As stated earlier in the dissertation, Womxn is a term used to highlight and push back against the power dynamics that are expressed through languages, cultures, and institutions that situate women as an extension of men, and men as the natural category of human. The term also acknowledges in our communities our transgender womxn and womxn of color.

[2] For discussion of the Fourth World that conceptualizes Indigeneity as informed by the settler colonial context but not contained please see Manuel and Posluns' 1974 The Fourth World: An Indian Reality published by Collier-Macmillan Canada, Ltd; for a discussion on the term Indigenous in international legal framework see Anaya's 2003 Indigenous Peoples in International Law published by Oxford University Press; toward an Original Nation approach in international law see Fukurai's 2019 "Original Nation Approaches to 'Inter-National' Law (ONAIL): Decoupling of the Nation and the State and the Search for New Legal Orders," Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies 26 (1): 199-262; and for a discussion on the capitalized versus non-capitalized form of Indigenous please see Veracini's 2017 "Decolonizing Settler Colonialism: Kill the Settler in Him and Save the Man" in American Indian Culture and Research Journal 41 (1): 1-18.

[3] Thank you to reviewers and editors for helping me draw out the arguments and lines of this story.

[4] Many Native womxn and their communities have themselves long organized against domestic violence. Tillie Black Bear (Sicangu Lakota/Rosebud Sioux) was one of

these leaders, recognized as one of the 10 founders of the domestic violence movement in the United States. Elsewhere, I focus on the contribution of these leaders.

[5] Legal Momentum. "History of VAWA | Legal Momentum." Non-Profit Website. Legal Momentum, n.d. https://www.legalmomentum.org/history-vawa.

[6] I use the state to stand in for the settler state, which is also inherently racial, heteropatriarchal, and economically driven. To learn more about the discussion of the settler state, gendered violence, and understandings of how the settler state and these forces "move through bodies," see Audra Simpson (2016) "The State Is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty." Theory & Event 19, no. 4 (October 12, 2016). http://muse.jhu.edu/article/633280.

[7] U.S. Energy Information Administration. "North Dakota - State Energy Profile Analysis - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)." Government Website. EIA.gov, n.d. https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=ND.

[8] To learn more about the ways that extractive industries disproportionately impact communities of color and Indigenous Nations see (Checker 2007; O'Rourke and Connolly 2003; Pellow 2016; Preston 2013; Pulido 2006; Voyles 2015). NYC Stands with Standing Rock Collective 2016 provides a wonderful syllabus that helps readers begin to explore these connections. The state and industry are increasingly hard to disentangle. Pellow (2001) urges sociologists of social movements to move toward highlighting the political and economic processes involved in environmental contamination and responses.

[9] Here I am pointing out the racialized experience of violence. We cannot forget, however, that race is both sexed and gendered, and must keep in mind that the violence affecting the LGBTQ2 community is grossly underreported.

[10] I would like to thank a peer reviewer for bringing my attention to this important source.

[11] The resistance to DAPL is an extension of a long and ongoing struggle against settler colonialism, as Nick Estes (Estes 2016) points out. While the official line is that DAPL contestation is resolved, the reality is more complicated, and the fight continues.

[12] MacPherson, James. "Pipeline Pique Complicates Heitkamp's 2nd Term Senate Hopes." Star Tribune, May 27, 2018. http://www.startribune.com/pipeline-pique-complicates-heitkamp-s-2nd-term-senate-hopes/483808071/.

[13] For information on rates of sexual violence particular to Native women, a critique of what the government chooses to privilege, and how the Trump administration restricted the U.S. DOJ's definition of domestic abuse and sexual assault, please see Nobiss, Christine. "VAWA's Expiration Was Devastating For Indigenous Women. But It's Part Of A Larger Problem." News Website. Bustle, February 1, 2019. https://www.bustle.com/p/vawas-expiration-was-devastating-for-indigenous-women-but-its-part-of-a-larger-problem-15915273.

[14] Ulmanu, Monica, Alan Evans, and Georgia Brown. "The Defenders: Recording the Deaths of Environmental Defenders around the World." News Website. the Guardian,

July 13, 2017. http://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2017/jul/13/the-defenders-tracker.

[15] Martin, Nick. “Heidi Heitkamp Has a Native Voter Problem.” News Website. Splinter News, October 8, 2018. https://splinternews.com/heidi-heitkamp-has-a-native-voter-problem-1829606905.

[16] Larkey, Molly. “Meet the Leader of the Two-Spirit Camp at Standing Rock.” Magazine Website. GO Magazine, January 13, 2017. http://gomag.com/article/meet-the-leader-of-the-two-spirit-camp-at-standing-rock/.

[17] Indian Law Resource Center. “Ending Violence Against Native Women | Indian Law Resource Center.” Non-Profit Website. Indian Law. Accessed July 23, 2020. https://indianlaw.org/issue/ending-violence-against-native-women?page=1&xid=17259%2C15700021%2C15700124%2C15700186%2C15700191%2C15700201%2C15700237%2C15700242%2C15700248%2C15700250.

[18] Bernard, Tamara. “We Are More than Murdered and Missing.” YouTube Video. TEDx Thunder Bay, July 18, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fylLSRQ5kx8.

[19] Native Youth Sexual Health Network. “What We Believe In.” Non-Profit Website. Native Youth Sexual Health Network, n.d. http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/whatwebelievein.html.

[20] Confluence Documentary. “Voices of Standing Rock - Jasilyn Charger Full Interview.” Facebook, October 12, 2016. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1254403517943257.

## Chapter 5: Education as a Frontline: In the Service of What?

> "Perhaps a history of service-learning seeking to challenge White normativity could reorient its discussion of service-learning vis-à-vis volunteerism toward traditions of activism and community organizing. Not only would these traditions potentially bring more people of varied races and ethnicities to the foreground as leaders in the movement, but they may also provide more examples of service not motivated by charity and noblesse oblige" (Melissa Bocci 2015).

> If furthering the aims of insurgence and resurgence (and not individual recognition) is what we hold paramount, then perhaps one of the most radical refusals we can authorize is to work together as one; to enact a kind of Zapatismo scholarship and a balaclava politics where the work of the collectivity is intentionally structured to obscure and transcend the single voice, body, and life." (Sandy Grande 2018)

In this chapter, I explore the goals of service-learning through as an educational frontline. I mainly investigate the way that the university frames its service-learning practicum on its websites in the context of settler colonialism and white supremacy. I search from reoccurring themes found in the university's articulation of service-learning and its relationship to the practices and maintenance of white settler-colonialism in California.

### THE FRONTLINES OF EDUCATION

Knowledge production always takes place in the presence of power relations. In this way, education can be understood as a frontline. Readers might think historically to boarding schools and the distinct purpose of eradicating the Indigenous peoples through the eradication of culture to understand this statement. Education, as a frontline for Indigenous nations as much for the wider population, especially the racialized and gendered and sexually minoritized, is an important site to explore in

terms of how violence is enacted and normalized. Like the violence we find in other places, the violence experienced in schools can be both physical and subjective, and as scholars have pointed out, these two things are intertwined. It is essential to acknowledge, however, that the genocide of Indigenous peoples is not a past act but an ongoing process.

These ongoing violent processes are inside our schools today. The scenes captured by cell phones or school video cameras of "safety officers" in the classroom throwing small black and brown bodies against the floors and walls are the only sort of scene that pushes back against the assumption that is understanding education as a frontline is outdated. Like the violence we find in other places, the violence experienced in schools can be both physical and subjective, and, again, these two things are "intertwined." Educational abolitionist Love writes about the "spirit murdering" of young black and brown children, where the murdering of their spirit is comparative to the physical murder. For example, like Trayvon Martin, who was stereotyped, charged, and executed by George Zimmerman because of the color of Trayvon's skin, young black and brown children are often approached, stereotyped, and the classrooms their "spirits executed."

Education, particularly those involved in service-learning, posit violence and inequality take place outside of schools, and as outstanding institutions, universities and colleges direct their students out into the "at risk" communities to assist with community ills. Students push back against this problematic framing. In the winter quarter of the 2019-2020 school year, graduate students striking for a living wage

were joined by undergraduates who supported the move for a livable wage and brought attention to the institutional lack of support for BIPOC students. The university responded by militarizing the entrance of the university, where students had set up their base for the strike and protests. What does this mean for those of us interested in the potential for enacting radical approaches to learning that link theory and practice?

On February 21, 2020 Nick Mitchell, Associate Professor of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Program and Feminist Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz posted a letter to the university's Critical Race & Ethnic Studies website. Mitchell, witness to the frontlines of the University of California, Santa Cruz explained how at first they interpreted their winning of the Chancellor's Diversity Award, awarded the year prior by Chancellor George Blumenthal as an acknowledgment of the "collective worlds that made [Mitchell's scholarship and service] possible." After witnessing the response to the student pickets and protest, Mitchell drew attention to the irony that university spaces rewarded "diversity" only when it remained silent. The letter, directed to the Chancellor, Cynthia Larive, stated:

> As one of a scarce few black faculty members at UCSC, witnessing this response been disturbing, to say the least. If you only value diversity insofar as it smiles but sweep it aside when it expresses its grievances in public confrontation, your commitment to diversity is shallow and superficial at best. At worst it is exploitative and opportunistic.[1]

Writing about service learning from an anti-colonial and abolitionist framework, I gain from Mitchell's actions, the protests, and the militarization of the university's entrance an opportunity to think about what service-learning, as a teaching and

learning approach, has to offer and its limits as its currently framed by a great deal of service-learning scholarship.

As Sheffield (2015:1) has written, "CSL Projects, increasingly, have little to do with the examination of systematic modes of oppression grounded in deeply felt problems; little to do with understanding the postmodern context of surveillance and corporate/governmental control; little to do with the community building via deeply abiding personal transformation; little to do with growing rates of poverty; and, precious little to do with acting locally toward truly reconstructing communities rife with such traits" (Sheffield 2015: 1). At the same time, Eyler, Giles, and Braxton (1997:13) write that service-learning "Provid[es] opportunities for students to link community service with their classroom experience adds value to their college experience and enhances qualities of understanding and commitment that lead to effective citizenship participation." Reflecting on the different ways service-learning has been both appraised and critiqued, especially in the production of civic participation, it is useful to explore what things, if any, can be addressed by those of interest in addressing capitalist-state control and personal and collective transformation.

I suggest, if, as Mitchell explained about the awarding of "diversity" by the university that remains "shallow and superficial" and "exploitative and opportunistic" then the continual appraisal of service-learning as connecting the university and "at-risk" communities is similarly "shallow and superficial" and "exploitative and opportunistic." As Craig Steven Wilder (2013:11) has maintained,

"The academy never stood apart from American slavery – in fact, it stood beside church and state as the third pillar of a civilization built on bondage." As Grande (2018) suggests, student activists' charges of "racism within the settler academy are often met with surprise and disbelief" (48).

As such, this chapter seeks to lay a foundation for further analysis of the frontlines of education by examining the University of California, Santa Cruz service-learning websites, and its actions on the frontlines of education. I take here an approach, as I do across the dissertation, to think about the depoliticization of our frontlines, the co-optation of Indigenous Knowledge, and how we might orient ourselves otherwise. As Sandy Grande (2018:60) has written

> "The struggle [to build interconnected movements toward decolonization] is real. It is both material and psychological, both method and politics, and thus must necessarily straddle the both/and (as opposed to either/or) coordinates of revolutionary change. In terms of process, this means working simultaneously beyond resistance and through the enactment of refusal – as fugitive, abolitionist, and Indigenous, sovereign subject."

Heading this call, I examine what service-learning is directed "towards," at least on a university's websites. Though I am not here conducting classrooms observations nor am I currently engaged in teaching a 'service-learning' course, narrowing in on The second half of the paper begins to imagine what "straddling" service-learning might look like that addresses the issues of the "shallow and superficial" and the "exploitative and opportunistic" of the larger university directly. From this analysis, I propose that service-learning on stolen land must directly respond to the concerns of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students working on and from within

educational spaces as frontlines spaces to disrupt the very foundations upon which the university stands.

## SCHOLARSHIP OF ENGAGEMENT

Service-learning is said to belong to the broader field of "scholarship of engagement." According to Butin (2006:473), the scholarship of engagement can include "experiential education, service-learning, undergraduate research, community-based research, the scholarship of teaching and learning movement, or stronger relationships with local communities. A scholarship of engagement is seen to link theory and practice, cognitive and affective learning, and colleges with communities." The linking of theory and praxis is one of the reasons I am most interested in strengths and limits of service-learning. Many, I believe, have similar interests.

At the heart of much social justice and ecologically oriented discussions is the question of how educators are to teach environmental justice and social justice issues at the same time inspire their students to get actively involved in the world around them. According to scholars, service-learning can be one of the most productive ways to introduce students to social justice issues, including environmental justice, and inspire them to get involved in making a difference. More broadly, Mitchell, Donahue and Young-Law (2012:612) write, "Faculty incorporate service learning because they want to bridge theory and practice, encourage active learning, and provide opportunities for students to develop skills in leadership, communication, cultural understanding, and critical thinking." In short, many of us what to both inspire change

and provide practical skills to our students so that they can exceed as change makers once they leave the university.

Civic engagement is a crucial defining element of liberal education projects and can be found in nearly every post-secondary mission statement of service-learning descriptions anywhere in the world today. Service-learning texts, particularly university websites and scholarly articles, conceptualize service-learning as execution of the university's broad mission to address social inequality through the educational building of skills and political efficacy. Butin (2006:476) suggests, regardless of the way that service-learning is institutionalized in academia it is proposed as "the skeleton key to unlock the power and potential of postsecondary education as a force for democracy and social justice." As he goes onto suggest, however, because of the "soft funding" that so many devoted practitioners experience, much debate has not focused on how to institutionalize service-learning. Antonio, Astin, and Cross (2000) point out, service-learning is overwhelming conducted my the most marginalized in academia, including the untenured, women, and faculty of color. For service-learning to be as transformative as its practitioners imagine, Butin (2006:474) suggests that its potential can "be fostered only by explicating the limits of present-day theoretical foundation and pedagogical practices…"

Anti-colonialist and abolitionist educators point out that public schooling, including the university, takes for granted its white supremacist legacy and colonial aspirations in the Americas. For example, the taken for granted whiteness of schooling displaces Indigenous relations to place through both their literal occupation

and their framing of education as a “civic engagement” process by which students are connected to their democratic responsibilities. As, anti-colonial and abolition scholars point out, what happens when the nation-state is inherently anti-black and genocidal? Thus the question posed by settler-colonial and abolitionist scholars "Toward what justice?" is relevant to service-learning and highlights the need for us to reflect on how and "where" we are directing students if and when educators are concerned with decolonial and abolitionist horizons. The question becomes not how do we best institutionalize service-learning, instead the question becomes for service-learning educators to what are we connecting our students and for what reasons?

I suggest that Indigenous activist leaders tend to conceptualize participation in social movement frontlines as an engagement both the “past” and “future,” and as a sacred relation with both others and the land. Land is not a “stagnate” category from which we act; rather, land is peoplehood. As Goeman (2008:25) writes, “The inability to bind land to settler societies or expunge Indigenous sense place is the anxiety producing thorn in the side of nation-states.” That is, when we refuse to give up our relations to land, we refuse to give into the settler-state’s ideas of property made possible through white supremacy. Before discussing what I think this might look like on educational frontlines, I want to discuss how service-learning has been framed by the majority, both in the political and educational spheres.

## THE SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT: LEARNING, SERVING, AND ENHANCING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

The attention to service-learning seems to be growing, and educators have generally not been alone in the desire to connect education and action. The Clinton

Administration focused on the role of community colleges and universities to better "prepare students for active involvement in community problem-solving and civic affairs" and colleges and universities were "encouraged to promote new service-learning opportunities through financial support by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education" (Reardon 1994:44). At the university level, California State University Monterrey Bay (CSU-MB) is known for its local commitment to service-learning, and the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) institutionalization of service-learning throughout its different colleges is worth noting. According to the CSU, Monterey Bay website, the university is "recognized as a national leader in service-learning and civic engagement" and in 2017-2018 academic year placed over 3,000 students in community agencies providing close to 115,000 hours that totaled 3.3 million dollars of community and volunteer service.[2] On my own UC campus and specifically within the Rachel Carson College, a college named after a leading environmental scholar, students are thoughtfully placed in a range of sites from high schools, to hospitals, to farms to encourage their understanding of environmental justice. Broadly, then, educators continue to carry on a historical mission of instilling students with an orientation toward civic engagement through the 21st century. As Butin (2006) stated, my intent is not to undermine or devalue the important work that educators have engaged in with their students. My goal is to understand both the strengths and limits of service-learning, especially from an anti-colonial and abolitionist perspective.

In studying the different texts of service-learning, I turn to the UC Santa Cruz's websites. Conducting a content analysis of these texts, three key themes emerged: deep learning, enhanced skills, and civic responsibility.

THREE KEY THEMES:

Analyzing service-learning texts and university websites on service learning, three broad and interrelated service-learning goals emerged: deep learning, serving, and civic responsibility. UCSC's Oakes College makes the connection between the student and positive social experiences when it encourages students to get involved with service learning because it can be a "way to get connected with other students who care, while gaining academic credit and enhancing your research and documentation skills."[3] The UCSC website from the History of Art & Visual Cultural (HAVC) states:

> Service learning is a teaching and learning approach that combines learning goals, meaningful community service, and reflection in ways that enhance student growth and address genuine community needs. Through service learning, the real-world application of classroom knowledge in a community setting allows students to apply academic knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. Students gain a deeper understanding and broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.[4]

The statement summarizes well what much of the websites propose to provide to students. I will explore the key components in the following section.

*Enhanced Skills*

University websites frame service-learning as beneficial to the student. Student understanding of sociological concepts are said to match if not go beyond what they learn in classroom lectures, strengthening their learning experience if not at

least meeting learning outcomes met in more traditional based lectures. Alt & Medrich (1994), in a report for the U.S. Department of Education, provide a list of service learning's positive outcomes, including academic skills, problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, ethical development, moral reasoning, social responsibility, self-esteem, assertiveness, empathy, civic responsibility, political efficacy, tolerance and acceptance of diversity, and career goals and knowledge" (cited by Wade and Yarbrough 1997: 42). The framing of service-learning as beneficial to the student also seemingly connects the university's responsibility to students and the public front and center.

*Deep Learning*

Experiential-learning's facilitation of deep understanding is so valued that students themselves have requested that their learning of concepts be supported if not replaced by learning in the field. For example, in an online document on the establishment of an undergraduate degree in practical anthropology, Bowman (n.d.) explained that the field practicum was in some ways inspired by students being upset that anthropology, understood as a filed based discipline, did not have more fieldwork-based opportunities. Reardon (1994:52) similarly discussed how participatory action research could be a way for white middle-class youth to, among other things, "gain first-hand knowledge of the devastating impact that urban poverty and racial discrimination can have on family and community life… [and a] deeper understanding of the social, economic and political dynamics…"

*Enhancing Civic Responsibility*

Enhancing civic engagement also tends to be a primary goal of service-learning, and most articles mentioned at least in passing, that service-learning leads to enhancing civic responsibility. Though not always explicitly stated, the premise of service-learning is that young people fail to care about community wellbeing. Wade and Yarbrough (1997:42) write that service-learning is "a needed response to youth's increasing alienation from and apathy toward civic involvement." Similarly, but less bluntly, Eyler, Giles, and Braxton (1997:5) write that service-learning "improves the quality of service today and, more importantly, helps sustain it throughout a citizen's life by developing attitudes toward community and a commitment to making a difference."

Critical reflection seems key to enhancing civic responsibility. Thus, while students might partake in activities like stocking and sweeping at a Housing for Humanity warehouse cite; gardening with and for a private non-GMO farmer; or gathering data and writing brochures for a community clinic, the idea is that service-learning goes beyond volunteerism because it involves a critical reflexive method to encourage students to come to know where they stand in relation to the world.[5] For example, Campus Compact, a national collation of over 1,000 colleges and universities that are committed to building "democracy through civic education and community development," provides a service-learning syllabus with an attached homework assignment of critical reflection.[6] The assignment: "You will make conscious use of the course readings by incorporating them into the essays and by

linking them to your experiences in the setting." Though this particular syllabus focuses on health, the homework assignment is reflective of most service-learning requirements that propose transformation happens through the application of text materials to a student's real-life experiences.

Just how does critical reflection lead to civic responsibility? It depends on how we define "civic responsibility." According to Eric Riedel (2002), civic responsibility can be framed in two different ways: "participatory" versus "private" citizenship. Riedel (2002:503) explains that while the function of schools preparing youth to take on the role of democratic participation extends beyond the early 1900s, the "key factor in relating community service to participant's sense of political engagement is how the service is framed." The tension, the Riedel posits, is between participatory and private conceptualizations of citizenship. In "participatory community service programs," the emphasis is on the action and "building skills for political activity, fostering an awareness of the wider social and political context of problems, and taking actual social and political action…" In comparison, "private community service programs envision good citizenship mainly in terms of personal virtue. A good citizen is a good person, although not necessarily a politically active one" (Riedel 2002:53).

Service-Learning educators propose that to best develop opportunities for enhanced skills, deep learning, and civic responsibility, the university's commitment to service-learning must be institutionally, including financially, supported. That is, the university, from their perspective, must put their money where their mouth is.

This challenge is especially important, considering that it is women, faculty of color, and the untenured who are more likely to engage in service-learning (Butin 2006:475).

## CHALLENGES: TIME, MONEY, AND VULNERABILITY

Within the university, professionals discuss the additional labor that goes into constructing, facilitating, and maintaining connections with the organization before and after the course. Bowman (n.d.:1) documented that in attempting to establish a degree in practical anthropology, that the project was "vehemently blocked by both anthropology and the university administration on round of additional expenses." Winitzky-Stephens (2016) also documented at the Salt Lake Community College a "lack of support (both financial and from senior leadership) as a significant concern. Barone and Ritter (2017:18) provided an example of applied anthropology at a clinical site and discussed the stresses of service-learning taking more time to execute successfully than would a traditional lecture approach. Barone and Ritter (2010) also discussed the tension of wanting to teach students how to execute applied anthropology, conducting surveys and interviews that respond to the organization's needs, for example, against the need to build a professional relationship and fulfill the responsibility of completing the public anthropology task.

At the University of California, Santa Cruz a recent report on the Oakes CARA Program, a program housed in a college with a distinctive social justice legacy and commitment to first-generation students of color, centers the importance of serving vulnerable communities. The report discusses the precarious funding for the

program and discusses the need for the university to invest beyond soft-money funding to ensure that service-learning programs are sustainable and developed wisely in ways that serve, not taxes, their community partners. Again, as Butin (2006:174) points out, it is often institutionally marginalized that are most likely to participate in service-learning engagement with their students. In this context and more broadly across the university, service-learning is understood as a "co-curricular practice" and potentially "detrimental for traditional tenure and promotion committees to take seriously." He adds, "It is in this context that service-learning advocates have begun to devote intensive efforts to institutionalize service-learning within higher education."

Burdens to students and risk to the community also need to be considered. According to service-learning literature, service-learning is the placing of students with community organizations with the intention that both students and the organization benefit from a service provided by students; however, this is not always the case in practice. Several criticisms of service-learning come directly from the students in service-learning courses. As one report explains, students find service-learning burdensome and point to their already filled schedules (coursework, labs, family, infants, travel). In my personal experience as a student advocate in a university's student family residential space, I had more than one conversation with a first-generation, racially minoritized single mother. She struggled with fitting the service-learning off-campus hours into her already full schedule. Butin (2006) notes for these sorts of reasons that "there is a distinct possibility that service-learning may

ultimately come to be viewed as the 'Whitest of the White' enclave of postsecondary education… a luxury available onto to the privileged few." The student-parent to who I often spoke also pointed out, at least in her particular experience, non-profit workers often spoke down to her as if she "was just another kid" and had "bossed" her around without any real, meaningful work assigned so that she was spending her time "folding other people's clothes."[7] What she asserted was the racialized and gendered assigning of sites by the professor and, once in a site, by the non-profit professionals. There is less scholarship on how service-learning can burden students of color, particularly womxn, as they endure in their attempts to "serve" surrounding non-profit organizations. From the other direction, as I've read pointed out, the wellbeing of non-profits and the communities they serve can also be at stake.

Hopi tribal member and anthropologist Angela Gonzales (2017:18) warns that though service-learning means to "bridge theory with practice by combining learning goals and community service," there can be risks to the community. She writes, "[I]f not done well, service-learning can have the opposite effect of reinforcing stereotypes, perpetuating social inequalities, and placing more of a burden on communities and organizations than providing a service." Sharing her successes with community-engaged pedagogy, she explains that though she was concerned with the warning to Native people about the infamous anthropologists and "other friends" coming to "help" given by Vine Deloria, Jr. she felt compelled to use service-learning to help address issues an unmet needs of Native communities" (18). Moving beyond simple conceptualizations of service, Gonzales explains that "reciprocity and respects

are central characteristics of successful service-learning" that benefit both the student and the community partner (20). Service as a reciprocal relationship is different from utilizing communities as sites for the "educated" to enter to "gain skills," though the latter can also be the case. The attention to service and reciprocity is similarly stated in Robert Coles (1994) *The Call To Service: A Witness to Idealism,* a book broadly on service-learning. In a review of the book, London (1995) writes that Robert Coles stories of service-learning "affirm that service is not a hierarchy but reciprocity in which the distinctions between teacher and pupil, giver and receiver, helper and helped constantly dissolve."

According to Oden and Casey (2006), two service-learning educators who were once part of the Black Panther Party, the importance of reciprocity is also central to their approach during their respective times at the University of California, Santa Cruz. They point out that it is a glaring omission to leave out community-based initiatives in the historical trajectory of service-learning. As they state, community-based initiatives "have helped define community needs, produced the change agents, and compelled [government, educational, philanthropic and business institutions] to become more inclusive and reflective in their engagement with social issues." Though they do not discuss their influence on the field of service-learning as past BPP members, it is important to point out that both Oden and Casey were directors of the UCSC Oaks Serves program. Moreover, as they reflected, "During the Oakes Serves course students examined the impact of race, class, and gender on the ability of people to attain the services needed to sustain and improve their lives. The Oakes

Serves class mirrored for [them] the political education classes of the party in not only discussing and reflecting on the students' own volunteer experiences at placement sites but also in linking their service work to greater societal struggles that impact on the ability of volunteers to deliver services to those in need." Jacoby et al. (1996) find reciprocity so central to service-learning in higher education that they write, service-learning is a "philosophy of reciprocity, which implies a concerted effort to move from charity to justice, from service to the elimination of need." The elimination of need can be imagined to be enacted in different ways – by either an equity model that directly addresses the uneven foundations upon which we live our lives, or it can get at undoing those very foundations. I imagine for many abolitionists these things must happen in tandem.

In any case, these sorts of foundations found in the BPP and other community-based initiatives are not often cited. Reviews of service-learning literature reveal that service-learning philosophical origins are most often traced to pragmatism and particularly John Dewey (Bocci 2015; Sheffield 2011). My review of the literature supports the claim that Dewey's name stands out across nearly all recounts of the philosophical and practical origins of service-learning, and though there is nothing inherently wrong with Dewey's star status, what it reveals, as Bocci (2015) explains, is how distinct origins and trajectories shape the field.[8] Other-than-white leaders and contributors to the field of service-learning, like Freire and the Black Panther Party, appear only ancillary to figures like John Dewey. The next section takes up the question of white supremacy in education broadly and in service-learning, mainly.

## WHITE SUPREMACIST FOUNDATIONS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Tania D. Mitchell, David Donahue, and Courtney Young-Law (2012), using whiteness as a conceptual framework, argue that service-learning is steeped in color-blind approaches and taken for granted whiteness that forsakes the historical and societal importance of race as a crucial factor of white privilege and social inequality. Drawing from Zeus Leonardo (2009), the authors write: we see whiteness and the privileges attached to it not as an 'a rather passive description of racial domination without agents' (9) but as part of a 'process of domination, or those acts, decisions, and policies that white subjects perpetrate on people of color' (75). Therefore, a 'critical analysis of white racial supremacy revolves less around the issue of unearned advantages, or the *state* of being dominant, a more around direct processes that secure domination and the privileges associated with it'" (Mitchell et al. 2012:613). In short, a critical analysis of whiteness as pedagogy in service-learning is concerned with the "direct processes" that are involved in "securing domination" and "white privilege." In short, white supremacy does not act on its own, it moves through enabling channels.

One of the crucial ways service-learning enacts the pedagogy of whiteness is through the uncritical marking of "at-risk" communities to be served by white-majority student populations. As Mitchell, Donahue, and Young explain (2012), "When problems are framed as the result of individual circumstances (e.g., drug [addiction], dropping out of school) rather than political and social processes (e.g., immigration policy or residential segregation), students are denied opportunities to

learn that racial domination is not the result of past 'mistakes' from which some passively benefit but, instead, is the result of intentional processes that are ongoing" (614). That is, the pedagogy of whiteness normalizes inequality and social hierarchies by failing to engage with an analysis of the historical and social production of communities and, for that matter, universities. If teachers are using service-learning in this way, we miss an opportunity to turn our attention toward the underlying issues that mark some of our communities "at risk" in the first place.

The field's privileging and normalization of whiteness can lead to assimilative, discriminatory, and exclusionary practices. These in return, according to Bocci (2015:1), "reinforce oppressive socioeconomic power dynamics." Bocci analyses reviews of service-learning texts and three well-accessed online historical narratives on service-learning to show that numerically, non-whites are not equally represented in reviews of service-learning texts and when people of color do appear they do so as the "served" or "needy" (7). Bocci writes, "When people of color are mentioned they are often referred to as collective or through allusions, which may indicate that the authors do not consider people of color or non-Anglo individual's contributions as worthy" when compared to white counterparts… [and] most of the historical narratives present people of color as needy recipients of service or do not include or elaborate on their involvement at all" (9-10). Highlighting the normalization of white supremacy within service-learning history and approaches, Bocci points to a Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999), a study of 33 pioneers of the service-learning movement to demonstrate the taken for granted notion of

communities of color "at-risk." In this review, Joan Schine, a leading pioneer "recalls that her 'passion… was largely combatting rascism: to convince minority youngsters who were poor and disenfranchised that they could act as citizens and take some control of their lives" (Schine 1999: 54-55, quoted by Bocci 2015). From this, Bocci points out even anti-racist approaches can be problematic when they position "youngsters" as *recipients* of service-learning even though "that service was to empower them as social actors" (10). Bocci advocates for a radical transformative service-learning approach that refuses to forsake students as passive recipients of an anti-racist education that would mark them as in need of empowering.

## CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

The Black Panther Party drew heavily and enacted Frieren (Freire 1993:10) "conscientization" (Oden and Casey 2006:5), and Friere's impact on service-learning is often overlooked by service-learning scholars. Bocci (2015) insists that one of the missing threads in the dominant narratives of service-learning and its history is critical pedagogy. This is important because critical pedagogy, in addition to theorizing the individual as an agent of change, also connected experience to the historical and social realities of oppression. In terms of theory and practice, critical pedagogical scholarship, particularly the Freiren approach, is concerned with the transformational process of collaborative knowledge that is produced through dialogical and problem-posing education. Challenging the banking model of mainstream education, where students are imagined as passive sieves waiting to be filled with artifacts of detached, pre-formulated knowledge, Freire philosophized

education as an embodied and co-created production of experiential knowledge, especially as it related to understandings of oppression.

The approach means to inform action as a process of living. Said differently, the production of knowledge is the process of embodied knowledge production. Service-learning is not concerned with dialogue for the sake of talking about different experiences, a process that Macedo (2006:18) states, "Some strands of critical pedagogy engage in an overdose of experiential celebration that offers a reductionistic view of identity, leading Henry Giroux to point out that such pedagogy leaves identity and experiences removed from the problematics of power, agency, and history." Critical pedagogy, in other words, directly addresses subjective and material oppression by co-producing knowledge that seeks to change oppressive conditions.

Critical pedagogy, rooted in the experiential processes of one's life, moves beyond mere sharing of experiences by taking the very objects of analysis as objects of curiosity (Macedo 2006:17). As Peter McLaren (2008:83) puts it, schooling "should be a process of examining how we have been constructed out of the prevailing ideas, values, and worldviews of the dominant culture." Meaning that all knowledge, including who we are as social subjects, are social constructions laden with power. Objects of curiosity are ideologically, materially, and historically produced. "Conflict does not fall from the sky," as Macedo (2008: 24) points out.

The point of not erasing the analysis of power in the analysis of experience is similar in the argument made by Crenshaw's intersectional theory. An intersectional approach, contrary to some reductionistic interpretations, is less about self-

examination of where we lay at the intersection of power but rather an attempt to understand the intersectional forces of power that have placed you and me here differently, to understand those forces, and to work toward transforming them. To again quote Macedo (2008:24), "The conflict must be anchored in those competing histories and ideologies that generated the conflict in the first place." Pedagogy of the Oppressed was, as Macedo points out, not about the Pedagogy of the disenfranchised. There is an embodied location of oppression, as there is one of power. Critical pedagogy, as an experientially informed and critical reflexive praxis, refuses the notion that teaching/learning can ever be outside of historical and social forces. "Thus, as the term "pedagogy" illustrates, education is inherently directive and must always be transformative" (Macedo 2008:25).

Much of the historicity of service-learning fails to draw connections to people of color, indigenous, or international histories of service-learning. In another example, when one of the texts briefly affirms Native American and civil rights movements as sites of service-learning, "they do little more than nod to the traditions of service and activism that run deep in many communities of color" (Bocci 2015). Bocci writes: "Perhaps a history of service-learning seeking to challenge White normativity could reorient its discussion of service-learning vis-à-vis volunteerism toward traditions of activism and community organizing. Not only would these traditions potentially bring more people of varied races and ethnicities to the foreground as leaders in the movement, but they may also provide more examples of service not motivated by charity and noblesse oblige" (ibid).

## CO-CONSPIRING INDIGENOUS FEMINIST AND ABOLITIONIST

I draw from both Indigenous Feminist and abolitionist teachings, both of which in my reading argues for the radical subjective and materialist destruction of oppressive systems of racist, heteropatriarchal settler-colonial violence. As Leanne Simpson (2014b)writes, "We have survived 400 years of racialized gendered violence designed to remove us from our lands and assimilate us into the colonizer's agenda. The idea that we should all remain positive and calm, while 1200 Indigenous women and girls are disappeared in Canada, while Black people are gunned down in the streets by white police officers, security guards, and vigilantes every 28 hours, while the legal system will not even provide a trial to the perpetrators of violence is unfathomable."[9] Lucia Buttaro (2010) writes that a decolonizing pedagogy is meant "to assist students to actively reflect, critique, and work against the existing forms of discrimination and exploitation in the United States while simultaneously preparing them for the concrete exigencies of its educational or professional spaces… It argues for a pedagogy that challenges the dominant practices of schooling and makes schools concrete sites for developing critical consciousness in the interests of the working class, indigenous and non-white peoples." From the perspective that our schools are frontlines, I think with anti-colonial and abolitionist scholars to explore ways that those of us interested in service-learning can actively address the anti-blackness and indigenous erasure inside of our schools. And like these activists and scholars, I do believe our best work is done in the collective.

In order to combat this weaponizing of teachers, Cherry-McDaniel (2016) discusses de-weaponizing preservice teachers so that they can reform their identities to undermine settler colonialism. Drawing from Cherry-McDaniel, I suggest that service-learning education must also be de-weaponized and, following Cherry-McDaniel, the learning of white supremacy is not something essential to white folx. In fact, as a system that surrounds and collects us all differently, each of us learns from and embody the explicit and implicit teaching of white supremacy and can embody its violence, even against our communities. Perhaps some of us have felt this from others in our community. Perhaps some of us have enacted this against our communities? And perhaps some of us recognize that we have experienced it in both ways. There is too much at stake to let the black-white binary stand on its own. "Emphasizing the United States as a settler society forces us to rethink the white-black binary in which sociological scholarship on race, for example, typically operates" (Murphy 2018:62). White supremacy is about anti-blackness, indigenous genocide, and ongoing wars.

Native communities are direly underserved by this western educational system, where researchers report that nationally Native Americans have the highest pushout rates. Jacob rightly puts it: "Indigenous Educational Framework must also account for the well-being of our Indigenous homeland and our cultures. "What good," Michelle Jacob (2017:3) asks, "would even 100% on time graduation mean, if for example, our homelands are still poisoned from settler society's nuclear waste? (citing LaDuke and Cruz 2013).

Similarly, Bettina Love, an abolitionist educator, and philosopher, argued "as a person of color, it is not just about grades and test scores. When you are a person of color in this country, grades and test scores only take you so far. You actually have to know who you are."[10] She further explains that when future teachers do take a "diversity" class about teaching our students, that black and brown children are often framed as having "a gap in everything, an achievement gap… a word gap." Thus, academia positions both our communities and our students as not meeting *their* expectations. Moreover, Love importantly points out that racial violence in our schools is as much about numbers as it is about the slow death of "spirit murdering."

Spirit murdering, Love explains, comes out of the work of critical race theorist Patricia Williams. Love writes, spirit murdering "robs people of color of their humanity and dignity and leaves personal, psychological, and spiritual injuries. Racism is traumatic because it is a loss of protection, safety, nurturance, and acceptance – all things children need to enter school and learn" (Love 2019). To delineate:

> Physical and psychological attacks on Black and Brown children's bodies and culture are more than just racist acts by misguided school educators; they are the spirit murdering of Black and Brown children. This type of violence toward children of color is less visceral and seemingly less tragic than physical acts of murder at the hands of White mobs and White self-appointed vigilantes, the shooting of unarmed people of color by police officers in their own homes and communities, or the senseless violence in some Black communities, which are all conditions of racism.[11]

For Love, educators must go beyond "loving" black and brown children and teaching about oppression; educators must respect the brilliance of black culture that has resisted the annihilation of their spirits.[12] Moreover, educators must move from being

"allies" and toward being "coconspirators." Abolitionists, Love explains, are those "average people in the room," the everyday folks willing and ready to "put-it-on-the-line" (ibid). Yesterday and today, abolitionists are the white folx, the black folx, and the native folx willing and ready to use their privilege, in whatever form, to do the work for other peoples' lives.

Similarly, Michael J. Dumas (2018) asks, "How might the intentions and trajectories of our work be motivated by the materiality" of young peoples lives and an "insistence" on their freedom?"? Education reform, he points out, and even the "pursuit of racial justice" is often wrapped up in "appealing for recognition and citizenship rights within a public sphere in which whiteness is property, and serves as the basis for legal and cultural claim to accumulation of Indigenous land and Black bodies (Grande 2015; Harris 1993, cited in Dumas 2018: 30). As Leanne Simpson (2014a) asserts, "I have a responsibility to make space on my land for those communities of struggles, to center and amplify Black voices and to co-resist."

Our classrooms have not held the values or principles of Indigenous nations and communities of color in mind. That is not to say that Native and people of color are not concerned with math or science, instead it is to say that our contributions to those understandings are greatly underappreciated. It is not to say that Native families do not find value in knowing how to read and write. It is to say that "land as process and context" are evacuated in the western approach to science, "social" and "natural." Land in our K-12 and postsecondary educational spaces in the "white-stream" world is understood only as a resource, just as Peoples have been made bodies for labor. As

(L. B. Simpson 2014c) explains, “My experience of education, from kindergarten to graduate school, was one of coping with someone else’s agenda, curriculum, and pedagogy, someone who was neither interested in my wellbeing as a kwezens, nor interested in my connection to my homeland, my language or history, nor my Nishnaabeg intelligence… My experience of education was one of continually being measured against a set of principles that required surrender to an assimilative colonial agenda in order to fulfill those principles.”

Many of us do not have the privilege to teach in our communities and instead have the privilege to teach in other people’s places. Both hold a great responsibility. Despite the fact of Native movement, many do not believe that diaspora and indigenous are terms likely put together. Native feminisms in motion recognize and enact connections between home and diaspora. Sabzalian (2016) described the possibilities for Native feminist texts to build new stories and relations amongst indigenous peoples: “To recognize land meant also recognizing the diverse urban Indigenous community in the area, as well as the Indigenous peoples whose traditional lands the center would be built upon. These acts of recognition would invite new stories and relationships to unfold in the center” (26). In doing so, she writes about her experiences involved in producing Native feminist texts that paid recognized and respected both an indigenous diaspora and indigenous peoples' traditional lands where a community center was to be built.

The accepted process of knowledge production, as scholars have argued, is a violent and dehumanizing process and way of understanding the world. In order for

us to story a different experience of value and to know the world "in a context of love," it is essential that we imagine something other than what many of us have experienced. What would it mean to be interested in not merely a transference of predetermined knowledge of our respective disciplines, but rather to be concerned with our students (not to mention our own) wellbeing? What would it mean to be committed to their connection to their homeland (and ours)? What would it mean to be committed to their language and history (and ours)? What would it mean to be committed to their freedom (and ours)? I suggest that as service-learning currently is framed continues the coercion and authority Simpson challenges that is so "normalized within mainstream western pedagogy that they are rarely ever critiqued" (7). As Richard V. Kahn (2010) has written on the western character of mastery over nature:

> "This hegemonic worldview has been unmercifully imparted through a host of public policies and practices that conveniently gloss over gross inequalities as commonsensical necessities for democracy to bloom. As a consequence, the liberal democratic rhetoric of "we are all created equal' hardly begins to touch the international pervasiveness of racism, patriarchy, technocracy, and economic piracy by the West, all which has fostered the erosion of civil rights and the unprecedented ecological exploitation of societies, creating conditions that now threaten our peril, if we do not reverse directions."

PARTICIPATING DIFFERENTLY

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter uprisings began in Minnesota and spread across the United States. Following a string of statements made by different institutions, including non-profits and universities, a graduate student in a department of sociology asked for her 'non-black colleagues and mentors to "not stay silent in [the] moment," and "risk perpetuating the systemic

racism that we are proposedly trying to deconstruct as sociologists" and suggested her colleagues produce a collective statement in support the Black Lives Matter movement and the "protests at home and across the nation."[13] Another graduate responded in support and their emails were met with an email by the department's graduate student chair. The faculty person responded that they put some effort into drafting a letter and passed it onto the other faculty, but that it was not comparable to other departmental responses. She continued, "To be honest, I'm less worried about graduate students right now than individuals who I know personally on the frontlines on the streets. I apologize for my attention being elsewhere."

Despite the apology, as can be gleaned by this statement, the faculty person was and was not "apologetic." Moreover, the faculty person drew a strict line between the frontlines of anti-black protest "on the streets" and academia. The faculty response was also not indirect in that it conveyed the message that graduate students were not to take up time that was importantly devoted elsewhere. The email suggests that academia was considered as safe, at least not dangerous, and only in need of discursive amelioration – to which the faculty was not interested.

Though at first taken back by what I first read as dismissive phrasing, I could sincerely identify with the faculty person's sentiments and understood her attention to her family and the streets. My own family members were also on those frontlines in a different state. Faculty and students, especially those BIPOC, often cite feelings of being overwhelmed with balancing our responsibilities inside and outside of academia. Though as a student, I vocally support these sorts of demands and

acknowledgments that are now ubiquitous in academia, I often feel as if they pay lip service to the "service" language of the university and fail to engage directly with issues of systematic racialized and gendered oppression (Grande 2018). In the case of land acknowledgments, I often find myself reluctantly involved and then upset when there is an offhand "recognition" made without the serious time and relation-building the statement reader and the local tribal community. I could imagine anyone involved in these spaces sometimes asks, "Why bother?"

Statements only carry so much weight and without collective action, these statements are not much more than, as Mitchell pointed out about the commitment to diversity, "shallow and superficial at best. At worst it is exploitative and opportunistic." It could be further discussed whether these sorts of statements, like land recognition statements, are themselves opportunistic in that they suggest histories and ongoing oppression can be addressed through this sort of recognition. I often struggle, as in other places, with feeling stuck between a rock and a hard place.

It was not until later, with push back from graduate students, that the frontlines of education would become more immediate and felt by the faculty person and the wider department. Meetings would ensue, and a great deal of time was invested by graduate students (and I am sure faculty) as they met, wrote, and strategized about how they could impact the core curriculum, pedagogical training, and financial support of Black students. Students from all over the United States, including the University of Berkeley, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of California, Santa Cruz, and outside at the University of Toronto, would

meet and share resources. In zoom meetings, students would report feeling burnt out, hopeless in the face of apathetic colleagues and departments, and even fearful of losing funding for voicing their concerns.

I am not suggesting that the faculty did not care for students in the usual academic sense of care. Scholars have long argued that academia since its inception serves to "reproduce racist, colonial structures of power-knowledge" (Schwoerer 2019:56), and graduate students insisted that we collectively have to commit to continually challenging ourselves, as the graduate student organizers suggested by their work. In the case of the University of California, Santa Cruz, faculty often literally joined the frontlines with their protesting and picketing students. The interactions inside of the department, however, encourage us to revisit the idea of frontlines of education.

Challenging us to think through how social justice education assumes as a forward progressive narrative, Tuck and Yang (2018) suggest that youth resistance is often uncritically "celebrated as positive, as developmentally or educationally progressive. Scholars represent civic engagement as going in one direction (from disempowered to empowered) and as a building blocks in the formation of social movements" (3). In the scholarship of engagement, as I have discussed, we often imagine our students as moving from disengaged youth to empowered and engaged *citizen*, future property owners and laborers. From the taken-for-granted perspective, we are to direct ourselves outward, in the liberal framework to be citizens, and in the social justice framework, to be citizens of justice. What happens, however, when the

schools that serve as our foundation for "working in the world" are themselves unjust? Do we not also have a responsibility to address this violence?

After the release of the statement, students began to organizer across the nation and would discuss similar responses, and others would refer to their respective department's statements as "lukewarm at best." Students would learn about similar experiences across their graduate departments and insisted they wanted to *serve the movement* by addressing anti-racism and white supremacy directly within their departments. Rather than directing their energies toward becoming "global citizens," if any of the students had done so before, it was clear that there existed a general sentiment of addressing the white supremacy experienced within their departments, institutions, and discipline. It was not that they understood their lives as students or the institution of academia more critical, instead it was that they understood that they had a responsibility to change what they lived and to "demand justice against racial violence that pervades all levels of our society."[14]

Building upon discussions with one another, the students would pen a letter that not only critiqued sociology's core curriculum for drawing from white supremacist foundations and demanded more from their teachers but also provided ways to build a more critical, anti-colonial curriculum and pedagogy. As someone soon on the "other side," my peers' insistence that faculty had the power to make a difference in their experiences stuck with me, frightened me of what I was inheriting as I moved from one space to the next.

As a participant-observer, both on the militarized protest zones of the university and email communications, I realized the importance of turning our attention toward a "de-weaponizing" of curriculum and teacher-student relations (Cherry-McDaniel 2016) might also be extended to service-learning. Monique Cherry-McDaniel draws our attention to the classroom and 'de-weaponizing" our praxis, particularly as it relates to teaching the next generation of teachers. Cherry-McDaniel suggests that people of color's discussions of white supremacy, rather than understanding themselves as benefiting directly from their access to "hetero-masculinity and whiteness" by way of the education instead "allowed them to see themselves only as the victims of white privilege and supremacy and not as beneficiaries" (34). In hoping to overcome this dynamic where future teachers of color committed the same sort of violence they have experienced in schools but normalized, Cherry-McDaniel turned toward Native feminist scholarship.

In my own experiences, Native womxn often lead movement spaces from a different set of principles and priorities than the "citizenship" that mainstream service-learning ascribes to learners. Their concern is less about linear moves toward "citizenship" and instead toward collective human emancipation. For example, at a 2017 public talk titled "Beyond Resistance," Judith Leblanc, Native Organizer Alliance leader and activists discussed how she imagined the Water Protector movement reestablished "traditional indigenous wisdom as an organizing principle." For Leblanc, it meant, "That we must organize in a circle. That that circle must continue to grow. And that it is our personal connection to water that is the guide for

saving the planet." She also discussed how she understood this "circle" as different from the "Western concepts" of organizing. For her, the dominant narrative suggests that seeing is believing; that is, "show me, then I'll believe you." From an indigenous point of view, Leblanc states, "When we believe, when we follow the teaching of our ancestors, it allows us to take action. It allows us in the here and now to do what our ancestors have been calling upon us to do, which is to save mother earth."[15]

The point is not to engage with a citizenship that is oriented toward "shallow and superficial at best. At worst it is exploitative and opportunistic." Rather the task is to know self, other, and land as not something we act upon but with, not as resource but as relation, not as despirted but as life giving. It is, as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017: Ch 2, section: The Radical Resurgence Project) writes, a radical resurgence project:

> [R]efuses dispossession of both Indigenous bodies and land as the focal point of resurgent thinking in action. It continues the work of dismantling heteropatriarchy as a dispossessive force. It calls for the formation of networks of constellations of radical resurgent organizing as direction action within grounded normativities and against the dispossessive forces of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy.

I suggest that service-learning projects can learn from students involved on the frontlines of anti-colonial abolitionists projects *within* academic spaces. Service-learning scholarship and social justice-oriented scholars must stop engaging in rhetoric that suggests "risk" is produced outside of schools and for other communities, drawing a strict dichotomy between "outside" and "inside" the academic walls we build and then suggest we are knocking these walls down. On the frontlines of education, our identity is based on what the movement has been called to

do, and the material arrangements are meant to support that action. The frontlines extend beyond the narrowly bounded ideas of frontlines into our daily lived relations with our conscious and lived connection to what is in process, this is enacted in the "either/or" that Tuck and Yang discuss as "strategic" and Vizenor "survivance."

What is explicitly different between our classrooms and movement spaces is the actual material relations and discourse about people's day-to-day roles. What is your classroom calling your students to do? And how are you supporting that? To return to Judith Leblanc: "When we believe, when we follow the teaching of our ancestors, it allows us to take action…" (2017). Similarly, young organizers understand their connection between the work they conduct in their communities, even when "civic engagement" as an extension of past tribal leaders' strategies. Speaking about how she explains "civic engagement" to other youth, she stated:

> **[W]e have to explain a little bit of history** and the policies and the practices that were put out there by the federal government **to exterminate us** and to continue the genocide over peoples, and I just express that as a motivation or as a reminder to **remember we weren't supposed to be here as Native peoples**, just as even existing and being in the colonial higher education and succeeding and becoming lawyers and doctors and instructors and professors and organizers and **whatever jobs that we do is something that is so beautiful and powerful** and to be proud of… We've always struggled in different fights and overcoming a lot of obstacles that ... There was a lot of decisions that our tribal leaders, our ancestors had to make that were tough, and maybe it was something that they really didn't want to do, but **for the benefit of their people and for the survival of their people,** they had to. Education, having to go to boarding schools, or signing a treaty, or being forced to do something else and trade land for money or something else and having to do those things is also ... This **sacrifice** that I remember and I remind people, "We need to remember that, too," and we need more people doing this work, because **if not, then we're just remaining silent and we're complicit to the system that's just continuing to repress our people.**

This young womxn aunty-ing through her relation-building and storying up of past tribal leaders reminded us that leading is following in those that have sacrificed in the wake of tremendous loss. Who made difficult choices, perhaps not easily categorized as "wrong" or "right," but always in the interest of relations and the Land. Civic engagement, service-learning, global citizens need not be going "out" toward decolonizing elsewhere and can build up communities of care, resistance, and survival on the frontlines of education.

## CONCLUSION

To our detriment, we think of social justice happening outside of schools, while teaching and learning about social justice happens inside of schools – as if there were a strict boundary. Even those of us well versed in pedagogies that center on a praxis of intervention understand our role as teaching students how to go out and be engaged. It may very well be that the idea of "intervention" is the prime suspect of such an approach. That is, "intervention" positions us as outside of social forces, preparing to enter their spaces, and then somehow miraculously intervening and changing the unjust world. It sounds very much like missionization.

Let us, however, start from another place – let us imagine ourselves as thoroughly and always already informed, figured, and invested in a world where relations are racialized, sexed, nationalized, classed, ableist, et cetera. That is, from wherever we are, including from within the very walls of the academy, we are accountable and participating in the world. No more, "let's produce "engaged" citizens." We are as "engaged" in all actions with this world. The question is, What

exactly are we engaging in? Well, we should ask ourselves: who defines "engagement"? For what reasons do they define it as they do? And who does this term as it is defined serve?

Chapter 5 Endnotes

[1] Mitchell, Nick. "Why Nick Mitchell Is Returning the Chancellor's Achievement Award for Diversity." University Website. UCSC Critical Race & Ethnic Studies, February 21, 2020. https://cres.ucsc.edu/news-events/news/mitchell-cola.html.

[2] California State University, Monterey Bay. "Service Learning Institute." University Website. CSUMB, n.d. https://csumb.edu/service.

[3] Oakes College. "Get Involved!" University Website. Oakes UCSC Academics, February 17, 2020. https://oakes.ucsc.edu/academics/service-learning/s-l-get-involved.html.

[4] UCSC History of Arts and Visual Culture. "Service Learning Practicum | Havc.Ucsc.Edu." University Website. HAVC UCSC, n.d. https://havc.ucsc.edu/program/service-learning-practicum.

[5] Conversation with faculty person from UCSC Oakes College.

[6] Breda, Karen Lucas. "Community Service Learning I." Non-Profit Website. Campus Compact, August 17, 2017. https://compact.org/resource-posts/community-service-learning-i/. (If readers are interested in seeing what all goes into a service-learning course, Dr. Breda has provided a wonderful resource. She offers a syllabus with reading, assignments, letter to the potential site director, and evaluation forms.)

[7] It was actually these conversations that I had with this single mother that piqued my interest into how service learning was serving our students and communities.

[8] Dewey's educational theory centers on bringing together both science and reflective experience into an individual producing what Dewey called "habits of the heart."

[9] Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. "Indict the System: Indigenous & Black Resistance." Magazine Website. Briarpatch Magazine, November 29, 2014. https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/indict-the-system.

[10] The City Club Cleveland. "The City Club of Clevland - Bettina L. Love, Ph.D. 9.6.19." YouTube Video, September 6, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_sL_DbXjr8.

[11] Love, Bettina L. "How Schools Are 'Spirit Murdering' Black and Brown Students - Education Week." Magazine Website. Education Week, June 12, 2019. https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/05/24/how-teachers-are-spirit-murdering-black-and.html.

[12] The City Club Cleveland. "The City Club of Clevland - Bettina L. Love, Ph.D. 9.6.19." YouTube Video, September 6, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_sL_DbXjr8.

[13] Department communication email.

[14] Quote taken from another statement. In full the statement reads: "The Feminist Studies Department is enraged and saddened by the murder of George Floyd. We demand that the Minneapolis police department take immediate responsibility for the collective murder of Floyd by four police officers. We also demand that all police departments across the nation restructure policing practices and policies to prevent any more murders of black men and other people of color. Given this recent barbaric

murder of Floyd is part of an ongoing culture of violence and hatred targeting black men at one of the most difficult times in our lifetime, we ask that there be no charges against any protesters. And we demand national responsibility driving this systemic violence to address not only direct actions against all four of the police officers involved, but also a national commitment to reversing the gross income inequalities between black communities who suffer obscene levels of unemployment, homelessness and food scarcity, even before Covid-19.

It is imperative that we all come out in droves to vote in upcoming elections to uproot a president who supports and inflames racial divisions and hatred, most recently in his statement of support for violence against any protestors who loot in Minneapolis and elsewhere. We are stronger when we stand together and reflect on how we all can do more to support our sisters and brothers, and demand justice against racial violence that pervades all levels of our society."

[15] I draw your attention to this excerpt, "When we believe, when we follow the teaching of our ancestors, it allows us to take action," as an entry way into considering how participation through ethnographic inquiry might be pushed to reimagine a "call" to be involved by fundamentally altering what we're involved in and who is doing the calling. Leblanc's assertion that there is a fundamental difference between Western concepts and Indigenous worldviews is in some way problematic because it sets up a rigid binary between Indigeneity and everything outside. Yet, her statement remains important to consider the ways that understanding commitments is informed by our understanding of relations both, if you will, both

"forward" but also "backward" in time. Service learning not only fails to take into account that democracy is founded upon a settler government, but it presupposes the ongoing of settler colonialism.

# Chapter 6: Aunty-ing On the Frontlines: Indigenous Womxn's Embodied Theory and Praxis

> "You know, these voices aren't going to be heard, the women, not just the women, but mostly the families. We are a movement of families. The press at the time was male-dominated press, and any press we did get was racist and in South Dakota and so they called the shots. The women then were basically invisible" (Madonna Thunder Hawk)

> "We are often denied the opportunity to talk about any kind of topic that has resonance to our shared experiences and daily lives. 'Americans" love to ask Indians about their jewelry, their spirituality, their long black hair and high cheekbones, their dances and 'costumes.' What they are more ignorant of or more reluctant to talk about, is their actual lived experiences" (endawnis Spears).

This chapter starts from the premise that as Native womxn we are much more than our experiences of settler-colonial violence (Simpson 2017). Native Feminist Theory and Praxis, informed by our movement spaces, reveals underlying networks and values that "make power" beyond a simplified reaction to the violence that we experience in the settler-colonial present (Jacob 2014). In this chapter, I extend Jacob's (2020) aunty-ing as a lived methodology to the frontlines in order to highlight its grounded and essential mode of being to not just a deeper understanding of Native feminism but rather as a radical potential to transform our settler-colonial realities through their direct engagement on intersecting fronts.

Broadly, this chapter takes up the question of Indigenous womxn and capturing them as "things." When a complicated, lived, and relational mode of being is "controlled," settler colonialism is upheld. C. Matthew Snipp (1992:363) highlights the unique social position of American Indian people and argues that both in the national imaginary and in sociological inquiry, Native American communities received both little in resources and attention. He continues, while American Indian

women are “certainly not immune from gender discrimination,” sociologists know very little about their circumstances. Similarly, Walter and Suina (2018) state, too much attention is paid by researchers to Native peoples rates of drug and alcohol abuse, lower educational attainment, and violence, without attention to the broader social force of settler-colonialism. Outside of sociology proper and over a decade before Snipp’s critique within sociology,  Rayna Green (1980:249), in contrast, argued that Indigenous womxn have not necessarily been ignored but rather “the level of the substance of most passion for them has been selective, stereotyped, and damaging” (ibid). What has been given most attention reflects an overreliance on stereotypes and has been destructive to the representation of Native womxn. The limited scope of Native women’s representation, Green argues, leads to a distorted image of Indigenous women.[1] I suggest, that this should not be read as a tension between erasure and representation, and instead what is demonstrated is that the settler colonial context materially and subjectively limits what can be read and translated by and for Native communities, especially Native womxn stuck between the “rock and a hard place.”

In movement spaces dealing with erasure, Indigenous womxn’s calling to attention missing, and murdered Indigenous womxn has led to a recent increase in law and public policies concerning the overrepresentation of Indigenous womxn sexually violated, raped, murdered, and missing. For example, their scholarship, activism, and organizing has led to Tribal Law and Order Act 2010, Violence Against Women’s Act reauthorized in 2013, Savanna’s Act in 2018, Arizona House Bill 2570,

Hanna's Act in 2019, Not Invisible Act in 2019, Washington House Bill 1713 in 2019, Ida's Law 2020.[2] The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's movement names settler violence as it names the womxn in our lives that have been taken by that violence. Gendered oppression and sexual violence are weapons of settler-colonialism and war (Deer 2015; Deer and Nagle 2017; Falcon 2001; Sarah Deer 2009). As Sylvanna Falcón (2001: 31) puts it, "By international standards rape is a war crime, a form of torture, and a link to genocide." Furthermore, as two-spirit Indigenous scholar Qwo-Li Driskill (2004) puts it, if sovereignty is defined as having control over one is one body and futurity, then a "sovereign erotic" must be become familiar as an always already part of our path to healing.

Our movements against sexual violence also inform Indigenous womxn scholar theorizing, methodologies, and praxis. Native womxn scholars fundamentally undermine the conceptualization of both academic silos and the supposed binary between the personal and political fundamentally undermining disconnectedness. Indigenous feminism, Huhndorf and Suzack (2010:4-5) posit, "has arisen from histories of women's activism and culture that have aimed to combat gender discrimination, secure social justice for Indigenous women, and counter their social erasure and marginalization." Moreover, scholars, even those who do not consider themselves "activist scholars," cannot unhinge their work from these movement spaces and knowledge production.

Despite the victories on the frontlines – both in academia and beyond - settler colonialism remains intact. Critical Native scholars point out that the dedication to

recognition of Indigenous peoples has provided little in challenging the prevailing power structure (Coulthard 2014, Simpson 2019; A. Simpson Smith 2012). In our turn toward the state, they argue, organizers and scholars are committing to the belief that bringing national attention to the plight of Indigenous womxn can help protect them against ongoing settler-colonial sexual violence. In other words, Native womxn's turn toward the state for legal protection further entrenches Native communities in the colonial grasp of the nation-state. Coulthard (2014) and L. Simpson (2017) advocate for a turn toward Indigenous grounded normativities. Grounded normativities are the interrelated and connective tissue that connects Indigenous nations and individuals back to their Earthly places and relations. Coulthard highlights Idle No More and Simpson Nishnabegwin brilliance as sites where this work is being done.

In terms of praxis, aunty-mg can take many forms, as Michelle Jacob (2020) writes, "I cannot tell you what it is." In gesturing and story-ing the best of our aunties, Jacob suggests, "she can make you stoop," "she is a mix," she is everything. Aunty-ing, a verb on the move. Aunty-ing is what Chela Sandavol, Gerald Vizenor, or Jacques Derrida might call the third space in that it is beyond the grasp of manifest manners (Vizenor) or controlling images (Collins) and is a "flight path" (Simpson) or punctum (Sandavol) toward spaces that are both parts of but beyond the settler-colonial present-ing.

I suggest Aunty-ing on the frontlines, not a subject in itself, but directed and networked through movement spaces, is open up to possibilities that refuse

containment. Aunty-ing on the frontlines, oriented through movement spaces and place, is oppositional, refuses containment, and is infinite in that is situational and not free-floating. I suggest that the dominant representation of frontlines flatten performances and readings of the ecological Indian. In contrast, a verb, aunty-ing is a recognition of care and love that asserts a network of responsibilities and possibilities. Most importantly, aunty-ing on the frontline is an active connection to our relatives and land, something only "figured" in manifest manners and the womxn as victim.

To understand aunty-ing as un underlying value and embodied knowledge, this chapter introduces to readers the tension of recognition in the settler-colonial context that strategically calls our attention to the technologies of **containment**. I begin this excursion with Collins **controlling images** to think about the capture of Indigenous womxn figures. I do so to enter a conversation about **strategies** that have been employed toward us and by us, particularly at the intersections of violence against land and bodies, to understand the ongoing importance of Indigenous networks of care. Our **movement** spaces, where things bubble up, including Standing Rock, Muana Kea, and Black Lives Matter, have shown us how anti-colonialism and abolition are about both tearing down and building, with our ancestors and children, from the **ground** up. After storying aunty-ing, the text will think with Michelle Jacob's aunty-ing as a methodology to further highlight the crucial aspects, challenges, and possibilities of aunty-ing on the frontlines. Aunty-ing, I propose following Jacob, is an active process informed by our lived experiences, histories, and relations. As Jacob's aunty-ing has done for me, the hope is that my nieces, sisters,

and aunties see themselves and feel free in this recognition of their love, strength, and courage – however messy and imperfect it might be.

I end by asking us to think about how the **sociological canon** has failed to contend with its imperialist tendencies and suggest that one way we, as sociologists engaged in academic aunty-ing, can enact networks of care in the frontlines of education and research.

## CAPTURED, CONTROLLING IMAGES AND RECOGNITION

### *Controlling Images*

Fanon is one of the most well-known philosophers in postcolonial literature that turns the question of the "Indian problem" back upon itself. Fanon's own alienating experience shook Fanon so deeply that he realized what it meant to be (seen) an object among other objects. As Coulthard (2014: Frantz Fanon's "Sociodiagnostic" Critique of Recognition Politics) writes, "Far from assuring Fanon's humanity, the other's recognition imprisoned him in an externally determined and devalued conception of himself. Instead of being acknowledged as a 'man among men,' he was reduced to 'an object [among] other objects."

In the United States, scholars have pointed out that the dominant representation is dangerous because media and scholarship represent women as stereotypical static categories. Patricia Hill Collins, a radical Black feminist sociologist, argued that stereotypes (such as mammy, a matriarch, and welfare queen) are "controlling images." Stereotypes are used "not to reflect or represent reality but to function as a disguise, or mystification, of objective social relations" (Carby 1987:

22, cited by Collins 1989/2000: 69). Again, stereotypes disguise social relations. Objectification, through which oppositional difference is made possible, and is as Dona Richards (Richards 1980), also cited by Collins, explains, a requirement of Western thought systems.[3] Sociology has been thoroughly invested in studying and representing the world as "the west and rest" (Hall 1992), as American and the other.

Collins warns, stereotypes legitimate structural and epistemological oppression making it possible for inclusionary politics that ultimately fail to address oppressive underlying structures. I suggest caricatures of Native women bolster the "west and rest" approach to social analysis similarly to the process by which the Black women's lived experiences are made into an object of "difference" to be "included" into the nation-state, whether through educational or legal institutions.

Rayna Green (1975) was one of the earliest to write about stereotypes as they related to Native women revealed what she called the "Pocahontas perplex." The controlling metaphor ascribes to the Native women both her Mother Figure of "exotic, powerful, dangerous, and beautiful" and an image of a benevolent princess, who, unlike her mother, gives aid to the white man (703). The image of the squaw, in contrast, is represented through the stories of an "Indian whores, their alcoholic and sexual excesses with white trappers and hunters" (711). Neither categorization allows the Native woman to move about freely, instead she is "between a rock and a hard place," and both her and the categorization of Native men are defined through their relationship with the white society, particularly the white man (713).

Craig Womack (1999) wrote, “Deeply embedded in the romanticism about Indians are ideas regarding gender… The queer Indian fits none of these popular imaginings” (Driskill 2004:58). That is, queer indigeneity falls doubly outside of an already marginalized and disappeared people. When Native communities are romantically characterized, often, this romanticization has no connection to two-spirit embodiment.[4] From a critically Native queer perspective, Chris Finely (2011) asks, what happens when we question both the straight-forward participation of Pocahontas, but also her straightness? This is a critical point to consider because as Driskill (2004:54) puts it, “Queer sexualities and genders are degraded, ignored, condemned, and destroyed.” Similarly to Collins assertion of the power of controlling images, Driskill highlight that settler-colonial containment included both rigid gender binaries and the prison institutions that contain and confine our trans-relatives. That is, containment is both subjective and structural.

When the concerns of Indigenous women are collapsed into generic “women’s issues,” the real issues they are talking about (the ongoing violence of colonization, the violence of extractive industry, and the denial of Indigenous nationhood) are potentially silenced. Deborah Bird Rose (1996), writes in the context of Australian Native land rights about “the double-bind in the encounter between Indigenous knowledge systems which include boundaries of exclusion and silence, and the colonising demand for information.” Indigenous women, she highlights, are often ignored in colonial legal processes, especially in land claims meant to act as decolonizing institutional mechanisms. In this claim’s hearings, as she explains, the

deep sacred and material relations that women enact on the land, dreaming across and naming it, alongside with men, are erased through court proceedings. To cite an essential part of her critique:

> This written record can be understood to document a people's relationship to land at the time of inquiry. Long after the witnesses are gone, the written record will remain. This record contains a highly biased representation of Aboriginal women as land owners. In a large majrotity of claims there is a marginalisation of women as managers of country, kindship and other social relations, as well as of ecological, geographical, religious and other forms of knowledge. The spiritual dimension of their lives sometimes is not even mentioned. (The erasure of women)

In a system where "speaking up" demands a disclosing sort of engagement with law, their erasure is read as passive choice. In this process, male centrality, as Rose describes it, is affirmed with "gender equity defined as an optional extra" (ibid). She writes, "This embeddedness may conceal, naturalise, or marginalise continuing colonizing practices. Furthermore, it can be difficult to offer a critique of the colonising features without calling into question the whole decolonising project" (2).

Adding the Native women figured by dominant representations into the field of sociology is thus problematic as the scholars above in different colonial contexts have already pointed out. Instead, what is imperative is to understand the ways anti-blackness, indigenous erasure, and imperial wars figure us as caricatures in the broader imaginary. The ways that colonial institutions, as Rose explains, do a double move in forced erasure of Indigenous womxn's practices and then recognition through imperial cultural frameworks. The "capturing" of Indigenous women depends first on the "capturing" of the racialized gendered Native. Furthermore, it is one of my tasks, and I hope the readers, to avoid this sort of capture.

*Juridical Recognition*

Stereotypes and prison walls are forms of "capture" or "containment." Juridical recognition is another. The point of ongoing containment, subjugation, and violence through juridical recognition may be difficult for some to digest, especially in the current era of tribal recognition. Recognition, after all, is sought by many, if not all, minoritized communities, including Native nations. As Coulthard (2014) suggests, the legal recognition of Indigenous rights is primarily due to the "persistence and dedication of countless Indigenous activists, leaders, communities, and organizations" (Introduction, From "Wards of the State" to Subjects of Recognition?). It is because of their work that "we have witnessed within the scope of four decades the emergence of an unprecedented degree of recognition for Aboriginal' cultural' rights within the legal and political framework of the Canadian state" (ibid).

Treaty rights have proven useful in the states, as well. For example, the Yakama tribe used their treaty right to protect their right to salmon. I made the point elsewhere that the Yakama Nation utilizes its authority granted through the Treaty of 1855 and the Comprehensive Environmental Recovery and Compensation Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Washington State Dangerous Waste regulations (WAC 173-303) to participate in the process of cleanup and restoration of hazardous and nuclear waste on the Hanford Site. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Womxn's Movement has been at the forefront of policies to support sexual violence survivors and to stop further trauma. Without these laws, tribal nations would have effectively

been barred from participating in discussions that informed what happens on their own lands. Treaties are important in the construction of policies, and the protection of Indigenous lands and peoples.

Guerrero (1992), who writes about Native water rights, explains that when the first treaties were signed, water was considered part of the land, so much so, that there was not specific language separating it out from usage. Legislation like the Homestead Act, railroad development, and interest in settler development brought about the usurpation of water from Native lands and its diversion to feed the needs of settler development (190). The issue of bifurcating land and water rights is connected to the very issue of spiritual and cultural survival, according to Guerrero (208). She turns to Madonna Thunder Hawk to illustrate the connection between land rights, water rights, and self-determination:

> Water is the life blood, the key to the whole thing. Without water, our land rights struggles – even if we were to win back every square inch of our unceded lands – would be meaningless. With the water which is ours by aboriginal right, by treaty right, and by simple moral right, we Indians can recover our self-sufficiency and our self-determination. Without water, we are condemned to perpetual poverty, erosion of our land base, our culture, our population itself. If we do not recover our water rights, we are dooming ourselves to extinction. It's that simple. And so I say that the very front line of the Indian liberation struggle, at least in the plains and desert regions, is the battle for control over our water (208, my bold).

Without treaty rights, as Madonna has explained to me in an interview, "we're just poor people." This is not othering of "poor people," but a refusal of the racialization of Native nations. In other words, it is the sovereign treaty relationship that keeps Native people in a unique position, a status as Nations.

Nevertheless, I read Coulthard as suggesting that juridical recognition fails to address the underlying structures of power, particularly the normalization of settler-colonial occupation. Dialectical recognition, "rather than leading to a condition of reciprocity" instead "breaks down with the explicit nonrecognition" of the nation to nation agreements between Native nations and the settler-state, or the settler-state strategically "domesticates" nation and leaves the foundation of the colonial relationship relatively undisturbed" (40). As Schulte-Tenckhoff (1998) explains, "the paradigm of domestication" is the process by which the state subverts the position of Indigenous peoples, either abrogating treaties or controlling the interpretation of treaties. As Schulte-Tenckhoff advises, "To put it in a nutshell: by virtue of 'quasi-sovereignty,' Indigenous peoples were sovereign enough to enter into treaties with the purpose of ceding legal title to their lands and territories, but were not sovereign enough to continue function as independent political entities" (254).

Thus, almost like a dance, the dispossession and containment of our lands and bodies shift from outright state violence to governing that "work through the medium of state recognition and accommodation" (Coulthard 2014; see Lomawaima and McCarty 2006 for discussion of the swinging pendulum). Treaty rights are essential and so is the recognition that these legal mechanisms govern our dispossession and containment. Despite the nation-state's step toward what appears as benevolent acts of recognition on Indigenous nations, as others have maintained, the aims remain the same: the usurpation of land. If the state has strategically deployed treaties and then

read those treaties to usurp land, what other relations might we explore to honor the first treaties we have held and continue to enact with our relatives?

As Coulthard has suggested, it is not as simple as "turning away" versus "turning toward" the state because the state does not necessarily need us to recognize its powers. Settler violence is real and ongoing. In the case of the United States and Canada, as is across the Fourth World, the colonial state has demonstrated its ability to usurp land, labor, and resources either through direct force or through legal remedies.

I suggest that womxn's political organizing has and continues to take into account the material, subjective, and metaphysical complexities of employing settler-state legal mechanisms. State law is a legal fiction that imposes western notions of land as property, while Indigenous assertions to water and land are deeply sacred relations. As Gilio-Whitaker (2019) writes, "In Indigenous worldviews, there is no separation between people and land, between people and other life forms, or between people and their ancient ancestors whose bones are infused in the land they inhabit" (138). Native American feminist theory and praxis, the assertion that our first treaties are with the land, challenges the restrictions imposed on our families practices that enacted the connections among and between the people, the land, and our more-than-human relations.

Legal mechanisms of recognition have indeed proven useful within the settler-colonial context, but they are also mechanisms that enact further violence on Indigenous nations, particularly womxn and their children. Colonial legislation has

and continues to be used by settler states to strategically impose racialized conceptions of indigeneity. Moreover, federal and state-recognized tribes, recognized but lacking resources, support methods of exclusion based on racialized quotas, and community members are effectively born into communities as second-class citizens. Family members, particularly women and children, are left to experience the forms of colonial violence but without the resources provided to status-members. Furthermore, this sort of attention to gendered issues by Native women on behalf of Native women and their families is still framed as potentially subverting tribal nations' quest for national sovereignty.5

## NATIVE FEMINIST ANALYSIS AND AUNTY-ING AS PRAXIS

"Native feminist theories bring together critiques of settler colonialism with critiques of heteropatriarchy" (Tuck and Recollet 2016). When the concerns of Indigenous women are collapsed into generic "women's issues," the real issues they are talking about (the ongoing violence of colonization and heteropatriarchy) are potentially silenced. Sandy Grande (2004) well known for her assertive critique of feminism, or more particularly, white-stream feminism, posits mainstream feminism is a "theory of land owners." As "land owners," white-stream feminist liberal goals of equality are fundamentally and materially placed in contradiction to Indigenous womxn. Grande (2004) citing Devon Mihesuah (1998:38) writes, "[W]hile indigenous women may in indeed be different in everything "from blood-quantum to skin color," their shared experiences as 'conquered peoples' historically and relationally places them within the 'common project' of colonization. It is this

placement that connect the lives and experiences of Indigenous women (the colonized) to each other while colonization distinguishes them from white women (the colonizers)." To cite Mihesuah directly, "Indian women share the common context of gender and the common core of struggles against colonialism… and the consequent tribal cultural change and identity confusion" (38). While I respectfully depart from holding onto notions of the change equating strictly with loss or confusion, I do concur with both Mihesuah and Grande about the importance of highlighting how gender cannot be disentangled from colonialism, racialization, and capitalism. Grande suggests, Native women's collective experience of colonialism, "a multidimensional force underwritten by Western Christianity, defined by white supremacy, and fueled by global capitalism" draws Native women together and not white-stream feminist opposition to patriarchy and goals of equality (124). As an Indigena, Grande writes, "academic feminists have virtually transformed the feminist project into a textual practice that isolates language and ideas from their historical and materialist frames of reference" replacing collective emancipation for individual choice and white-middle class liberation. Similarly to Rose's critique of legal maneuvers that must first erase women's dreaming across their lands to then offer them redemption through land proceedings is a move from the left hand to the right. Grande critiques the democratic imaginary and its integrationist rhetoric for its failure to assist American Indian peoples struggle to retain sovereignty and instead turn toward a land-based pedagogy that puts the learner in relation to the world and land.

As in any community, not all people agree on language, tactics, and strategies. Anyone belonging to a tribal community knows very well that there are individuals, including scholars, who refuse the label "feminist" and "activist." Janet McCloud, fish-in activist, Sandy Grande, scholar, refusals of feminism is more particular and nuanced then what they have been framed. Grande's work, sometimes cited as "anti-feminist," is best described, I suggest, as an Indigenous feminist insistence of teachings that center a cosmological relation and responsibility to our relatives, human and non, past, present, and future. I propose that Native womxn's assertion to this mode of being is beyond textual play and what is important is that whether Native peoples refer to themselves as feminists, matriarchs, or by their individual tribal responsibilities, they are enacting lived refusal to what "manifest manners," to use Vizenor's term, have inscribed both subjectively and materially. Instead, regardless of which label Indigenous womxn deploy, what has remained the same is the assertion of the ongoing value of our sacred relations. Native womxn's gendered and environmental justice is, from this perspective, an enactment of a sacred relation to life in all its forms. These sorts of endeavors, as others have suggested, "fall arguably under the rubric of feminism, despite Indigenous women's fraught relationship with the term and with mainstream feminist movements" (Huhndorf and Suzack 2010:5). And as Tuck and Recollet (2016) assert, there are multiple definitions of Native feminisms, not just one

Are we merely asking to be included under the rubric of feminism? I think not. I suggest that Indigenous and Native feminism is a direct intervention into

colonial materiality and ways of knowing. Goeman and Denetdale (2009:10), for example, intervene in discourses that propose feminism is a "white thing" and the ongoing of settler colonialism by employing feminism as an analytical method to "examine and reflect upon the [settler colonial] reverberations in our Native homelands." Indigenous scholars J. Kehaulani Kauanui and anti-colonial scholar Andrea Smith (2008:10) state that "the very simplified manner in which Native women's activism is theorized has made it difficult to articulate political and scholarly projects that simultaneously address sexism and promote indigenous sovereignty."

Wilson (2015:258) writes, "The issues that Indigenous women raise often relate to their identities or to their individual and collective experience of discrimination and violence, but in speaking out, they are not proclaiming themselves victims." There is plenty of evidence that demonstrates the dedicated time, energy, and remarkable abilities of Indigenous womxn activist scholars to point out the underlying issues that have affected their lives, draw connections to other groups of women, and to speak on Indigenous womxn particular embodied experiences (see (Brant 1984). For example, Winona LaDuke (1995) at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, outlined the devastating impact of decision-making made by corporations on Indigenous nations, women, and land. She asserted, for example, at a UN forum that the predatory relationship of corporations like Conoco, Shell, Exxon, the World Bank that superseded human rights to live on the land without fear of contamination will not end if cultures of consumption continue to

undermine other ways of relating to the Earth. LaDuke warned, "Consumption causes the commodification of the sacred, the natural world, cultures, and the commodification of children, and women." She ends the same speech with the following:

> It is not that the women of the dominant society in so-called first world countries should have equal pay and equal status, if that pay and status continues to be based on a consumption model which is not only unsustainable, but causes constant violation of the human rights of women and nations elsewhere in the world. At the The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China 1995).

Native womxn are often in what looks like from onlookers as contradictory roles, contesting feminist analysis even as they work from inside of Women's Studies, for example. Contesting settler colonialism even as they work within international legal institutions that by their presence, bolster settler-state sovereignty.

In this complicated spaces, Native Feminisms draw from the grounded, and generative work of womxn activists maintain our essential connections to the first treaties we held as human nations. These two labels, scholars and activists, from a Native feminist perspective, are difficult to parse out. In what follows, I suggest that a Native Feminist praxis, more particularly, aunty-ing on the frontlines demonstrates the critical resistance and care within Native Feminisms, as diverse as they are. I propose aunty-ing on the frontlines is community building against the backdrop of settler-colonialism. Community building that addresses head-on the issue of settler colonialism teaches the importance of caretaking one another and the lands – both essential connections from where we make or own energy. Whatever we call

ourselves, I hope to demonstrate that Jacob's attention to be-ing reveals that our lived embodiments are more complex and grounded than what can be captured by manifest manners.[6] From this perspective, sociology, regardless of "who" it studies, must contend with its legacy as implicated in both subjective and materialist imperialism.

Goeman and Denetdale (2009) introduce readers to the task of "[illuminating] the workings of colonialism within our respective Native nations and communities and to reclaiming traditional values as the foundation of our lives and communities" (9). The task is important because the consequences of colonialism have shaped our lives. As they say, "The structures of our lives as Native women and men are shaped by racism, sexism, and discrimination. We strive to recover our former selves and push toward creating better future selves by reclaiming Native values, which have seen us through multiple traumas, including land dispossession and the loss of our freedoms" (9-10). As heading this call, I propose that Jacob's aunty-ing, primarily when understood against the backdrop of settler colonialism, is part of indigenous resurgence.

## AUNTY-ING AS A METHDOLOGY

In this section, I return to Michelle Jacob's aunty-ing methods to think about what my relatives have taught me about aunty-ing on the frontlines. Michelle does not tell the reader "who" or "what" an auntie is and instead describes aunty-ing as a methodology. Jacob (Jacob 2020:2) writes:

> What is The Auntie Way? You can decide for yourself, as you read the brief stories that follow. You bring your own experiences and wisdom and perspectives to these stories, and to your life. I cannot tell you what The Auntie Way is or should be for you. But I hope that how I describe Auntie-ing

> is helpful for you. For me, The Auntie Way is the very best of what I see my Aunties over the years giving to me, to help me find my strength and courage to be my best self- or at least try. And the understanding and patience to know that it is okay to fail. That failure is part of learning and growing; it expands our ability to love and care, if we allow it.

Later, aunty-ing as a methodology, Jacob shares, is "about listening, guiding, and helping" and later, "a verb [she] made up that [she] finds both fun and important." I read aunty-ing as a refusal to the limited inscription and an assertion that focuses our attention on care, love, and joy against the backdrop of settler-colonialism.

I believe aunty-ing to be similar to what Leanne Simpson (2017b) calls brilliance and describes as strategic and present. Brilliance is of embodied thought, meaning it resonates from ways of being, and these ways of being are a mode of relating. Coulthard calls this mode in indigenous communities a "grounded normativity." This embodied brilliance serves for Simpson as a "flight path out of settler-colonialism." Simpson delineates flight by drawing from Neil Roberts description of marronage. Marronage, as she explains it, is the enactment of a fully autonomous community. For Roberts, flight "is directional movement in the domain of physical environment, embodied cognition, and/or the metaphysical" (18). In other words, flightpath is an ability to distance oneself and direct movement spatially and is rooted in the present. Simpson proposes that the brilliance that her elders practiced *was* her flightpath. As a flightpath, they helped her "to escape colonial reality" into an "unfolding of a different present." This different presence was Nishnaabewin "grounded normativity." In this way, in the present, in the conditioned and contextual, Simpson stories how the embodied modes of being she experienced as a young

person accompanying her teachers, her aunties, and uncles, was a way to physically, consciously, and spiritually distance herself from settler-colonial reality.

The procedure of practice of living, theory, and praxis intertwined, is generated through relations with Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg land, land that is constructed and defined by our intimate spiritual, emotional, and physical relationship with it. The procedure is our grounded normativity. Living is a creative act, with self-determined making or producing at its core.

Melodi Wynne (2018), one of my brilliant aunties, wrote her dissertation on the protection of Indigenous Knowledge, and she starts her work with recognition of her Aunty Marlene. She writes, in the précis:

> My paternal Auntie Marlene, an author in oral tradition, emphasized listening as a path toward hearing, understanding, and acting as the thing we need to learn, practice, teach, expect, and deliver..Auntie, in her way, demanded we listen for understanding in order to bring back our Tribal way of empathy, compassion, and taking care of each other. The listening that Auntie expected puts much of the responsibility for communicating onto the listener… (1)

Aunty-ing is active, and centers our care for one another. Later Wynne, who wanted to write about Indigenous Knowledge, writes about her time with her auntie and the difficult conversations they had that informed her understanding of the community's most immediate needs. Together they talked about the community's concerns of the documentation of Indigenous Knowledge. In the end, it was this lived relation with her auntie that was an enactment of Sqeliz modes of being. As Wynne describes, "we have/know Tribal values through relationship with elders/aunties/uncles, our language, our practices, etc. They have and will stay the same and evolve" (my bold).

Our values enfolded into our knowing, are made and active in the movement between our relations with our kin networks, including both human and other-than-human. They are incomplete, not in a way that most think about failure, but incomplete as an unfolding present potential. They have always been so, will stay this way always, and, doubling back, will continue to change. The hegemony of human replaces cultural modes of being as cultural representations are democratized, so that there may be many cultures but only some of them human. Aunty-ing refuses this democratization of cultural representation with only some human and reasserts that all are human and that human doesn't mean above and outside nature, but among and responsible to.

For Jacob, whether sharing about auntie who can speak the Yakama/Ichiskíin language, another auntie who reflects "a mix of pool hall tavern toughness form the reservation back home, and savvy adaptation of Southern California fashion and trappings," or aunty Pyaxi who is "bitter and strong and difficult and beautiful" that teaches you the "power of the collective," the reader learns about their relation to aunty-ing, and the potentiality of becoming in relation to her relatives. Jacob passes these stories as gifts of relation, of struggle, and strength onto her readers within the settler-colonial context. Without offering a static definition, she says, "aunties are everywhere":

> The nurse at the IHS clinic, the aide in my kindergarten classroom, the librarian, the after-school club leader, coworkers, bosses, intern supervisors, coaches, and teachers. Recognized regardless of blood relation, because Aunties best distinguish themselves through demonstrating the care and concern of kin, with or without the sturdy

> branches of a family tree; Aunties can provide other trees, blossoming with hope and possibility" (98).

Importantly I highlight that aunty-ing is not only a humanized form. Instead, aunty-ing is a teaching of strength, resolve, and "the power of the collective." Pyaxi is both the material root and the metaphysical, in she speaks to us through how she gathers us, and we are made to gather with her.

Jacob's attention to "kin," our familial networks that are both and beyond the racialized constructs provided to us through colonized gendered norms and the heteropatriarchal family networks, also hold this potentiality. Jacob challenges and provides opposition to what Vizenor calls manifest manners that undermine our brilliance. In contrast to the U.S.'s "Native American woman," in Jacob's aunty-ing I see myself and more. I see my aunties aunty-ing. I realize recognition need not be enclosed, I have space for growth.

In the next section, I show how aunty-ing on the frontlines demonstrates humble resolve and the strength of care on the frontlines.

## AUNTY-ING ON THE FRONTLINES

First, a note by what is meant by "frontlines." I am using frontlines to highlight that places are productions of social histories and present tensions. As political spaces I mean not only to highlight the political and legal narrations and materializations of frontlines through conflict with the settler state and its technologies, but also the present, historical and ongoing indigenous and anti-colonial orderings that render their occupation visible. As Mishuana Goeman (2013) remarks about Native women's mapping, "there is a critique of colonial orderings that exposes

power relations in the settler map, points out the intentions of the state, and relishes in the uncertainties." Native womxn's aunty-ing on the *frontlines* marks Native womxn's presence as much as it denormalizes settler-state arrangements of lands and bodies.

In my experience in academic spaces, the Water Protector Movement and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Womxn's movement are at times conceptualized as addressing two different issues, or two different frontlines.[7] The former is considered an environmental critique and the other gendered. At academic conferences, for example, Standing Rock is referenced as an environmental movement, and the MMIW is encapsulated as addressing the violence against Indigenous women's bodies.[8] The legislation that arrives from these two "different" movements also addresses different legal arenas. However, the work that happens within these spaces quite literally refuses bifurcation. This refusal is perhaps so because Native womxn's stories emanate from an embodied reality of settler-colonialism (the dispossession of land, children, and our very bodies).

Moreover, from this lived experience, they have, over and over again, pointed to the violence of settler colonialism. They are not silent. For example, the Yakama Nation womxn of War Cry podcast critically analyzed a 1959 news article titled "Dusky Maidens in Demand." The newspaper articled attached for potential white men, as they explain, a monetary value awarded by marrying a "Toppenish halfbreed." Through their critical analysis, situating the newspaper squarely within the settler-colonial context, the women pointed out the connection between the gold

rush, the rape of Native womxn and children, the United States response to the complaints of the nation with war, and following usurpation of land (Washines et al. 2020). When we listen to those aunty-ing on the frontlines, their embodied critiques refuse easy categorization into, for example, environment and womxn.

Actively engaged in addressing suicide, homelessness, drug and alcohol overdoses, and intergenerational violence on the Cheyenne River Reservation, the One Mind Youth Movement was a, if not *the*, significant flame for what became known as Standing Rock Water Protector Movement. The chairman of the Standing Rock Tribal Council had been resisting the pipeline proposal since 2014 in legal spaces. The youth who would later be known as leaders of the movement faced doubts within the council by many of its older members. With the support of Ladonna Bravebull, Jasilyn Charger and other camp leaders gathered the youth.

Jasilyn Charger shared her own back story to how she got engaged to Saul Elbien, a writer for the New York Times. Charger starts her story at a time in her life well before what is more widely known as a "Water Protector Movement." According to Charger, early in her life she was suffering from drug addiction when her cousin, Joseph White Eyes, intervened. "He Would say, "You're killing yourself, and we need you… Don't get high, let's go to sweat." Sobering up, working, and then moving away, Jasilyn returned from Portland, Oregon, when a friend committed suicide. While Jasilyn was there for her friend's funeral, another youth committed suicide, and then another. As our tribal communities are too familiar with, death is expected in "waves." In this case, "30 Cheyenne River kids attempted and eight

completed." Jasilyn with Joseph, committed to doing something about the situation. Organizing basketball tournaments, a trip to Red Nation Film Festival in California, Jasilyn and Joseph then pressured the tribal council to provide funding for a safe house for the youth (Elbein 2017).

Having been involved in the KXL pipeline spirit camps, Jasilyn and Joseph saw an opportunity to contribute and to get the youth involved to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. "But little remarked upon at the time was the unlikely seed from which the movement had grown: an anti-suicide campaign among a tight-knit group of youths, most younger than 25, impelled by tragedy and guided by prophecy" (Elbein 2017). Their refusal to watch young community members lose their lives to suicide, to the tribe to allow youth to live unhoused and unsafe, and then their involvement in the KXL camp all informed their response to the Dakota Access Pipeline. Once Ladonna Bravebull Allard opened her land to Jasilyn and others, they built a space that was like their time at the Keystone XL spirit camp. "For Charger and other leaders, as important as the idea of the safe space was the idea that activism would teach children the skills to survive more immediate threats, like bullying and drug abuse. They hoped to pass on the skills at the camp that they themselves had been taught by Keystone activists in their community" (Elbein 2017). Their centering of ceremony, as a place of gathering and healing, demonstrates youth connect protection of the people to the protection of Land. Culture was not an activity detached from their modes of be-ing; instead, "culture" was about enacting their connections, connections to both their human relatives, their more-than-human

relatives, and the water. As their lived practices demonstrated, family making and caretaking before, during, and after Standing Rock was not grounded in western heteropatriarchal nuclear family formations. Rather, it was material, practical, and spiritual as it addressed their most immediate concerns of life.

Debbie and Twa-le are best known by most outside our community as combatting uranium contamination on the Spokane Tribal Reservation. Natural waterways course on three sides: to the east is Chamokane Creek and to the south the Spokane River, and to the west the Columbia River.

The Hanford Nuclear Facility already established and producing weapon-grade plutonium lead to uranium mining as a lucrative activity.

Two enrolled tribal members, Jim and John Lebret, found uranium and then established the Midnite Mine Company. Midnite mine is situated amid the confluence of the Spokane River and Blue Creek, with the Columbia River to its west. The Dawn Mining Company took over and managed the site. After decades of "shawty mining" and the price fall of uranium in 1981, the mine was closed. Not until then did the site operate to treat the water from the mine. "Groundwater flows closely follow surface topography, due to extensive fractures in the bedrock. The filled drainage continues to act as conduits for shallow groundwater flow, and the open pits intercept significant groundwater flows," according to a governmental report. This means much of the freshwater is directed to the contaminated pit. The groundwater then travels into the surrounding waterways.

Deborah Abrahamson started SHAWL Society (Sovereignty Health Air Water and Land) to raise awareness among both tribal members and non-Natives about the contamination. Ted McDermott of the Spokesman-Review writes about Deb, "Perhaps her central fight with SHAWL has been working to make the cleanup more responsive to the needs of her tribe and pushing her community to engage in that process. She has fought many campaigns in that war, including resisting the relocation of some 700,000 cubic yards of dirt from elsewhere on the reservation cap mine waste, helping the tribe access funds from the federal government for former uranium workers suffering from occupational illnesses, and successfully working to stop the relaxation of cleanup standards at the Midnite Mine site…"[9] In Deb's words, "[P]eople need to take the precautions necessary to protect themselves, as well as the lands and the waters, and do what our ancestors taught us. We're obligated to the lands that we live on. And we're obligated to this earth to make things better for future generations. That's the main message" (McDermott 2019).

As discussed earlier, Tribal members worked at Midnite as mining, processing, and transporting uranium. Many families talk about the ways that workers would come home dusty from the mine. The radioactive uranium dust was widespread throughout the community, found on miners' clothing, and alongside the road from the mine to the processing plant. In some instances, roads were paved with waste rock. Spokane peoples now have high rates of cancers, though exact numbers are difficult to locate.

Deb and her daughter Twa-le are most known for their activism as it relates to Midnite Mine and uranium contamination. However, their work is challenging to categorize if we understand their engagement informed by a variety of social problems, including police brutality, houselessness, and environmental degradation of Indigenous homelands. As stated earlier, I first met aunty Deb working on a police accountability campaign. A community member was shot in the back of the head by an off-duty police officer. Deborah than supported my efforts as I pushed back against my elementary age child's school use of a classroom management program that forced him to make "money" in order to purchase tickets for a vacation. I argued that it was an extension of boarding school ideologies that erased common understandings of responsibility to the community and Deborah told me to take the story and what she understood as abuse to the local paper.

Deb, always aunty-ing, encouraged me to speak up, and when our voices became drowned by a white lead organization, she taught me when to distance ourselves yet remain connected to the more long-drawn-out fight. She encouraged me to school and when Standing Rock happened, she led my way to the frontlines and then welcomed my return. When I shied from speaking up about my own interpretations of what the Water Protector movement meant, she encouraged me that I needed to return to school and tell our stories. Wherever I seemed to be, even a thousand miles away, she was there aunty-ing on the frontlines. Deb and Twa-le's latest frontline excursions involve fundraising and delivering COVID-19 supplies to

elders across the Spokane res. Again, bifurcation of these fronts is practiced when we stop listening to the womxn who embody their resistance.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR RADICAL NATION BUILDING BEYOND CAPTURED RECOGNITION

Native feminist praxis refuses the permanency of the state, and through aunty-ing on the frontlines, as I propose here, we can both imagine and enact other forms of lived governance as we further develop our anti-colonial and abolitionist strategies. Justice, I suggest, is worked out between our relations and not with the state as mediator. Cheryl Suzack (2015:264) writes, Indigenous women:

> [F]oster community regeneration according to principles of kinship respect and inter-generational inheritance and renewal by working 'behind the scenes' to undertake liberation struggles and self-determination practices in ways that facilitate Indigenous social justice claims.

From this perspective, Native feminist justice is about maintaining, fostering, and asserting the caretaking responsibilities that all of our relatives carry as human beings. Caretaking is a responsibility and different than liberal rights frameworks to justice.

As anti-colonial, radical black feminist thought, and poststructuralists have shown, domination involves the objectification of a group of people (Collins 2000:70–71; Fanon 1963; Hall 1992). For Smith (2008:309), the politics of inclusion has led to discussions about Native feminism that rely on essentializing Native women and including them, or not, into feminism. Instead, Smith contends, "theorizing produced by Native women scholars and activists makes critical and transformative interventions into not only a feminist theory but also into a wide

variety of theoretical formations." Native and black feminist scholars have shown that our experiences of the oppressive logic of white supremacy, though "differently" embodied, are interwoven and enmeshed. I am not free until you are free. Aunty-ing on the frontlines, I suggest refuses the provincializing of Native feminist theory praxis to a "going back" and, drawing from Simpson, is an enaction of brilliant, present, connections.

According to Paula Gunn Allen (1992), colonization of the Americas depends on gendered violence and suppression of Native women power in our own communities, and this is why she wrote to "recover" the "feminine." The language of "reclaiming traditional values" can sometimes get lost in the current settler-colonial context. This reclaiming makes sense only in this context. For it to make sense, readers have to imagine the Indian as archaic and moving away from originality that has been nearly lost.

## IMPLICATION FOR SOCIOLOGY

Like Fanon's refusal of simple inclusion into the white world, Smith (1974) argues that for sociology to deal with its imperialist nature, it must do more than shift its subject matter to "include" women. A similar case was made by Goldman and Schurman (2000) in their article on society and nature that challenged the "common trait of anthropocentrism" in sociology. They argued for an "ecological paradigm" to displace sociology's human exemptionalism," and stated, "the environment should not be introduced as just another new variable or theme, but as a radically new way of thinking about society" (54). Taking these perspectives, sociology's limited

inclusionary approach makes "women's sociology" or "environmental sociology" a simple addition to the regular happenings of sociology. This sociology is sociology authorized by the human, or more particularly authorized by men for men.10

Indigenous sociology thus is not about merely adding Indigenous womxn as another U.S. nation-states population to be studied. Chris Finely (2011:36) proposes that "those nationalist narratives can be exposed as stories of conquest rather than universal love" (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 2013). As Patricia Hill Collins (1989:6) has stated, "symbolic inclusion often substitutes for bona fide substantive changes." Challenging the rhetoric of inclusion, sociology must do more than include the topic of Indigenous peoples if it is to be relevant to both non-Natives and Native peoples. They might start with listening.

Native and non-native, though differently, continue to experience the interrelated "logics of white supremacy" through the processes of anti-blackness, genocide, and orientalism (Smith n.d.). Settler-colonialism is not "just" a Native peoples issue. U.S. theorists who write and research on the processes of racialization have failed to take into account the ongoing processes of settler-colonialism and, by doing so, categorize Native Americans as a racialized minority among minorities (Smith 2009). By considering the state as "inherently racial," we need not presume its inevitability (Smith 2012b). Settler-colonialism is not "something in the past" (Arvin et al. 2013). Margaret L. Anderson (1988) wrote over two decades ago, Sociology needs to move from studying women of color as objects of analysis to origins of the questions. Following Anderson, I suggest sociology must attend to the

question of settler-colonialism, as Native womxn have pointed to it as a structure of power that intersects and informs our experiences as womxn, as caregivers, as frontliners.

Colonialism, Fanon (1963) explains, is always already a violent process for both the colonizer and the colonized. Fanon's point was to bring attention to the Native's turn away from the subjective categories and structural conditions imposed and turn toward a struggle informed by our values and on our terms. For Fanon, the turn "away" was a break away from colonial subjective and material subjugation. Thus, if settler-colonialism is not a "Native only issue" and a "turn away" breaks away colonial subjugation – this process involves us all. And, the question in the context of Angola was not whether to engage but rather how to direct our collective will toward freedom. As Fanon wrote, "What are the forces which in the colonial period open up new outlets and engender new aims for the violence of the colonized people?" (59). As it is so clear for those who directly experience the violent forces of colonial occupation, the question is not whether violence exists. For Fanon, in an "atmosphere of violence," where violence was present, subjective, and material, the question was how to engage with that violence in a way that our humanity was freed from colonial bondage. A bondage that is both subjective and material.

Fanon, we should not fail to take into account, was talking about colonialism and not settler-colonialism (74). Fanon was not addressing the Black radical in the states or the Native enframed by the U.S. government. Where others talk of the nation-states imperial power as a colonial power, we discuss here, from and Native

feminist analysis and praxis, its settler-colonial reality. Thus, I am not suggesting that an atmosphere of violence does not exist in the United States, as others have suggested in their questioning of the turning of violence back onto itself. What is different, however, is that the settler *has* indeed set up a "prolonged establishment of large forces of occupation." In addition to the similarities of an atmosphere of violence is that the category "native" (like we have with Indian, American Indian, Native American, and Native) in the United States is mobilized by the Peoples as a method of inscribing pride in their objectified distance between the occupied and the occupier, no matter if the latter feels their presence to be benign. This is the case, while the racialized binary between Native/settler is no longer if it ever was, solid. Thus, in this atmosphere of violence and prolonged establishment of imperial power, where do we go from here and, more importantly, how do we start?

Native feminisms contribute to and shake up the field of sociology by disrupting the colonialism of gender, refusing the stereotypical caricatures, and calling attention to the context in which we live out our lives. As Fanon said about the negritude movement, we often strategically mobilize the term and constructs imposed upon our communities, but this is not the end goal. The point is not to "do-away" with the Indigenous Peoples as an essential legal category. Instead, I point to how be-ing necessarily escapes these labels, especially as constructs imposed by colonial institutions.

I take sociology's commitment to the study of power and its commitments to challenge oppressive structures seriously and call our attention to our ongoing shared

condition of settler-colonialism. The issue of leaving dominant power structures in tack we realize that we cannot merely expect to "include" Indigenous womxn to address "inequality." Indigenous womxn's aunty-ing on the frontlines enacts a desire to live free of contamination and dispossession, pushing back against the issues that are inherent of Western imperialism. The point is not to reform the institutions but to question their very presence. As feminist sociologists Dorothy Smith (1974:7) pointed out long ago, sociology produces a sort of "conceptual imperialism" that is forcing a binary between the knower and the known. I am concerned with these "internal processes" that Smith points out in the field of sociology, with the symbolic inclusion broadly and, most notably, the ongoing violence that continues to affect our tribal communities. Sociology, D. Smith suggests, remains imperial because it subscribed to its unstated citational practices that limit the conceptual tools that we work with. Following these taken for granted citational practices, D. Smith (1974) posits that sociology is imperialist because traditional methods alienate both men and women from the center of their experiences, their bodies. Most specifically, in her example, sociology is imperialist because it separates women's experiences from her body as it inserts her into predetermined categories of analysis.

As we bend and scribe lived realities to fit them into objectified categories, a process that helps make sense of inequality, we also lose the complex realities of live-ing. More importantly, I suggest, there must be an analysis of the framing in which sociological categories, like Native women, are employed to understand what makes

these categories make sense in the first place. As Native feminist scholars we both mobilize these terms while we recognize they are not our destination.

Women of color feminists, both within and outside of sociology, have written about how our social locations provide a particular lens in which to view the world. Others have discussed our absence in and failure of these categories (intersectionality, for example). Others have attempted to move beyond these categories (cyborg for example). Social theories that emerge from the lived realities from a diversity of womxn across the globe "do not arise from the rarefied atmosphere of their imaginations" and instead reflect their efforts to "come to terms with the lived experiences within intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation and religion" (Collins 2000/2014:9). As scholars and activists working on uranium contamination have critiqued, much of science is conducted with this white man as its center. This centering is not merely a faulty science. It kills. What is equally pressing is to practice understanding where this scientific white man stands.

In other words, our "place" in the world informs what we know about the world. As sociologists and Indigenous womxn concerned with the tension between recognition by the state and recognition of and with each other, what might we do differently? I have explored by listening to individuals aunty-ing on our frontlines the ways we might rearticulate recognition as an action, and free it from its dialectical incarceration.

## CONCLUSION

It is essential to point out that settler colonialism organizes power relations between Native communities and the settler-state, but also informs our lived relations within our communities. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women activists have pointed out, the topic of sexual violence is regarded as outside the bounds of Native community issues. The dispossession of Indigenous womxn and children from their communities by way of treaties and blood quantum requirements are also effects of settler-colonial power structures. The exclusion of trans and queer womxn from ceremonial places are also the effects of settler-colonial power structures. A "sovereign erotic" is a return to and continuance of the complex realities of gender and sexuality that are ever-present in both the human and more-than-human world, but erased and hidden by colonial cultures"(Driskill 2004:56).

In this paper, I outlined how Jacob's aunty-ing as a methodology has the potential to move us from Indigenous womxn "in-itself" in the broader field of sociology, through the process of "for-itself," by a praxis of centering our values and thereby refusing "domestication" and bringing us back to our bodies and "sacred infrastructure." Counterdiscourses, Coulthard suggests (2014:ch.1, Turning our backs on colonial power) are still seeking liberal recognition from the state, and while they are an essential part of our struggle, they are not the ultimate end. It is not enough to reclaim objectified statuses and turn them back toward the Other for recognition or to make new categories, but rather the task is to as bell hooks (1990:22) put it, "recognize ourselves and [then seeking to] make contact with all who would

constructively engage us" (Coulthard 2014:ch.1, Conclusion). It is as Bettina Love has said in a panel hosted by the Education for Liberation Network, abolitionist teachings are attempts to restore humanity in places of learning. "It's not just a teaching practice, it's a way of life."[11] Aunty-ing on the frontlines, aunty-ing practices within our very communities, restore to our nieces and nephews, to ourselves, to our relatives the vibrant connection and responsibility we call be-ing "human." Like the abolitionist teachers in schools who apply methods of "protest, boycotting, and calling out other teachers who are racist," aunty-ing on the frontlines is an anti-colonial embodiment that calls out settler colonialism in its process.[12]

Indigenous scholars and activists are providing alternative ways of analyzing social problems and doing so by engaging with Native feminisms in a way that conceptualizes it for the sake of the wider community, including our more-than-human relations.

Our Auntie Melodi Wynne (2018) started her dissertation, on the protection of Indigenous Knowledge, by acknowledging her auntie's assertion on the importance of understanding listening.13 Wynne writes that listening "puts much of the responsibility for communicating onto the listener" and discussed how she took this mode of being into her dissertation and relations with the community elders with which she worked. I draw inspiration from both Wynne's and Jacob's aunty-ing methodologies and attempt to show through the aunty-ing they have embodied I have experienced, sincere gratitude, and respect for the many different ways aunty-ing on the frontlines have enacted of what it means to be womxn in the settler context.

I began this chapter with a review of Native American Feminisms and then drew from the grounded and generative work of womxn activists to highlight how Native feminisms reimagine what it means to belong to the human nation against the backdrop of settler-colonialism. Drawing from Jacob's aunty-ing as methodology, I propose aunty-ing on the frontlines demonstrates Native womxn's ability to create a "flightpath" toward collective transformation.

We conclude this chapter by calling on sociologists to take up the precious teachings that Native American feminist theory and practice provides. In doing so, we can collectively imagine and bring about Native futures that uphold the examples within the Creation Story we shared at the beginning of this chapter. In the context of "desire to become Native" (Deloria 1999; Hernandez-Avila 1996), how do we navigate sharing/guiding "spiritual re/awakening/connection to land" for the sake of the Human Nation and more-than-human relatives?

Capturing is, to say again, both an epistemological and structural control of Indigenous womxn. As others have demonstrated, to discuss settler-colonial capturing of Indigenous womxn we cannot rest at a racial analysis but must also include gender and sexuality. These embodied realities are a constant statement and, sometimes, disruption to ongoing settler-colonial erasure. Our nation-building, our networks of love, must refuse the U.S. nation-state as an appropriate model.

Chapter 6 Endnotes:

[1] Deloria *Custard Died for your Sins* discussed images of Indian peoples in general.

[2] The young womxn aunty-ing at the UC Santa Cruz American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) were first to bring this specific list of policies to my attention during a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Womxn's program.

[3] Donna Richards' work is an important voice for Afro-pessimism, and anti-colonialism. She makes important remarks, from what I could gather through small excerpts of on-line books, about the racialization of knowledge and, particularly, a statement about the despirtualization through categorization of Indigenous Black peoples. I am finishing the dissertation during the time of shelter-in-place orders due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and could not access this important chapter to which she holds accountable so-called Western Progress. I look forward to the time I can give her the close attention to which she is due.

[4] In a slightly different direction, anthropologists have also fetishized Native sexualities and apply Westernized understandings of gendered embodiment to Indigenous cultures. Much has, for example, been written about the European "berdache" when referencing some of our community members.

[5] Sexual violence is perpetuated by white men and Native men, though the latter is reported as statistically greater. In either case, despite the rising attention to the violence experienced by Indigenous womxn, the topics of gender and sexuality in our

day-to-day lives is still framed as happening "outside" and "against" tribal communities because most violence is reported intra-community.

[6] I also suggest that aunty-ing, as a concept grounded and informed in our local contexts – one-to-one relationships, communities, and tribal nations – evades the capture by the term feminist itself.

[7] Academics are also activists, organizers, teachers, mothers, aunties, and broadly "citizens," thus I am not limiting this occurrence to academia but rather pointing out that those who have the privilege of critically reflecting on activism and the politics of knowledge can also narrowly categorizing Indigenous movement spaces.

[8] The fact that these movements are broadly addressed topics makes my point even more pressing.

[9] Ted McDermott. 2019. "Deb Abrahamson blames mining pollution for her cancer, keeps fighting toxic legacy on Spokane reservation." *The Spokesman-Review*. https://www.spok esman.com/stories/2019/dec/01/deb-abrahamson-blames-mining-pollution-for-her-can/

[10] It might be best to say more about sociology if I am to make my point stick. Snow (1999), in a 1998 presidential address to the American Sociological Association, the Value of Sociology, offered four distinct offerings that made sociology unique and valuable in comparison to other disciplines. Sociology, from his perspective, had been described through narrow and limited "reflections or visions of what is central." He pointed out that limited reflections and visions function "much like metaphors" and that in doing so they simultaneously both illuminated and obscured, "capturing only

an aspect of what makes sociology distinctive" (1999: 7). In response to these unsatisfactory metaphors, Snow proposed that sociology is valuable for 4 distinctive reasons: relational connections, contextual embeddedness, a focus on social problems, and its ironic perspective that reveal things are not as they are expected or should be (17).

[11] Repurposing our Pedagogies Panel hosted by and on Education for Liberation Network's Facebook page, accessed June 2nd, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=260890484987341&ref=watch_permalink.

[12] Bettina Love in Repurposing our Pedagogies Panel hosted by and on Education for Liberation Network's Facebook page, accessed June 2nd, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=260890484987341&ref=watch_permalink.

[13] My Aunty Melodi Wynne writes, "My paternal Auntie Marlene, an author in oral tradition, emphasized listening as a path toward hearing, understanding, and acting as the thing we need to learn, practice, teach, expect, and deliver. Auntie taught this with the authority of an elder on her final journey from this life over to the ancestors, and from a lifetime of experience among our people and Tribal ways. Auntie, in her way, demanded we listen for understanding in order to bring back our Tribal way of empathy, compassion, and taking care of each other. The listening that Auntie expected puts much of the responsibility for communicating onto the listener, which is the kind of listening my participants referred to in focus groups and interviews, the kind of listening I aspired to throughout this project, and the kind of listening I invite from the reader of this dissertation."

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

To conclude
a collectively produced project
as all project are
is to move toward something else
Such a path is dedicated, made possible
by sisters, brothers, cousins, friends, aunties, and uncles.
Those who encouraged us to "keep going"
and
continue to welcome us home.
Friends and family who have passed on,
others who are "locked up,"
and others who are "gone,"
Your visions grounded
us in love
and community
while also directing us toward "something else."
To conclude
is to move toward something else.

Refusal is generative. Refusal might be thought of as a stoppage, an end to something, the breaking of relation. And it might be just this. However, the ending of one thing is often the generation of something new." Carole McGranahan[1]

This work is grounded in and contributes to Indigenous studies, settler-colonial studies, and environmental justice by studying the politics of indigenous embodied knowledge on the frontlines of protest where, so far, I have learned, confirmed, co-created with participants three crucial points:

1. Seemingly disparate issues, like the Pacific Northwest Fish-ins (in Nisqually Territory in WA state), Standing Rock in the North Dakota, or Mauna Kea in Hawaii, are not distinct events – spectacular in form, they index ongoing

dispossession and resistance. They are acts of refusal and love, and center one specific issue: the Land is our body, is or relation, is our as sacred.

2. Frontlines are broader than usually conceived and include everyday lived experiences. In other words, Standing Rock was and is happening all over the Fourth World, and it is happening in our day-to-day lived experiences; whether that is caretaking our loved ones experiencing domestic violence, rape, suicide, being pushed out from educational systems, homelessness, foster care, adoption, gang violence, or environmental degradation.

3. I have witnessed Indigenous knowledge reified and romanticized in dangerous ways. In contrast, Indigenous embodied knowledge refuses erasure. It indexes ongoing and everyday experiences of militarization and slow violence. Furthermore, like the movements and gathering places that caretake us, indigenous embodied knowledge is a place of love and survivance. That is, we are not only sites of historical violence and trauma but are sites of that refusal.

The racialization of identity-knowledge objects is not the same as the attention to the conditions of the lived embodied ways of Indigenous peoples. The project of depoliticizing Indigenous Knowledge is the same project that despiritualizes our teachings and suggests these practices are not modes of existence. To story the politics of Indigenous Knowledge, and then suggest that we move past categorical distinctions so that we can move beyond hierarchical relations is to forget that culture is more than a capsule. As a praxis, Indigenous and Native feminist embodied knowledges grounded in relations to Land and more-than-human relations, reach and

embrace water in all its forms, as our lands have taught us. To speak of the violence that our communities experience, especially the womxn, is not to suggest that we are made up of that violence. These tensions are difficult to navigate and tease out, and they are not. It is not, especially when we take into account the backdrop of settler colonialism, how it embeds itself in our psyches, our relations, our understandings of place, how we become to matter, and not. Rather than racializing or gendering knowledge, I turn to and develop a realization of the conditions in which we live. I focus on our relations and responsibilities held in place, to our pauses, through our activities. Buffy St. Marie told the BIA, I am not your Indian anymore. To say to the state technician or environmental steward, I will not be your sustainability savior/ecological Indian, is not to say that I will not think with a relative on how we might make our way together.

Power in the settler-colonial context has arranged us differently, and, indeed, identity categories are blurry at best.[2] It can also be in these liminal spaces, not quite places, that we come to know ourselves as Peoples, as a Sqeliz womxn.[3] I did not in this dissertation explore the politics of coalitions of interspaces; I explored the racialization of Indigenous Knowledge on the frontlines and how it was mobilized across different places. I am suggesting, from the frontlines, from places and spaces of location, relocation, and dislocation, that Native womxn movement is grounded through her community, the Land, and more-than-human relatives. If one insists on fluidity, it can be said that even a river follows its path as it shapes the earth. It is in these movement-spaces, at times quite literally movement spaces, that our place-

based resistance is spirited, made active. Through the work of my sisters and aunties on the frontlines, I have learned it is the relations of care to our places and relatives that make us who we are, and it is from these places that we speak back to settler-colonial violence and Indigenous erasure.

The dissertation is a study of the conceptualization of Indigenous Knowledge across the frontlines of Indigenous resistance. I join others who argue that different processes construct and turn Indigenous Knowledge into an identity-knowledge-object, racializing, and disembodying a very nuanced and complicated onto-epistemological system. Within the settler-colonial context, this production is often explicitly for the benefits of state reform. In contrast, Indigenous womxn's embodied knowledge/s on the frontline of protest suggests that our bodies are sites for crucial modes of action and produce a radical understanding of –and refusal of - the environmental and gendered violence of settler colonialism (McGranahan 2016; A. Simpson 2014a; Simpson 2007). The research project pushes back against a deficit model of representation while refusing the silencing and flattening mechanisms of globalization, at the same time reaching from, with, and toward a Fourth World, and I suggest Indigenous womxn's embodied knowledges reacquaint Indigenous Knowledge toward a different horizon.

Chapter 7 Endnotes:

[1] McGranahan, Carole. 2016. “Theorizing Refusal: An Introduction.” Cultural Anthropology. 31(3): 319–25. https://doi.org/10.14506/ca31.3.01.

[2] Chela Sandavol, Gloria Anzaldua, Cherrie Moraga, and Andrea Smith wrote about these spaces differently. See Work Cited for full citations.

[3] Gerald Vizenor called this space survivance, Jacques Derrida difference, and Merelau Ponty called it being. See Work Cited for full citations.

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