Re-Storying Political Theory: Indigenous Resurgence, Idle No More and Colonial Apprehension

by

Kelly Anne Patricia Aguirre Turner
B.A. Hons., University of Winnipeg, 2007
M.A., University of Manitoba, 2009

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

This dissertation considers the ethical and methodological challenges that the transformative movements of Indigenous resurgence present to political theory scholarship’s ways of telling, giving accounts of and accounting for, Indigenous politics. It takes experiences of the grassroots mobilizations of Idle No More in the winter of 2012-13, deemed a flashpoint political event and perceivable as an appearance of resurgence in Canada’s settler-dominated public spaces, as impetus to confront these challenges. It describes the discursive and epistemological reorientations advocated by Indigenous theorists and activists on resurgence, away from external recognition and toward regeneration of traditional and decolonial lifeways and intellectual systems. This involves refusals of demands for the disclosure and intelligibility of Indigenous knowledges, practices and stories in these refigurative processes. It suggests these reorientations highlight and also disrupt a pervasive colonial drive to classificatory apprehensions of Indigenous peoples that deny their inherent rights and powers of self-determination and attempt their capture and reformation into governable subjects; meeting structural exigencies of settler-colonial dispossession and domination. It argues that addressing how political theory scholarship might capitulate to and reproduce this colonial apprehensiveness is a necessary critical project, but more so is articulating substantively how it might instead model resurgence’s reorientations. Resources to describe, analytically link and recount political action in these ways, balancing imperatives to theorize and tell with its risks and uncertainties, can be found in Indigenous storytelling principles, whose patterns can be aligned with certain sublimated threads in Euro-Western thought. This dissertation engages and begins to contribute to both endeavors.
Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee ........................................................................................................ ii
Abstract .................................................................................................................................. iii
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. iv
Dedication ................................................................................................................................. vii
FORE-WORDS ......................................................................................................................... 1
On Names and Word Choice .................................................................................................. 5
CHAPTER ONE - My Story ..................................................................................................... 8
  First Words ............................................................................................................................. 8
  Resurgence’s Reorientations: Regeneration and Refusal ....................................................... 16
  Disorienting Fanon: From Prefiguration to Refiguration ....................................................... 25
  Situating My Storying ........................................................................................................... 34
  Arendt and Indigenous Thinkers on Story ............................................................................. 35
  Others on the Politics of Storytelling and Scholarship ........................................................ 41
  Telling Well ........................................................................................................................... 48
  After-Word on Linking and Chapter Outline ....................................................................... 51
INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS TWO & THREE ................................................................. 55
CHAPTER TWO - Coloniality and the Problem of Apprehension ............................................. 62
  PART ONE - Locating Core Concepts and My Relationship with Them ............................... 62
    Which Modernity, Or Rather Whose? .................................................................................. 62
    Which Epistemology or Rather Whose Épistème? .............................................................. 68
    Discourse and Discursive Domination .............................................................................. 73
    Subjectification as Subjection and Governmentality ......................................................... 78
    Transformative Power and Practices for and of Freedom .................................................. 82
  PART TWO - Windmills in the Mind: Apprehension as a Problem of Dependency ............... 90
    “Derivative Discourse” and “Epistemological Dependency” ............................................. 92
    Dominance Without Hegemony and Subjugated Knowledges ....................................... 100
    From a Problem of Dependency to the Challenge of Giving Accounts .......................... 107
CHAPTER THREE - Unsettling and Refusing Colonial Apprehension ..................................... 111
  PART ONE - The Settler-Colonial Theatre of Apprehension ............................................ 111
    Setting the Stage .............................................................................................................. 111
    Entanglements and Disentanglements .......................................................................... 114
    Settler and Native Subjects, Space and Time .................................................................. 117
    Unsettled State: The Logic of Elimination and Its Haunting ........................................... 127
| PART TWO - The Challenge of Refusal .......................................................... 143 |
| --- | --- |
| ‘Reading’ Resistance in the Theatre of Apprehension ........................................ 143 |
| A Matter of Sovereignty: Audra Simpson on a Right to Refusal ............................. 148 |
| Bad Indians: Refusing the Settler’s ‘Right to Know’ ........................................ 154 |
| Inside/Outside the Refusal ................................................................. 162 |
| Tracing Perimeters to Give Accounts .................................................. 168 |
| CHAPTER FOUR - On Ethnological Reason .................................................. 173 |
| The Challenge of Indigenous Politics .......................................................... 173 |
| The Culture Concept ........................................................................ 181 |
| Ethnological Reason ........................................................................ 187 |
| The Bifurcation of Culture: Ethnos and Politas ................................................ 190 |
| The New World: Anthropos Aspiring to Humanitas ........................................... 197 |
| Native Informants and Foreclosure of the Aboriginal: A Critical Impasse? ............. 208 |
| Embracing Damnation and Dancing Between Worlds ....................................... 217 |
| CHAPTER FIVE - Theorist as Storyteller ...................................................... 224 |
| Making Distinctions and Drawing Correspondences .......................................... 224 |
| Story and Active Life .................................................................... 229 |
| Publicity and Politics .................................................................. 233 |
| Benhabib on Thinking With Arendt, Contra Arendt ......................................... 239 |
| Outsiders or Pariahs? ................................................................ 246 |
| Asserting Critical Understanding in Dark Times ......................................... 252 |
| Political Storytelling .................................................................. 260 |
| A Methodological Ethic? ............................................................. 266 |
| Telling to Remember and Relate ...................................................... 270 |
| CHAPTER SIX - Weaving An Indigenous Storytelling Ethic for Political Theory .... 275 |
| Warp and Weft ........................................................................... 275 |
| Indigenous Storywork Principles and Patterns ............................................. 279 |
| Orality and Literacy: Mismatched Patterns? ............................................... 285 |
| Which Stories and When to Tell? ...................................................... 294 |
| On Witnessing Beyond Testifying to Colonialism ......................................... 298 |
| Bearing Witness for Decolonial Transformation ........................................... 309 |
| Storied Practices and Storying Praxis .................................................. 313 |
| A Weaving Ethic ......................................................................... 320 |
| CHAPTER SEVEN - We Have Never Been Idle: Storying Resurgent Movement ...... 324 |
| Re-membering .......................................................................... 324 |
| A Beginning, A Return ............................................................. 325 |
| Story Lines as Connective Threads .................................................. 329 |
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Tlazocamati
yo soy nepantlera
I come from between
dos abuelas fuertes (two strong grandmothers)
sus idiomas no eran suyos (their languages were not their own)
and my language is not theirs

to these are the threads of my huipil
weaving together
what was unraveled
or sensing invisible threads
achto huan tiahui (before and ahead)
always unfinished
nepantla
pero
ihquitiz (she will weave)

Nehua Notoca Kelly Aguirre, nehuatl Nahua auh ſuù savi mestiza cihuatl. Nehuatl Ciudad de Mexico Tenochtitlan auh Treaty 1 Anishnaabe, Cree auh Métis homelands. Tlazocamati Lekwungen auh tlazocamati W’SÁNEČ.

My name is Kelly Anne Patricia Aguirre Turner. I am a mestiza or mixed-blood woman
whose Indigenous homelands and birthplace are in south central Mexico. I am of Nahua and also ſuù savi (Mixtec) ancestry on my dad Marco Antonio Aguirre Venegas’ side. My family is originally from Acatlán de Juárez, present Jalisco state and Tezoatlán de Segura y Luna in the Huajuapan de León/ſuù dee area of the Mixteca Baja region in present Oaxaca state.¹ We have some relations who are Yoeme in the north as well. I was born in Mexico City Tenochtitlan
where much of my family now resides, and my birth was recorded at the registry in the hacienda of Hernan Cortez in Coyoacán. My Abuela Maria Cipriana Venegas Ramos was a respected curandera, a traditional healer who died when my father was still a child, she spoke only Spanish. When I was about two and a half years old we moved from Mexico to my mum Joanne Patricia Turner’s hometown of Winnipeg, Manitoba in Treaty 1 Anishnaabe, Cree and Métis homelands. This is where I grew up, among my family of second and third generation settlers. My great-grandparents were multilingual but primarily German speaking Russians (Samara) and

¹ Mixtec, people of the clouds, is a Nahuatl name for ſuù savi, people of the rain. In Nahuatl Acatlán is ‘place of reeds‘; Huajuapan is ‘river of huaxin‘ (Guajes or river tamarind) and Tezoatlán is ‘place of tezontle,’ a red volcanic rock; ſuù dee is ‘place of brave people’ in tu’un savi the Mixtec language.
Cymraeg-speaking British (Glamorgan, Wales and Somerset, England), who arrived on the prairies in the 1910s. My Nanny, Margaret Patricia Nick was a matriarch and an avowed socialist, she spoke only English. I’ve been living, working and above all learning on the unceded territories of the Lekwungen speaking Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the SENĆOŦEN speaking W’SÁNEĆ peoples for nearly a decade, since 2009. I am forever grateful to these lands and their peoples as teachers, for I have come to know and accept myself better here in these storied places.

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In his collection *Dissemination*, theorist Jacques Derrida expressed distrust of the prefacing intent of the written fore-word as attempting to recreate “an intention-to-say after the fact,” where “the text exists as something written - a past - which, under the false appearance of a present, a hidden omnipotent author (in full mastery of his product) is presenting to the reader as his future” (Derrida, 1981: 7). This implicates a foreclosure of the text to come in anticipation of which you might “dispense with reading the rest,” as well as the “impossible wholeness” of books (Bohle, 2017: 258) and the pre-tenses of authorial control. Yet as Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux methodologist Margaret Kovach described of her learning from Māori scholar Graham Hingangaroa Smith, we might instead consider the prologue or fore-words as signaling “to the careful reader that woven throughout the varied forms of our writing – analytical, reflective, expository – there will be story, for our story is who we are” and this will, despite our intentions, disclose itself (Kovach, 2009: 3-4). As a prelude for engagement for readers which is not complete on reading, this does not delimit the scope or possible interpretations of unfolding story, but is a way of introducing ourselves to begin a dialogical exchange as in oral contexts, a relationship that is ongoing, as our stories and the life with others they describe are unpredictable and open-ended. Situating ourselves with fore-words is about connecting with our interlocutors and assuming accountability for our speech and action, though their effects and affects may be ultimately unknowable and uncontrollable. It is “putting ourselves forward” in our initializing of these relations, communicating intention as ethical practice (see Absolon, 2011: 25; Absolon & Willett, 2005), though we cannot ultimately direct how others engage our stories when we do. Here I want to put myself forward, as the story I will tell in this dissertation is, in many ways, who I am – and also have been, or might be.
Elsewhere, in his *Monolingualism of the Other*, the Algerian-Jewish, French speaking Derrida exhorted “I have but one language - yet that language is not mine” (1998). A meditation on the ambivalences and limits of the colonized’s possible possession and control of a master and *mastering* idiom, a deeply personal reflection of his own positionality. A thread of my story, like Derrida’s and so many others is one of an often confusing and painful relationship with language in speech and action, struggles to speak *who* and *as* I am, to tell my story and so disclose myself, indeed my *selves*, in the languages I have but are not mine. It is then not without appropriate irony in regard to my preoccupations, difficulties and anxieties that to be *Nahua* is to speak clearly and in a shared language. I speak only English yet I introduced myself in imperfect Nahuatl, as I have learned here this is an important protocol for conveying who I am, and a regenerative practice of “re-memembering” as Lee Maracle (2015) has put it. This is a re-memembering of a dis-membered Indigenous self, but also a striving to reintegrate oneself into a whole being, though always also in a transformative becoming.2

In the meaning of such a process for a mestiza Indigena, the late Xicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa’s conception of the *nepantlera*, the threshold worker who upholds difference while establishing links (from the Nahuatl *nepantla*, between) has recently found me. There are transformative possibilities and risks in the refusals that not simply accepting such a position as given but bearing it with conviction, involves.3 Overcoming the fear of self-disclosure, in the languages we do have and as perhaps not one but many selves, is also a thread of my story. I story from numerous intersections at once, though not all may be visible or audible to all, including as diasporic Indigenous, mestiza, gendered as woman, racialized person of colour, immigrant, academic, member of families and communities, able-bodied, educator, theorist-storier and as non-neurotypical. My work to embrace this last self as integral in my ways of knowing-being-doing, and so as hub of my struggles and perhaps gifts, is reflected here. I also

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2 Bonita Lawrence (2003) describes the processes that formed a racialized identity of Indigeneity as the “dismembering” of nations (see Chapter). My phrasing here is not to reference a bio-essentialist conception of wholeness.

3 This position has been described this way: “Nepantleras are threshold people: they move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds and refuse to align themselves exclusively with any single individual, group, or belief system. This refusal is not easy; nepantleras must be willing to open themselves to personal risks and potential woundings which include, but are not limited to, self-division, isolation, misunderstanding, rejection, and accusations of disloyalty. Yet the risk-taking has its own rewards, for nepantleras use their movements among divergent worlds to develop innovative, potentially transformative perspectives. They respect the differences within and among the diverse groups and, simultaneously, posit commonalities” (Keating, 2006: 6).
story from positions whose dis-memberings, displacements and dispossessions have contributed to that of others in turn. This, in my familial locations as diasporic-immigrant-settler but also perhaps as a student in political theory, embedded in academia and the institution of the University who has had 15 years of discipline in Euro-Western methods of scholarship.

These intersections and positions are intrinsic to my theory-storying yet had tangled the threads of my life’s story around me. In 2012, as I was worrying at the knots that had formed in a particularly difficult passage through PhD candidacy exams, *Idle No More* rose up. I have recently read a 2000 piece by Greek poet and literary theorist Smaro Kamboureli that resonates on a close frequency with how I felt then, and in deciding to focus my dissertation project on that winter we danced and Indigenous resurgence discourse here. She reflected on her position as a diasporic critic in Canada who finds themselves in what feels to be a place and time of great transformation or movement and wants to write a manifesto as a witness; but as this transformation or movement is also a marked by a struggle over positionality and agency, is paralyzed with “reluctance to commit to the fixity of words on a page,” and uncertain whether “self-location...suffice[s] to immunize academic discourse against the perils of representation (speaking for or about others), against the politics of the institutions that we are complicit with – however strong our avowed desire to change them” (Kamboureli, 2004: 349-51). Kamboureli’s depiction of her process could easily describe my own:

“I felt that my study was in search of a different author. It kept changing direction, resisting the narrative threads I was intent on following, moving in and out of Canada and its literature, conflating various temporalities – and thus revealing my historical imagination to be other than what I thought it was. I soon began to show signs of personal and academic weariness, the effects of the seemingly tangible gap that separates academic discourse from social reality, government and institutional policies from practice, the intricacies of academic argument from the heat and pressures of personal emotions and engagement...This was not just a matter of finding the right shape and scope for my project; it was, above all, a matter of the difficulty I encountered in negotiating, let alone incorporating into my study, what both personal experience and theoretical insight compelled me to confront” (350-1).
*Idle No More* proved a flashpoint in my story, compelling me to confront the tensions and snags in its threads that I had felt bound me for so long. Instead of attempting to break free of them to follow others and indeed others’, I slowly began to let them guide me. I nearly did not get here, there was tripping up and stumbles but this is the result, a project I did not quite intend, but that has unfolded as it needed to.

**On Names and Word Choice**

In this dissertation I engage a range of identifiers for Indigenous people/s and non-Indigenous people/s. As with Métis law scholar Chelsea Vowel on the “terminology of relationships” (2016: 8), I acknowledge this as necessarily unsettled ground, even within my analytical preferences and political commitments going forward. That is, none of these are meant as absolutes or uncontested even for my purposes here, nor do they necessarily correlate to entirely common or consistent use by others in Indigenous political discourse, nor should their use be taken as arguments on my part as per the most appropriate terminologies for the people/s or subjects at hand. I also do not purport to ‘correct’ identifiers used by others in quotation. Below is my current naming practice for the story I am going to tell. This may change in tellings to come.

My preferred collective identifier is *Indigenous peoples* or *Indigenous nations*. I take these to signify the standing of distinct and originary polities with inherent rights of self-government in their homelands, flowing from a principle of self-determination. Here I align to the normative terminology forwarded by the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, though without associating this to a Westphalian definition of sovereignty (see Turner, 2013: 103-4). That is, this involves a collective self-consciousness that aligns to political autonomy without equating or aspiring to statehood, nor tying nationhood to “fixed boundaries” of kinship or allegiances and “territorial confinement” as in Euro-Western conceptions (Stark, 2012: 122-3). As Métis scholar Chris Andersen has outlined, nationhood encompasses a theory and claim to both internal cultural-societal unity and external political legitimacy and while peoplehood and nationhood are often used interchangeably for Indigenous contexts, key are their assertion of prior existence to and contradiction of subsequent settler-colonial theory and claims, and their reference to intersocietal norms and customary law as an “overtly and relationally political designation” (Andersen, 2014: 91-2). Like Andersen I am
emphasizing these external rather than internal dimensions, with questions of unifying cultural-societal characteristics in critical abeyance as these have been mobilized against self-determination, particularly in the association of nationalism with Euro-Modernity. Nevertheless, Indigeneity is a qualitative expression of affinity in lifeways, experiences of colonialism and political solidarity across boundaries and state borders and I take it up as such. Further consideration of this can be found in Chapters One, Two and Four.

As per the location of my story here and unless otherwise stated, in my discussion by Indigenous people/s I mostly refer to those in present Canada (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) and the United States. Wherever possible and within my awareness I use Indigenous language autonyms for specific nations or confederacies in my address, or an Indigenous person’s expressed self-identification, and so with varied levels of specificity and spellings. I sometimes may use Indigenous people as a collective term for experiences pertaining to Indigenous individuals in general or for a specific group of individuals that may not belong to the same communities or nation.

I use the term Native extensively where I want to cue or signify the homogenized, externally imagined and imposed (that is overtly or implicitly colonial) modes of subjection of Indigenous peoples vis-à-vis the settler or colonizer in general terms, following this use in anticolonial and postcolonial theory. This is a choice I made strictly for purposes of rhetorical distinction from Indigenous self-defined subjectivities and to indicate that the constructs this term references carry experiential force, affect and effect on and in Indigenous lives. However I acknowledge that Native is frequently utilized in Indigenous peoples’ talk and political discourse in non-pejorative, diverse ways including as Native American in the United States. I mostly use Indian only in reference to the sense of Indian Status and band governments according to Canada’s Indian Act, though in some places as having similar connotations to my use of Native in many settings. Aboriginal is a term of recognition utilized in Canadian constitutional law, government and extensively in media and settler publics since its appearance in the Constitution Act, 1982 to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. I infrequently engage with it.

Like Vowel, I concede that the naming of non-Indigenous people in Canada and other settler-colonial states is also complex and contested, particularly distinguishing those “who form the European-descended sociopolitical majority” in them as she puts it. Like her I see Canadian to now be a category of state citizenship that does not get at this majority’s descent from and
particular connection to foundational settlements and the still-dominant sociopolitical order these established. She goes with *settlers*, disassociating them from minority and marginalized immigrant, migrant and refugee people of colour, whenever their arrival, many of whom have been impacted in their movement by colonialism and imperialism elsewhere. These she also disassociates from the descendants of enslaved Africans who “could not be agents of settlement” (Vowel, 2016: 17), though others were also brought to this continent forcefully. I also subscribe to these delineations and discuss settler-colonial studies’ triadic and other conceptions of non-Indigenous subjecthoods in Chapter Three - though my own subjecthood is a case-in-point for the glossing of intersections that the rhetorical and analytical distinctions we make can involve. Nevertheless, when I use *settler society* or *settler-Canadian* I frequently aim to evoke the whole non-Indigenous settler-colonial order within or under which all of these possible subjectivities exist, with the majority’s dominance and its own diversities (not least in regard to Québécois and Francophones) always also in mind.

Aside from the above naming, careful wording in general is what some friends have suggested to be an overly pedantic preoccupation of mine (“this is not a linguistics dissertation Kelly!”). Certainly, this can and likely frequently has impeded my communication being clear and succinct. None of my word choices here or in my everyday life are incidental and un-agonized over, because as I will draw out and unpack in regard to many of these, I believe words matter. Where word choice corresponds to important distinctions between phenomena or practices they describe and so using them synonymously as if we can always infer intended meanings and so understand each other as if we all always “share a world” in Hannah Arendt’s terms, is a dubious prospect (Arendt, 2006: 95-6). Dubious in part because it ignores power dynamics in naming, as in the transliteration of Indigenous conceptions of power, peoplehood-nationhood, self-determination into languages not our own. I do not aim to suggest Western logocentrism or some other kind of absolutist nominative determinism – that naming determines one’s path, if we use a word it *necessarily* alters the phenomena or practices it describes. Rather as with many Indigenous linguists and political theorist-storiers, it is to hold that power analysis in regard to how words operate in discourse that is bound up with practices and structures is important and so too is to take seriously how our stories, who we were, are and can be, is reproduced through language (though not strictly verbal), and to weigh the possibilities of appropriation or subversion of the worlds language carries, transforms and re-creates.
CHAPTER ONE

My Story

My First Words

“I remember my first words…”
-Lee Maracle, from “The ‘Post-Colonial Imagination” (Maracle, 2004: 204).

“I have always believed that, no matter how abstract our theories may sound or how consistent our arguments may appear, there are incidents and stories behind them which, at least for ourselves, contain as in a nutshell the full meaning of whatever we have to say...the curve which the activity of thought describes must remain bound to incident as the circle remains bound to its focus; and the only gain one might legitimately expect from this most mysterious of human activities is neither definitions nor theories, but rather the slow prodding discovery and, perhaps, the mapping survey of the region which some incident had completely illuminated for a fleeting second.”
-Hannah Arendt, from “Action and the Pursuit of Happiness” (Arendt, 2018: 201-2)

I am going to tell a story about political theory telling stories. It is also a story about me, who I am.

On June 7th, 2013 I participated in a panel discussion called “Idle No More and Indigenous Resurgence” hosted by the Society for Socialist Studies during the annual Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities held at the University of Victoria, in traditional and unceded Coast Salish territories of the Lekwungen speaking Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and WSAÑEĆ, which that year felt like being on the crest of a wave. The panel was held in the First People’s House on campus, a frequent place of refuge those past years. I had been asked to fill in for Kanien’kehá:ka theorist Taiaiake Gerald Alfred, whose stature at this point made this a tall

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1 The Society’s meeting was held June 5th – 8th, 2013 with the theme “empire@the.edge.” Our panel was co-hosted by the Indigenous Governance Program and had been adjusted from a general focus on resurgence to respond to INM.
order for a short and timid grad student who had much to say on this panel’s subject but always had difficulty speaking. When the microphone was turned to me however, I did speak. What I said I suppose had enough resonance with those staunch Marxians present to later elicit an invitation to contribute to a book project that the panel organizer, Elaine Coburn had conceived. If the weight of responsibility for my words had daunted me on that day in June the prospect of committing them to the page was a hundred-fold more anxiety inducing. This not least because my words were an expression of the limits of discourse, the possible inability to explain, to make sense, to render intelligible, to apprehend in the dominant language in which I had been trained, that I had come to rely on and thought was expected of me, one of critical theory. Like “discovery,” “mapping survey” and even “illumination” these words used to speak what I had to say might be anything but benign for Indigenous peoples, though their dangers may be more nebulous and material effects indirect. After many revisions, trepidations, concessions and consolations to myself, my first and only solo publication emerged, “Telling Stories: Idle No More, Indigenous Resurgence and Political Theory” (Aguirre, 2015). These years later when I have finally returned to my first words, I feel them to be inadequate and know them to contain mistakes, as I am sure is the case for many who fear scrutiny and still risk disclosure. What follows is not a documentation or defense meant to ‘set the record straight’ about my intentions with those words but how I have come to be here now, to a place of speaking, of telling stories, though I am still uncertain. This is a story of disorientations, reorientations and cycles of return. “The circle has remained bound to its focus.”

During the early days of writing my book chapter, I was asked by my supervisor and mentor Jim Tully whether in my estimation the grassroots movement Idle No More (INM), as the winter we danced (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014) had then been named, could really be seen as instantiating a turn away from recognition and reconciliation politics as I suggested during that panel, when much of its rhetorics and performativity seemed directed at settler-state and society and toward “resetting” the ongoing colonial relationship with Indigenous peoples (as a pamphlet distributed at local rallies co-authored by Alfred contended, see Alfred & Rollo, 2014). It certainly appeared to many of us a rejection of what had, for the last 40 or so years at least,

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2 The title of this opening is similar to that of Alfred’s Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom (2005), an initializing text of resurgence discourse. However I use this here not to indicate deference to him but as this evokes my experience at that moment, feeling I needed to ‘fill in’ for someone who had a powerful reputation as I revisit in Chapter Eight. I amend to ‘my words’ against a masterly or removed authorial voice.
been deemed legitimate conduits of Indigenous political struggle, expression and representation endorsed by and within the Canadian settler-state formation. That is, seeking recognition of a dependent status as citizens-plus or domestic nations through constitutional rights and title adjudication or new treaty negotiations, and the brokering politics of advocacy organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) or the Indian Act band council system. As the late Arthur Manuel put it, INM and other recent grassroots and especially Youth-driven initiatives reflect a rejection of this “status-quo” (Manuel, 2017).

Yet Tully’s conceptual question seemed a pertinent one. Initial organizing was certainly responsive to the then Conservative government under Stephen Harper and their mammoth and near impenetrable Omnibus Budget Bill C-45 with its contravention of the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent; and also the relegation of many reserves like Attawapiskat and the bodies of Indigenous women such as Attawapiskat’s elected Chief Theresa Spence, as zones of permanent emergency. That is, permissible to such zones’ mixture of scrutiny, exploitation, abjection and neglect, interchangeable sites for the exercise of a sovereign exceptionalism toward Indigenous nations, just as Bill C-45 also rendered Indigenous lands, territories and authorities violable. In this way INM displayed a “visible topsoil of grievance, resting on vast sedimentary foundations of settler-colonialism” (Webber, 2016: 4). INM’s practices seemed to mobilize Indigenous people and settlers in “co-resistance” (L. Simpson, 2017) to an unprecedented degree, at an unprecedented speed, with the use of social media for the dissemination of its stories mirroring the tactics of horizontalist protest or social movements like Occupy Wall Street. This was indeed the most visibilized and communicated Indigenous mobilization on Turtle Island since the siege at Kanehsatà:ke (Oka) in 1990 and until the Lakota, Dakota and Nakoda led camps protecting water from the black snake of the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock in 2016-17. And yet this I knew like many participants in its actions, was “not just another social movement” or swell of protest (Coburn & Atleo, 2016).

INM did not present a unitary front making demands of a state whose legitimacy remained unquestioned or offering a single counter-hegemonic alternative, nor perhaps was it even only anti-colonial resistance providing a clear signal of a revolutionary liberation whose transformations could be predicted or immediately known. INM organizer and two-Spirit

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3 Most visibilized and communicated rather than largest or “most sustained and far-reaching” in present Canada as perceived several years on, which would still be the mobilizations against the White Paper, 1969 as commentators point out (see Webber, 2016: 4).
academic Dr. Alex Wilson (Nêhiyaw) gave a sense of how it might be known as the winter turned to spring - that while the rallying points of Bill C-45 and Spence’s fast provided a catalytic “impetus to a sudden rise in resistance,” there was also “a sudden rise of interest in a movement that's based on broad-scale community building” (Wilson quoted in Schwartz, 2013). What I discerned at the time was that there were a number of ways that INM was and could be theorized or as I will suggest storied but only one, the strand I have taken up, to me implicated a profound challenge for telling of INM’s practices – methodologically and ethically as I will draw out. As the seasons have shifted, others have since reflected similarly on the convergences of that winter such as Michi Saagiing Nishnaabe thinker and storyteller Betasamosake Leanne Simpson, who saw at least three “distinct but interrelated Indigenous political strains” meeting, the first two oriented to recognition and the third its refusal:

“a rights-based approach that was interested in changing the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state through policy, bills, and electoral politics; a treaty rights approach that included using the numbered treaties to change the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state; and a nationhood approach that involved the rejection of recognition and rights-based politics and a turn toward Indigenous resurgence that was anticapitalist in nature” (L. Simpson, 2017: 219).

On first reading Dene political theorist Glen Coulthard’s 2007 article “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Canada” (probably the year it was published, when I was beginning my Master’s program), I was convinced that he had closed – and indeed on the publishing of Red Skin, White Masks in 2014, effectually “demolished” (Kulchyski, 2016) - the debate on recognition as interpretation and orientation of Indigenous politics, in a liberal vein and in present Canada at least. Coulthard’s critical intercession proved decisive for me intellectually and personally. Here was an Indigenous scholar engaging the great Martinican anti-colonial theorist Frantz Fanon as a vital voice of relevance to the politics of this continent’s original peoples, I had found what seemed an opening to my own bourgeois interests and closest commitments. I had however implausibly found Fanon on my own, at a time and place during my undergraduate years when no one spoke of him, not least in relation to Indigenous struggles here. Another piece I had also found then that infused my thinking with a Foucaultian lexicon was Tully’s “The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples For and Of Freedom” in
the 2000 collection *Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (which I will return to in Chapter Two). When considering a PhD and finding out Tully was Coulthard’s supervisor I thought: “fantastic, if he can support this Fanonian, then he can certainly support me!” - which he has so generously, and being given an opportunity to discuss Coulthard’s work with him directly has also been pivotal. This is how I became located here in Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ territories, and at the University of Victoria, which has been a place emanating *Indigenous resurgence* discourse, as a transformative and still transforming way of telling Indigenous politics.

In the rejection of recognition, the intellectual opening Coulthard contributed to was to make space for the “turn toward” Indigenous resurgence which had begun to coalesce as a field of thought and practice around this word, this name, though in continuity with long traditions sometimes branded radical. Rather than only a negation of colonial domination and dispossession centered in loss, this discourse is centered in self-affirmation and the existent alternatives of a vital Indigeneity. During the winter we danced and the seasons that followed, many articulated the reorientations that this advocates, such as prominent voice Pamela Palmater (Mi’kmaq). On the anniversary of the signing of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 on October 7th, 2013, she suggested in an editorial that as a British edict, it enshrines a narrative of Indigenous dependency, suggesting instead that

“Our culture and identity has the power to sustain us in difficult times and in my opinion, this is the core around which we should rise up and defend our lands, waters and peoples. The sooner we stop orienting ourselves around the laws, policies and media releases of the Canadian government, the stronger we will be in our resistance. Canada requires our participation in their processes to validate their ongoing oppression of our people - we can choose to withdraw and demand better” (Palmater, 2013a)⁴

I experienced and so interpreted *INM* as a spectacularly visible and audible manifestation of resurgence discourse, a decolonial re-emergence of Indigenous nationhoods and ways of knowing-being-doing in words and action. As organizer and then-fellow grad student Jarrett Martineau (Nêhiyaw/Dene) would put it later, in “a literal refusal of ‘idleness,’ *Idle No More* called for collective action against the stasis of the status quo; embodying a self-reflexive call to

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⁴ Palmater here closely aligns to Coulthard’s articulation of the shift to resurgence, see Coulthard 2014: 179.
physical, symbolic, spiritual and cultural movement” through “multiple spaces and modalities” that are “rooted in, and dynamic expressions of, Indigenous cultural, political, artistic and ceremonial praxis” (Martineau, 2015: 236; 231). Yet I thought, how would this movement embodied in diverse practices and events - many of which, “symbolic, spiritual and cultural” like the flash mob round dances being made politically spectacular that winter - be perceived and later told of in the settler-Canadian public at large and an open academia? Especially as it is mobility along with independence that is denied to ‘Natives’ imagined in colonial narratives (Borrows, 2016) that represent ‘Native practices’ not as manifesting transformative power and alternative political orders or socialities but precisely apolitical irrationality and stasis.

The problem I would discern of that still structurally asymmetrical, settler-colonial public and its dominant ways of seeing and hearing Indigenous people differently than Wilson, Simpson, Martineau or myself, might be encapsulated in the following statement by the (wholly “sincere”) historian Ken Coates at the opening of his 2015 retrospective monograph #IdleNoMore and the Remaking of Canada:5

“[A]s political protests go, key elements were missing. Idle No More had founders but no leaders. There was no manifesto at first, no real organization, and an almost complete absence of an effort to manipulate, aggregate, or intimidate. At first glance, the arrival of hundreds of Aboriginal people in shopping malls and on street corners seemed deliberately threatening. Yet the people were singing instead of yelling. They didn’t demonstrate but danced. They had a purpose, but to many people it seemed deeply buried or, at least, confused. This was a protest, if it was that at all, of mothers and children more than warriors and activists. All events associated with Idle No More were astonishingly calm. Culture mattered more than politics” (Coates, 2015: xi emphasis mine).

After Bill C-45 passed, the people continued to drum and sing and this Coates noted “did not make a great deal of sense” to settler Canadians in terms of a political rationale (63). Yet such a rationale was never conformed to. Even the Facebook event page for INM’s December 10th, 2012 National Day of Solidarity and Resurgence, an intensifying turning point of that winter, did not call only for demonstrations against the State but to “visit your Elders, your family, tell your

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5 The cover features a quote by former Assembly of First Nations National Chief Ovide Mercredi (Cree, Misipawistik) that refers to Coates’ endeavor here as “sincere.”
stories. Go hunt or fish, take part in your ceremonies, speak your language...TEACH your language, guide your young ones, sing your songs and embrace your nationhood in any way you can” (quoted in Coates, 2015: 49).

What Coates cues in my story here is an emblematic instance of what another of my teachers Peter Kulchyski has called the “expansive and absorptive exigencies” of settler-colonialism in regard to Indigenous cultural politics (1992: 193), or indeed Indigenous politics as such. Particularly, an insidious coloniality that operates at the level of the epistemic and discursive (connected to the materialities of dispossession Kulchyski is concerned with), and can infiltrate even “sincere” attempts at alliance or co-resistance. Here was a replication of the unlinking of politics and culture according to Euro-Modern classifications that Indigenous peoples in the “status quo” are expected to divide themselves to be eligible for recognition as either political or Native; notable too for an association of one with antagonism and the other with conciliation and a gendered and generational subjectivity with each (mothers and children, not warriors and activists). We might also consider the possible threat sensed at a spontaneous and so unexpected density of Indigenous presence which is expected to be gone or at the margins, invisible and inaudible, as a kind of insurgency. This is an indication of how a cultural/political division helps establish the capacity to know and so predict, and so contain Nativeness and so Natives themselves, has been structurally operationalized in settler-colonialism. As critical anthropologist Natalie Baloy has recently observed of the perception of Indigenous performativity in spaces associated with settlement and Capital like the urban centre of Vancouver, as “forms of display” that are “experienced by non-Indigenous people as cultural not political, visual not otherwise sensorial, passively observed not participatory” (Baloy, 2016: 209). This neutralizes them as marking presence, evidencing Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, muting the people and their homelands’ voices that say as much continuously, though perhaps not with words.

It is the unlinking in liberal recognition theory of certain traditional cultural practices as folkloric identifiers from collective subjecthood as polities and nations with rights of self-determination, which allows the domesticating subsumption of Indigenous claims to life and land to the settler-state. But perhaps recognition was only “demolished” for those of us who read Coulthard and the linkages of these practices and politics evident only to people who live them every day. Accounts like Coates,’ which I will return to in Chapter Seven, align to those first two
strains Leanne Simpson identifies which do not fundamentally unsettle dominant and colonial ways of seeing/hearing, understanding, ordering and managing Indigenous difference as resurgence does. And yet the demand to perform Indigeneity as a racialized ethnocultural Nativeness and to perform a politics that is externally intelligible remains, and here is where I began to consider the complicity of political theory in this problem of colonial apprehension that implies a fundamental discursive dependency for Indigenous struggles. This is a problem I fretted even attempted enunciations of resurgence might be captured by, with culture and politics themselves “subjects of Empire.” Yet despite resurgence’s appearance in/to a settler-dominated public during the winter we danced, the structural political but also discursive and epistemic reorientations that resurgence engages as a turn away and inward challenges the desire for external visibility and audibility and resists representation. How might resurgence do so for political theory, how then might I tell of resilient and inextricably Indigenous politics as INM had provoked me without risking settler-colonial appropriations of its stories?

These have been my first words. They perhaps could end there, to rest in my nutshell. But the incident, the event, the story of INM grounds the threads of my “slow prodding discovery” and “mapping survey” of a region INM’s movement “illuminated” that the dissertation, as the dominant “space and modality” of telling in Academia, seemed to demand of me. It is in this space and modality that I can nevertheless gesture to how I came to consider ways of telling in which rather than discovery, survey, narrative explanation we might speak stories of resistance and resurgence without apprehending them – and that we might unsettle both in the process. These are traditional ways submerged but survivant, both Indigenous and Euro-Western, as may befit my own positionalities. They indicate how we might bear witness to resurgence as a story line that can be traced through both a diverse multiplicity and fragmenting colonial assault. That this may be an imperative for those who have been called to do so.

Here I can begin by drawing out how resurgence’s reorientations are told of by those Indigenous thinkers who have been at the frontline of its tide. Then my disorienting falling out with Fanon and anti-colonial resistance’s framing of traditional practices, and the shift of my project away from describing resurgence and its decolonial transformations in contrast to a decolonization that wants to found a new world. This is a directional shift when I perhaps thought apprehension was only a lexical matter or problem of conceptual vocabulary, to one of the limitations and necessities of disclosure signaled by a problem of words. This is a shift
toward a project considering the methodological-ethical challenge of resurgence for political theory and so a turn to storytelling principles. I will then outline the forthcoming chapters in brief at the end of this chapter but the following is meant to trace a shape from or at least send reverberations down, the story lines I will follow by plucking at different points in the web of threads I will weave from that you might feel them and so get a sense of what may come.

**Resurgence’s Reorientations: Regeneration and Refusal**

Here I will tell you a bit about the reorientations of Indigenous resurgence as I understand them through the words of some of their eminent and emergent voices and in relation with some of their intellectual path-breakers. At the outset I should emphasize that what follows is not to suggest resurgence discourse as unitary or static rather than lively and dialogical. I do not aim to define it rather than follow some of its pronounced contours nor uphold the following voices as uncontested or uncontestable. While I am unsure as to the first use of the term *resurgence* in the political/discursive vein in question, one who might be considered especially influential to its course is Alfred, particularly his 2005 *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. Anishnaabe law scholar John Borrows had included the term in the title of his 2002 book *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law*, which considered the ongoing vitality of Indigenous legal orders, considering their integrative potential with Canadian law for a decolonized visioning of shared political life (Borrows, 2002). Alfred’s conception however involves a turn away from the conventions of “self-government agreements, land claims agreements and aboriginal courts cases” toward “recreating the conditions of coexistence” that just covenants and treaties would presume through “regenerative struggle” (Alfred, 2005: 20-1).

*Regeneration* is perhaps the key synonym to describe resurgence’s political, epistemic and discursive reorientations, with decolonization conceived as not (only) resistance against settler-state power toward liberation, and so reactive to the colonial relation, but enacting

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6 And also the article with Jeff Corntassel (Tslagi), “Being Indigenous: Resurgences Against Contemporary Colonialism” (2005).

7 The outcome of resurgence recreating *conditions* for respectful relations has always been a current in resurgence discourse that is not hidden, despite that a recent article sets out to “excavate an opposingly directed drive” against “first impressions” that it advocates the “permanent or absolute cessation of discursive engagement with settler society” or seeks “to reduce it merely to functional necessities” (Elliott, 2018: 62). This piece emphasizes reciprocal dialogical relations with settler society (which I perceive is an attempt at making it palatable) however it is not prioritized as a “drive” of resurgence but a possible outcome, as the present grounds of engagement remain asymmetrically colonial. Also resurgence discourse does not discount the right of some nations to refuse more than just functional relations as a prerogative of self-determination.
Indigenous models for decolonial life, not only a “process of being against but of being with” as Wanda Nanibush (Anishnaabe) has put it (Simpson, Nanibush & Williams, 2012: 3-4). Cree feminist scholar Gina Starblanket has recently summated this regeneration as toward the “adoption of political strategies and cultural practices that are grounded in Indigenous visions of freedom and autonomy,” with the term resurgence referring to “individual and collective practices that embody this reorientation” (Starblanket, 2017: 22). This involves regeneration of traditional ways of being-knowing-doing, and a sense of temporality or memory connecting past, present and future that emphasizes the continuity of Indigenous lifeworlds, “affirming our cultural resiliency in the face of the ongoing and ever-evolving colonial forces” (25). Here is the claim to strong and persistent foundations for regeneration that is the basis for resurgence, marking a discursive shift from precedential work in the terms of revitalization.

A concept I feel evokes this affirmation of resilience aptly and so use frequently is survivance, associated with Anishnaabe writer and theorist Gerald Vizenor and first appearing in his 1994 Manifest Manners: Narratives of Postindian Survivance, a series of essays on Indigenous cultures in relation to tradition, modernity and post-modernity. Though the term morphs in his varied usages against easy definition, he has described survivance as “an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are resistive renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry” (Vizenor, 1999: vii) and are also assertions of Indigenous life beyond responding to and enduring colonialism, as more than bare survival (Vizenor, 1998: 15). This is contrasted with racialized ethnocultural colonial fabrications of Nativeness (static, determinist and homogenizing) that Vizenor associates with the misnomer Indian and a foregrounding of perceived deficits these constructs perpetuate, that Indigenous peoples are merely subsisting in the “ruins of representation,” in desolated cultures (Vizenor, 1993).

Vizenor calls the narratives of desolation that survivance is set against “terminal creeds” and the notions of authentic behaviors and Otherness in these constructs “manifest manners” (1999). In contrast he forwards what he calls a “postindian” posture centered in tribal affiliations that accounts for adaptability and complex diversity against colonial determinants of identity and

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8 Jacques Derrida uses survivance to denote a spectral quality between life and death, see notes in Chapter 3 in relation to Vizenor. We might as Coburn & Atleo associate resurgence as affirming life against what Achile Mbembe calls necropolitics, which speaks to the claiming of a right to kill but also expose to death (Atleo & Coburn, 2016: 178; Mbembe, 2003). See also Chapter Seven on Audra Simpson’s discussion of Theresa Spence’s fast.
belonging (as Native, Indian) that displace the self-determining peoples, the named nations who are measured by these determinants (Doerfler, 2010: 192-3). This is to contest aspersions of cultural dissolution with ongoing essentializing categories of Nativeness and Native subjectivities or personhoods; though the visible and audible performativity of certain practices (like dancing, even if in shopping malls) may not be seen or heard by others as we intend, but rather as manifest manners *reiterating* their imaginaries of us.\(^9\) Nevertheless with survivance Vizenor’s rejects notions that because of ongoing colonial asymmetries of power there is a necessity for a strictly ‘realist’ or pragmatic approach to a politics of the present that defers to a notion of Indigenous dependency (structural, epistemic and discursive) as a “ruse of dominance,” which resurgence also refuses, as I will return to in Chapter Two.

Questions of enactive and iterative Indigenous identities align to other emphases in resurgence discourse Starblanket and others gesture to, reclaiming self-determining nationhoods and their emplacement, the relationship with homelands and everyday practices that instantiate this relationship. As Alfred and Jeff Corntassel (Tsalagi) have articulated, Indigeneity is a lived transnational identification connecting a multiplicity of peoples who are struggling to retain their distinctiveness “on foundations constituted in their unique heritages, attachments to their homelands, and natural ways of life” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 597). However, homogenizing and partitioning labels as employed by and signifiers of, colonial strategies of domination and dispossession must be countered by Indigenous “definitional authority” in their view (600). Relational models of peoplehood can be forwarded to mitigate conceptions of Indigeneity as either political or cultural identity, which also compartmentalizes the “terrain of struggle” (Corntassel, 2012: 88; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 607-9; Andersen, 2014).\(^10\) This indicates a discursive resistance to colonial modes of subjectification while also a praxis-based regeneration of Indigenous alternatives that are *grounded*.


\(^10\) Alfred and Corntassel cite Tsalagi anthropologist Robert K. Thomas’s conception of Indigenous identity as “enduring peoples.” Like Vizenor’s postindian, this might be named a “post-Aboriginal” view as Alfred has referred disparagingly to a posture that identifies only by the “political-legal construction” the state has assigned as “Aboriginalism,” imputing this accepts the politics of recognition and reconciliation (as a reconciling to settler sovereignty) (Alfred, 2005; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 598-9). On a peoplehood model of identification see Holm et al, 2003. On Indigeneity as a transnational identification see Veracini, 2015: 56-61. For works considering the common politics of Indigeneity, borders and international solidarity see Merlan, 2009 (in relation to the state politics of international relations), Maaka and Fleras, 2005 (on Canada and Aotearoa) and the 2014 collection *Native Diasporas* (Smithers and Newman Eds.). Simpson has also considered internationalism from a Nishnabeg perspective (2017: Chapter 4).
Though I discuss this further in Chapter Two, I would be remiss here not to acknowledge the subversive influence of the great Standing Rock Sioux philosopher Vine Deloria Jr. (1933-05) on resurgence discourse and various nationalist threads in Indigenous intellectualism and activism since he published *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* in 1969, during the height of Red Power and the American Indian Movement. The year he published his own manifesto *Peace, Power, Righteousness* (1999), Alfred reflected on finding Deloria Jr. at age 12 in a Jesuit high school in Montreal, how he gave many Indigenous thinkers a “taste of freedom that changed everything,” a shift in consciousness away from deficit to affirmation (Alfred, 1999) and one that suggested “the pathway to decolonization requires a fundamental epistemological shift away from Western theory” to Indigenous epistemologies as “the foundation for indigenous liberation” (Simpson & Smith, 2014: 4).

Where the alternatives that Deloria Jr. and his contemporaries affirmed as vital and persistent are located, where we learn the nation-based models for both liberation and Indigenous freedom, the source of ethical and sustainable conceptions of a good life in reciprocity with all creation is the land, as Indigenous “ontoeipistemic foundation” (Martineau, 2015; L. Simpson, 2011). Practicing land-based pedagogies (seeing land as pedagogy) is then part of the reconnecting work of resurgence (Wildcat et al., 2014; Simpson, 2017: 145), as is the prioritization of territory reclamations, as “our presence and engagement in these spaces nourishes and sustains specific geographies” which nourish and sustain Indigenous knowledges and stories in turn (Starblanket, 2017: 29). The regeneration of place-based foundations for thought and action – “modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge” - inform what Coulthard and Leanne Simpson call “grounded normativities,” ethical frameworks for relating with each other and the non-human (Coulthard & Simpson, 2016; L. Simpson, 2017: 22; Coulthard, 2014: 13).

Grounded normativities implicate a form of traditionalism which, while foundational, Coulthard and Alfred have both suggested involves a “self-conscious” and “critical refashioning” of values and principles to align with current needs and aspirations for a “powerful melding of

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11 In Canada other major influences of this generation include Howard Adams (Métis), Harold Cardinal (Cree) and George Manuel (Secwepemc).

12 Simpson considers resurgence in terms of *mino bimaadiziwin* (to live the good life), as a process of continuous renewal or rebirth (as Winona LaDuke translates it, 2011: 27). Jill Doerfler (also White Earth Anishnaabe) has described survivance in relation to the good life similarly (2010).

13 ‘Land’ is here meant synonymously with Indigenous territories in their ecological completeness, earth, waters, air, and ice (as for Inuit Nunangat/Homelands, see Christie, 2011 and Tester & Irniq, 2008).
renewal and continuity” (Alfred, 2005: 81, 2008: 104-12; Coulthard, 2014: 179). While this does not delegitimize what may “appear to outsiders as essentialist notions of culture and tradition” (used as validation for settler-state interventionism, Coulthard, 2014: 103), a number of thinkers on resurgence including Starblanket and Simpson, have argued for attentiveness to any possible recapitulations of sexism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and heteropatriarchy in deferrals to embodying sovereignty or tradition (eg. ‘natural roles’ or gendered divisions of labor), and to account for Indigenous conceptions of “queer normativity” (L. Simpson, 2017).\(^{14}\)

As Simpson asserts, while grounded, Indigenous thought systems are also “fluid, dynamic and responsive,” and contain principles and models for communal and self-actualization in “valuable, ethical, consensual, meaningful, and reciprocal relationships with all aspects of creation” that are gender neutral or non-binary and inclusive of gender diversity and variance in sexual orientation (L. Simpson, 2017: 121-2). We can also speak similarly to contesting ableism and neurotypical normativities to “story the in-between” (Chandler, 2017; Durst & Coburn, 2015) in regard to concepts of embodiment and enaction in resurgence discourse, to accommodate many pathways of collective and individual self-determination as well as relational responsibility for our choices to our selves and between self, human and non-human others, spirit worlds, the earth (L. Simpson, 2017: 134).\(^{15}\) An emphasis on land-based practices must also consider the complexities of the terrain of struggle as such, to account for being “Indigenous in the city” and urban emplacements as well as other mobilities, both physical and cultural (Peters & Andersen eds., 2013; Coulthard, 2014: 173-6; Simpson & Smith, 2014: 11-12; Borrows, 2016).

We can also be mindful of how the emphasis on grounded-ness prioritizes community-based and everyday practices, how we move in the world as individuals and interact with others in our varied and overlapping spheres of intimacy, which sees transformative action in lived experience across multiple scales and sites of renewal and resistance.\(^{16}\) On the terrain of struggle

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14 Coulthard discusses Simpson’s work here as responsive to concerns raised by Métis thinker Emma LaRoque on a foregrounding of heteronormative views of Indigenous womanhood and motherhood by some Indigenous feminists such as Kim Anderson (Coulthard, 2014: 158). On resurgence diocese and gender studies see Morgensen, 2016. See also notes to “Strong Women Stories” in Chapter 7.

15 As an able-bodied but non-person I am only recently beginning to consider what I might learn from critical disability studies as this work might challenge concepts of enaction and pertain to my theory-storying. I acknowledge the limitations of my work so far in this, as I contend with stigma associated with disclosures.

16 The resurgence literature’s intersection with other work on everyday practices and Foucault’s concept of counter-conduct is interesting though beyond my scope here to discuss, see for example Demetriou, 2016 and Odysseos et al., 2016. See notes to the Introduction to Chapters Two and Three on de Certeau, and Chapter Three on Scott.
and transformation, resurgence discourse reorients our attention beyond and away from an emphasis on institutional, statist and state-sanctioned politics of grievance (Corntassel, 2012; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 606). Indeed, Alfred and Corntassel locate the trajectory of decolonial change from the ground up, with resurgence as “shifts in thinking and action that emanate from recommitments and reorientations at the level of the self” that over time “manifest as broad social and political movements to challenge state agendas and authorities” (611). Corntassel has couched his view of these shifts in the “interlocking” reiterative practices that reinforce the relationships that constitute peoplehoods and require constant renewal. These have been waylaid by a “politics of distraction” as Māori educator Graham Hingangaroa Smith has called a fixation on the state, for instance in rights discourse (Corntassel, 2012; Smith, 2000).

I can here recall the suggestion of INM’s Day of Solidarity and Resurgence on December 10th 2012 cited above to engage the types of everyday practices that Corntassel describes as they interface with the responsibilities of nationhood: Tslagi ceremony at sacred places, kwetlal (camas) food-harvesting here in Lekwungen and Kanaka Maoli cultivation of kalo (taro) in Hawai‘i, Nishnaabe women’s water walking, language use, song, storytelling alongside other practices perhaps more discernable to the dominant political rationality (Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Corntassel, 2012, 2018 Ed.). These practices are crucially “acts of remembrance” (or remembering as Lee Maracle might put it) which bears on how some were made spectacular and unsettling the winter we danced and so how they may be recounted not only in oral histories and living memory, but also scholarship and political theory committed to decoloniality.

This brings me to the other aspect of Indigenous resurgence’s reorientations that make retellings and documentations of its practices a potentially ambivalent imperative. This is refusal. In concert with the emphasis on regenerative praxis, refusal names another quality (or “tenet” as Leanne Simpson calls them, 2017: 176) of these reorientations, practical but also epistemic and discursive. Refusal refers to the stance of abstention or ‘turn away’ from state-institutional recognition processes in political organizing and for framing struggle, but also direct and implicit defiance of the terms of recognisability and demands to know hitherto set by settler-colonial

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17 For example while critical of essentialist arguments of cultural incommensurability to justify gendered inequalities enshrined in community governance (Indian Act or traditional), Coulthard is reticent to discount arguments for exclusionary practices that defer to sovereign authority (eg. to determine membership, see my Chapter 3 in regard to Audra Simpson’s work). He unpacks issues with theories of anti-essentialism and social constructivism used to assess Indigenous claims to cultural difference that do not adequately address the contextual complexities or the state’s legitimacy (2014: 21, chapter 3). The work of Indigenous feminists who consider Indigenous and human rights indivisible provides a counterpoint (see Green ed., 2014).
power. Refusal indicates how the limits for and dangers of enunciating resurgence have to be accounted for, which includes reiterating the colonial ways Indigenous peoples are discerned - seen, heard and made sense of by others. And not necessarily wittingly, but due to the “expansive and absorptive” (Kulchyski, 1992) or apprehensive, exigencies of settler-colonialism and its desire for classificatory knowledge and surveillance of its subjects, that they can be rendered governable. Indigenous difference is dominantly perceived ethnographically as cultural rather than political to meet these exigencies. This presents a challenge to the enunciation as disclosure of resurgence practices when engaged in a still settler-dominated public as I have discussed of INM, including their recounting in scholarship (as another stage of this public).

The thinker who decisively named Indigenous refusal and prompted my thinking on this challenge was Kanien'kehá:ka critical anthropologist Audra Simpson. I first read Simpson in the collection where I first met the work of Tully in about 2005-6, and the argument of her chapter “Paths Toward a Mohawk Nation: Narratives of Citizenship and Nationhood in Kahnawá:ke” struck me immediately. She suggested that Indigenous nationhood “demarcates identity and seizes tradition in ways that may be antagonistic to the encompassing frame of the state, may be simply unintelligible to the western and/or imperial ear” (A. Simpson, 2000: 114). I sought out what else she had written and found “On Ethnographic Refusal” and “On the Logic of Discernment,” which extended the question of Indigenous political intelligibility to the ethnographic eye (2007a and b) and these became touchstones for me until her 2014 monograph Mohawk Interruptus. Simpson’s articulation of refusal has since been taken up by others in critical Indigenous scholarship and has informed a 2016 special issue of the journal Cultural Anthropology (see L. Simpson, 2017; Flowers, 2015; and Tuck & Yang, 2014a, 2014b). In her introduction to the special issue of Cultural Anthropology, Carole McGranahan sketches the precedents to the current dialogues on the concept of refusal (including an essay by Shelley Ortner which I revisit later), as well as four shared theses on refusal across contexts, which are helpful to mark how I engage Simpson, though I maintain an Indigenous contextual specificity in my discussion. The first is what McGranahan refers to as Simpson’s “signature contribution” that refusal is not only a negation, rejection or closure but is a productive or generative act (McGranahan, 2016a: 322). As a no refusal can hold the line to protect places physically, politically, intellectually and discursively for resurgence’s regenerative thought and praxis, “zones of refuge” or Indigenous freedom that bypass the state and outside scrutiny.
(Hernández-Ávila quoted in Alfred & Cornassel, 2005: 605). This no is not antisocial or reactionary (Coulthard, 2014: 169; Martineau, 2015: 242) simply because certain relationships or modes of relationality are refused directly or bypassed. They are refused for others, which affirms these alternatives as existing and possible. What this helps (re)generate are other socialities and affinities (the second thesis), and so refusal “produces or reproduces community... belonging as a refiguring of community, a conceptual partner to refusal’s role in animating sociality” (McGranahan, 2016a: 322). Thus the third thesis is that refusal is an insistence, “not another word for resistance,” as it does not require reference to domination, and so skirts the insufficiencies of the concept of resistance as it may overestimate or reify the power against which it is oriented (such as the settler-state). Hence, resistances toward the liberation of structural decolonization and immanently decolonial practices of freedom or alternative lifeways are often distinguished in resurgence discourse, though they are linked. Refusal is then also “wilful” or obstinate in its “insistence on the possible over the probable, and thus in Isabelle Stengers’s terms, is aligned with hope” (the fourth thesis, 321).18

Though McGranahan (and indeed Simpson) still situate refusal as an “ethnographic object” itself and “methodological form” in ethnography, the elasticity of such a concept of ethnography is suspect in my story here. I rather suggest that the challenge of Simpson’s presentation of particularly Indigenous refusals, both direct and intrinsic (as with evasions of classification, for example. practices’ expressions of Indigenous nationhood) as specifically refusal of ethnographic scrutiny, enquiry, interpretation and representation (especially but not exclusively by outsiders), is critical. It cuts to the core of the fundamentally colonial formation of Euro-Western ethnological seeing/hearing and knowing which coalesced in relation to Indigenous alterities. This divided the analysis of racialized ethnocultures from the political cultures of modern societies, sequestering Indigenous peoples as archaic object-subjects of the former. This still effects how Indigenous political practices are considered in or excluded from, ostensibly non-ethnographic fields of thought and discourse and perceived (or not) in the settler-dominated ‘political theatre.’ That is, ‘Natives’ were made object-subjects of ethnography well outside the confines of anthropological study, because ethnology’s logics or reason toward

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18 Coulthard suggests INM as a “case study against which to explore what a resurgent politics might look like on the ground” and offers five theses or “strategic hypotheses” as Jeffrey Webber suggests in this regard, affirming direct action, anti-capitalism, urban reclamations, gender justice and post-statist politics (2014: 159-60; Webber, 2016: 6-11). These might be considered in conceptual concert with the theses on refusal.
difference implicate but also exceed anthropology in projects of domination and dispossession (especially of Indigenous peoples). Indigeneity is hyper-visibilized, audible and sensible in some dominant registers and invisible, inaudible, insensible in others. Yet how we attempt to address this confronts the problem of reiterating colonial modes of apprehension.

If “settler colonialism will always define the issues [it creates] with a solution that re-entrenches its own power” (L. Simpson, 2017: 178 my addition), the uncertainty for me in considering my dissertation project was whether engaging academic political theory scholarship to defensively re-describe the meanings of Indigenous political practices such as those associated with INM (as resurgence rather than recognition) was itself an instantiation or extension of this. I long let the “ruse of dominance” as Vizenor calls it worry me, that in the face of asymmetrical power Indigenous peoples were still beholden to respond to insidious issues of recognition created by colonialism, to make political-cultural claims that inevitably constricted how and where we might articulate Indigeneity (clue: inside and against the sovereign state and Euro-Modernity). While the inward “collective self-recognition” within and between Indigenous communities and intellectual systems that refusal reorients us to is a powerful affirmation (as per Coulthard and L. Simpson), this also leaves questions of what might be imperative disclosures necessary for decolonial mobilizations and transformations. That is, the need to tell our stories publically despite the risks of doing so in the “deeply unequal scene of articulation” and interpretation in the “settler-colonial present” (A. Simpson, 2016a: 328; phrase Veracini, 2015).

It is the challenge of Indigenous ethnographic and indeed ethno-logical refusal as an ethical and methodological stance for scholars (to mirror the refusal of their ‘subjects’) that I am largely concerned with in this dissertation and specifically in the context of political theory recounting resurgent Indigenous praxis and movement. But this is to see Western academic political theory and theorists, rather than Indigenous peoples, as beholden to explain themselves. For Indigenous scholars in political theory, this requires a confrontation with the limits and possibilities for telling of resurgence and Indigenous political subjectivities which transgress material and conceptual colonial boundaries and borders (A. Simpson, 327; Stark, 2012), within the field’s scope (in every sense of the word), which was defined to the exclusion of Indigenous peoples.

Refusal is not only a methodological challenge, but also an ethical one in deferring to a principle of self-determination and so consent. As Simpson reflected of her own project at home
in Kahnawà:ke recently, what she perceived as crucial were the “very deliberate, willful, intentional actions that people were making in the face of the expectation that they consent to their own elimination as a people, that they consent to having their land taken, their lives controlled, and their stories told for them” (327-8 emphasis mine). In keeping with their refusal of consent, she “refused then, and still do now, to tell the internal story of their struggle. But I consent to telling the story of their constraint” (A. Simpson, 2017: 5). This is as apt a summation of the posture I have also come to in my own project as I will likely find, in the decision to consider only Indigenous stories that have already been shared and recount them around their constraints, though I will discuss my reticence in even this further.

Simpson depicts the posture of refusal as an avenging one, that disrupts a sense that interpretive matters of common settler-Indigenous histories past and present are settled and reconcilable, but also that there are easy answers as to any categorical definitions of Indigenous politics (2016: 330; 2017: 4). Resistance or resurgence as theoretical catchments can themselves function as diagnostic containers that flatten complexity of a kind as she suggests, but they might also be understood as ways of storying politics to share, where and when it is important to counter narratives of settlement. And that it is possible to do so without revealing internal regenerative practices and struggles in ways that can be appropriated or redeployed against Indigenous peoples and practices of freedom, that can be colonially apprehended. That is, disclosures or tellings which do not assume a potential for ideal empathetic mutual recognition as Simpson puts it “rooted in philosophical formula of seeing, unencumbered, what and who is before you – seeing as one ought to be seen, in a way that is consistent with one’s sense of self and property” (2017: 3).

Disorienting Fanon: From Prefiguration to Refiguration

Coulthard’s critique of liberal recognition politics in Canada laid bare what Simpson refers to as the “ruse of consent” – dispossession by force, then legal delegations of options for emancipation that “marks the inherent impossibility” of Indigenous freedom after dispossession (Simpson, 2017: 3). This ruse and the impossibility it marks also appears in a sense of epistemic and discursive dependency, whereby Indigenous peoples must make their alterity and equality (as difference and similarity to the colonizer), intelligible within the dominant political rationality; that even in claims of nationhood and competing sovereignties is considered
derivative of Euro-Modernity and so catches Indigenous peoples in a double bind of “political gain versus cultural pain” (Lynes, 2002). An ‘authentic Nativeness’ is couched in a racialized ethnocultural classification incongruent with modern individual and collective political subjectivities equal to Western statehood and citizenship. And yet neither difference nor similarity is accessible as the basis for rights and title, as Indigenous peoples are both too changed and too unchanged since the mythic Encounter. It is a choice between death and assimilation that is not even possible to make, only tacit ‘consent’ to “a half-life of civilization in exchange for land” (A. Simpson, 2017: 5). On this damnation of the colonized by a false universalism, Martinican anti-colonial theorist, psychiatrist and member of the Algerian National Liberation Front Frantz Fanon (1925-61) had much to say.19

I still agree thoroughly with Coulthard on Fanon’s resonance to an analysis of asymmetrical recognition and contemporary settler-colonialism’s (primarily) assimilative and ‘consent’-driven rather than coercive domination, as well as the productive structural processes of subjection and its “psycho-affective” impacts in colonized people toward internalizing a sense of dependency (Coulthard, 2014: 25-6). Yet on reading Coulthard’s 2007 essay “Subjects of Empire” I had felt he did not attend enough to Fanon’s prognostic limitations for aligning with Indigenous resurgence, in regard to the instrumental role Fanon assigned to traditional or national culture and the emphasis on founding a “New World” and “New Man” in his teleological Marxist-humanist vision of decolonization. However Coulthard addressed both concerns in Red Skin, White Masks. He acknowledges that while Fanon “eschews an evolutionary anthropological theory” of development “from primitive to civilized,” he conceived of culture like class, as a “transitional category of identification” and remained dedicated to a dialectical view of “social transformation that privileges the ‘new’ over the ‘old’” (Coulthard, 2014: 153).20

19 In a treatment of Fanon and Jacques Derrida Shannon Hoff articulated this double bind of “acceptance and refusal” and the terms of both past and future being controlled by the dominant as an “interpretive gesture” imposed on a whole people which

“renders both the identity and the resistance of the colonized consciousness always already appropriated: both alternatives - to assume the role assigned to it by the dominant group or culture, or to oppose it inverting the hierarchy and celebrating those characteristics of identity that are devalued by the dominant group or culture - are tethered to this powerful interpretive gesture inasmuch as that interpretation is still setting the terms for understanding the reality of the non-dominant group” (Hoff, 2013: 59)

20 Coulthard’s engagement with Marx considers his emphasis on time rather than space or place as orientation to understanding, drawing on Vine Deloria Jr.’s suggestion in God Is Red that this marks a distinction of Euro-Western
Yet it was Fanon’s depiction of colonialism’s truly totalizing power and the colonized’s engagement in certain ‘Native’ cultural practices in the *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) that has long troubled me the most. Coulthard defends Fanon from accusations he offered a “devastating” view of colonial power and an inability to break from its cyclical logic of domination and resistance (2014: 43). I still contend more specifically that while Fanon offered a view of anti-colonial “agency and empowerment” in Coulthard’s words through direct action, he did not see an expression of vitality, subversion or resistance in traditional practices like dance, but rather *idleness*, limitations brought home acutely to me the winter of 2012-13. As the seasons changed it was notable to me that a number of thinkers associated with resurgence, such as Jarrett Martineau, Leanne Simpson and Coulthard minimized the transformative power of these practices (as *affecting*), against those more immediately structurally-materially *effecting* and indeed intelligible to the dominant political (and economic) rationality, such as the direct actions of blockades and land occupations.

As major shifts in my project and so story, hinge in certain respects on my dissonance with Fanon I should further address this here, though I will touch on it elsewhere. This is not meant to be an engagement with his wider work on culture or violent resistance centered in the Algerian context or to be determinist in regard to his own story, but merely an account of *my* affect and effects to my story in relation to his rhetoric – his words as they may be taken up. Fanon depicted the frequently clandestine engagement in particular customs like ceremonial dance under colonialism as merely staging a pantomime of hostility and fantasies of revenge (Fanon, 2004: 19-21), a stultifying expression of Native resentment that would not break into anger and so was an energetic diversion, an avoidance of the catharsis of counter-violence, in which the colonized externalize their inferiority complex in the colonizer and take their place by force (1, 10; also Coulthard, 2014: 22).  

and Indigenous ways of knowing and being (2010; 2014 60-1; also Gómez, 2005: 152, 156). The simplicity of Deloria Jr.’s dichotomy has been critiqued, see Simpson & Smith, 2014: 3-4 and notes to Chapter Two. For a critical reading of Coulthard’s view of the relation of Marxism and Indigenous struggles with reference to Latin America and international politics see Dunbar-Ortiz, 2016. Robert Young’s *White Mythologies* critiqued orthodox Marxist historicism in the terms of political economy to be another iteration of white Eurocentric history (Young, 2004). The notion of unavoidable Native cultural death toward human rebirth as a “tragedy of progress” has prevented many iterations of Marxism from being a natural ally of Indigenous decolonization struggles (see Bedford & Irving, 2001; Simpson & Smith, 2014: 17-18). On the ‘idea of Marx’ and Indigenous struggles see Salas Pérez, 2013.

21 See Chapter Three, especially note on the Ghost Dance and the phantasmagoric, also Chapters Four and Eight.
While Fanon eloquently describes the colonial disfiguration of the Indigenous past to produce a narrative of domination and dependency, he deemed Indigenous “cultural alienation” as effectively achieved (Fanon, 2004: 149; 1994). A modernizing nationalism toward establishing a temporary counter-hegemonic order could recuperate and glorify that past, “reinscribing value and worth” in the colonized as Coulthard put it (Fanon, 1968: 247). However Fanon suggested such nationalism as ultimately a retrograde force if not self-consciously impermanent and strategically aimed at structural change, that Native culture became a “fighting culture” (see Coulthard, 2014: 140, 147-8). National liberation could only be a step toward an eventual transcendence of culture, nation and state to achieve the end of total human liberation (Fanon, 1968: 244). Commitment to an “inventory of particularisms,” the “mummified fragments” of customs amounts to going through a catalogue of empty motions. In this Fanon critiques the colonized intellectual who only attends to forms rather than the substance of a culture (its energy) which is “beset with radical changes”; that in “seeking to stick to tradition or reviving neglected traditions” rather than taking up “armed or political struggle” is “not only going against history, but against one’s people” (Fanon, 2004: 160). Fanon viewed anti-colonial violence as the colonized grasping a future-oriented subjectivity that had been halted and fixed by the spatial partitions and cultural internments of colonization, to be once again “living within history.” In the “absolute praxis” of violence (Fanon, 2004: 44) is an “unstable, critical and creative moment of negativity and transcendence,” when the colonized finally reject their being for another for a becoming (Gibson, 1999: 411; Fanon, 2004: 155).

Fanon’s limits in regard to Indigenous resurgence’s emphasis on grounded normativity and its embodiments in repetitions of regenerative customary practices – dancing as much as blockades - are clear. As Coulthard puts it, while Fanon saw “cultural self-recognition” as instrumental in a process of decolonization, Indigenous struggles “articulate a far more

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22 Coulthard discusses Fanon’s shifting views of the necessary limits of affirmative “cultural self-recognition” in relation to the Negritude movement, including simple inversion of colonizer values, essentialism and elitism see 2014: 132-3, 140-7. Nigel Gibson has suggested that Fanon’s depiction of the Manichaean order as experienced by colonized peoples does not distinguish between modernity and tradition as neatly as was then usual in Western thought (Gibson, 1999: 418-9). For a contestation of Coulthard’s (and by extension my) reading of Fanon’s cultural instrumentalism and its alignment with Sartre see Ciccariello-Maher, 2016. For a reading of Fanon on ‘Native culture’ that suggests both his insights and recapitulation of a “terminal creed” see Al-Abbood, 2012. For a discussion of Fanon and Aimé Césaire on culture and decolonization as a topic of their intellectual and situated milieu see Julien, 2000.

23 As Coulthard (2014) has suggested, Fanon powerfully applied Hegel’s allegory or rather metaphor of the Master-Slave dialectic of asymmetrical recognition to its structural actuality and suggested how it might be broken. For another reading of Fanon and Hegel on mutual recognition and the opening to a ‘New Man’ see Villet, 2011.
The substantive relationship between identity and freedom insofar as they are attempting to critically reconstruct and redeploy previously disparaged traditions and practices in a manner that consciously seeks to prefigure a lasting alternative to the colonial present” (Couthard, 2008: 199). On first reading Coulthard’s injunction that “Indigenous resurgence is at its core a prefigurative politics” (2014: 159), I felt this spoke to how survivant customary practices immanently carry “different conceptions of what it means to be human, to live as a community, to live in relation to the land” (Mack, 2011: 297); and so modes of enaction that aim to bring into effect decolonial forms of life in the now, a collapse of means and ends. Yet the language of prefiguration, as with Fanon’s privileging of newness, signals an aspiration for novelty and an anticipatory or future orientation that is a hallmark of Euro-Modern thought, seen in theories of revolution and social transformation including current discourses of/on social movements (see for example Carroll, 2010).

Prefiguration can then be considered an attempt to address what German-Jewish political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906-75) called “paradoxes of revolutionary beginnings,” the aim of finding grounds outside the current order and yet also for legitimation, an authority to found a new order (Benhabib, 2000: 163-4; Arendt, 1996) which can then simply re-state the old. This is a manifestation of a broader “problem of the new” with philosophical and practical-structural implications that Arendt saw in an absolutist Euro-Modern philosophy that demands linear

24 Alfred advocates against replicating statist patterns that approach power as sovereignty or violence, which can reify the forms of life opposed (2005a: 130), though the “ultimate violence” of colonialism forms a “culture” in which the colonized are always tempted to contest within the limits of the political rationality ascribed by them (Nandy, 2009: 3). Coulthard reads Alfred on this in conjunction with Patricia Monture-Angus on patriarchy (2014: 159). Neither delegitimizes violence but questions its efficacy in the current context and alignment with Indigenous visions of freedom. Fanon is often critiqued for not being able to break the “cycle of violence” in his depiction of decolonization, for an argument against this see Bernasconi, 2001. In his work on tracing Fanon’s story as experiential, Ato Sekyi-Otu calls to account reading him on violence as prescriptive, to “bestow upon utterances in his texts the coercive finality of irrevocable propositions and doctrinal statements” and that from “Hannah Arendt to Ashis Nandy, there is hardly a mention of Fanon in any account of contemporary social thought and movements which does not see “Concerning Violence” as a teaching - perverse advocacy or justificatory theory, but a teaching all the same” (Sekyi-Otu, 2009: 4-5).

25 The concept of prefiguration associated with Antonio Gramsci (1891-37) in his theory of cultural hegemony (rule by consent) and non-determinist Marxism as the “philosophy of praxis” rather than laws of history, considered designing popular institutions and organizations like cooperatives to integrate a nascent revolutionary politics in the everyday of the worker as a way to avoid reproducing authoritarianism, thereby setting up the context for a move beyond counter-hegemonic resistance and a cycle of domination (see Boggs, 1976; Gramsci, 1971). This can certainly be read in Fanon’s depiction of breaking the link of tradition and resistance following the ‘fighting’ stage of nationalism in anti-colonial struggle. This is when “cultural regeneration and creation where positive concepts of self-determination, not contingent upon the colonial status quo, are generated” where “the struggle for the new way of life and the native’s daily ‘ways of life’ become one and the same” (Gibson, 1999: 419-20).

26 Arendt wrote on the American Revolution here as avoiding this problem (she admired their constitution) without considering the displacement of Indigenous orders (Arendt, 1996). On

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causation and cannot conceive of action’s dynamism, of radical contingency or spontaneity as expression of freedom. Indeed this is a demand that redescribes/inscribes and absorbs resistance and radical difference (perceived as the ‘new’) into the same (see Zerilli, 2002). Considering imperialism’s logic of invasion, forced ‘newness’ has been described by Bill Ashcroft as its ironic and “darkest gift,” as it both erases place and assimilates difference to sameness in clearing the ground for the creation of colonial space, here in Canada for the founding of the settler-state. The language of revolutionary newness is therefore anything but neutral (Ashcroft, 2005). As I consider in further chapters, the still utopian preoccupation of much non-Indigenous social movement discourse with discovering “alternative forms of production and reproduction or alternative conceptions of nature-society relations” beyond Capital and state (Karriem quoted in Carroll, 2010: 179; Gibson, 1999: 418) can manifest in an appropriative desire for Indigenous alternatives that mirrors the dispossession of land and territory.

Resurgence discourse maintains a sense of visionary creativity and indeed hope through the rejection of “terminal creeds” of Indigenous political/cultural desolation and determinism, yet foregrounds the capacity for and principle of self-determination in the prerogative to remain Indigenous – as both a being and continuous becoming. This does not want to avoid restatement of the old in the ‘new’ (always a renew - as in the re-iterations of traditional practices), and indeed involves a regenerative reinstatement of already authoritative, grounded orders and patterns of life, which inherently unsettles the state’s narratives of foundational legitimacy and Capital’s drive to accumulation. In contrast to founding a New World for all, or assuming a shared “world to win” (Carroll & Sarker eds, 2016), resurgence emphasizes that we have had and continue to have other worlds, other knowledges - they “are (already) possible” (Escobar, 2009 & 2007; Ivison, 2011). However these are not contingent on an imposed regulative ideal of inclusiveness; that these worlds are necessarily open to all in the still colonial present.

The abandoning of what might be called the ‘old’ common world of colonial relations and imagining with intent a ‘new’ shared one of respectful coexistence is certainly evoked by thinkers on resurgence – such as with the Anishnaabe concept of Shki-kiin (L. Simpson, 2011; By “darkest gift” Ashcroft here refers to the valorizing of the new ushered in by colonialism and imperialism such as “cultural hybridity” as an expression of vitality without consideration of how it has been forced upon Indigenous populations through invasion.

My use of the term ‘worlds’ can be aligned with the World Social Forum’s use though with some concern on their prefigurative politics’ perhaps not adequately accounting for existing Indigenous knowledges and theory, see notes to Chapter 8. In regard to the language of worlds and knowledges ‘otherwise’ I am aligned with the Modernity/Coloniality thinkers I discuss in Chapter 2.
Belleau, 2014b). But this evocation is not to implicate a collapsing of imaginings of different worlds under a single, universalizing counter-hegemony. Such collapse must be countered in telling of how Indigenous politics centering self-recognition, is linked to the externally-engaged liberatory politics of decolonization in a story of survivance, as I perceived when traditional regenerative practices became spectacularized during the winter we danced. *INM* organizer Lesley Belleau wrote of *INM* as imagining “new” worlds (Shki-kiin) but also as giving Pauwauwaein, a “vision that gives understanding to matters that were previously obscure,” the “implicate order” (L. Simpson, 2011: 146), which she suggests is not so much a revelation of the colonial present but the reemergence of nationhoods: “Idle No More is unlike anything that has ever occurred before and it cannot be compared to any other revolution, because it is not a revolution! This is not a revolution. It is more than that, it is an awakening that will forever progress” (Belleau, 2014b: 354).

Both Fanon’s anti-colonial revolutionary reversals and conceptions of prefiguration in a sense suggest an ordinal or sequential view of decolonization and the world ‘to come,’ in terms of what can or must precede or follow liberation to halt a dialectical cycle of domination/resistance. This is certainly present to an extent in resurgence discourse’s reorientation of priorities from primarily “trying to transform the colonial outside into a flourishing of the Indigenous inside” (Simpson, 2011: 17) at least until Indigenous peoples have the “personal and collective strength necessary for a confrontation with Canadian society” (Wildcat et al., 2014: 3-4). Resistance and resurgence are frequently rhetorically and analytically separated in this reorientation as Corntassel (2012) notes, though they are not separate but often congruent in practice and effect. As for example, simply being Indigenous in the everyday is a refusal of elimination (Wolfe, 1999; Veracini, 2010) and threatening to settler-colonial domination. Yet how might *INM* be seen/heard and interpreted? As a potentially catalytic moment in what Gramsci called the “intergenum” space between the death of the old and birth of the new; and so a fragile opportunity for precipitating a broader crisis of authority and legitimacy in the state and a new consensus among Indigenous people and settlers (Gramsci, 1971: 275-6)? Or the out-rage of the colonized from complacency that contrary to the “revival” of tradition
initiates the “true revolutionary culture” of productive praxis which must be “forged while the iron is hot,” to quote Fanon’s friend and interlocutor Jean-Paul Sartre (Sartre, xlvii)?

In either interpretation the movement of that winter may rather seem frozen, trapped in a flashpoint, a premature confrontation, a failed experiment. Yet the usually obscured implicate orders as Leanne Simpson calls them – both colonial and Indigenous - may have only been “illuminated for a fleeting second” by the flashes of a million cellphone cameras. Indeed Simpson, Coulthard and Alfred themselves expressed an uncertainty of momentum in the Spring of 2013 that coalesced into a call for Idle No More to become Indigenous Nationhood Movement and perhaps, like some pondered in regard to Occupy Wall Street, a consideration if prefiguration could “replace” a strategy intelligible to the dominant political rationality (see Smucker, 2014). Though not necessarily seen as mutually exclusive, this would be to ask whether to ‘just’ keep dancing or build more blockades? I became concerned that any such internal debate on predicting or perceiving the outcomes of INM’s transformations and what effectual action looks like, might be taken to detract or distract from our capacities of enacting freedom and pursuing liberation now, seem to delay one or other indefinitely, and recapitulate a “ruse of domination” against hope. The language of prefiguration simply did not address these issues enough for me.

I discussed this with both Tully and Coulthard, and addressing the pre-fix that was causing me such consternation (pun intended), came my lexical shift to refiguration. This is a word I prefer and utilize sometimes in place of regeneration in regard to the inward flourishing of resurgence, and also to refer to the outward relational transformations of decolonial resistance - structural, epistemic and discursive - toward liberation and engaged in diverse practices. It is also a term that is central to my concern with modeling resurgence in scholarship. As I take it up, refiguration can be associated with feminist theorist of technology and situated knowledges Donna Haraway’s usage. She countered the disparagement of a feminized concept of partial, felt and embodied knowledges and interested inquiry rather than objectivity equated with neutrality in Euro-Modern science discourse (Haraway, 1988; TallBear, 2017: 81). She also considered...
issues of potentially replicating or reiterating the dominating “worlds we analyze” in “our own practice, including the material-semiotic flesh of our language” when it seems critical for the scholar to “intervene.” Indeed in describing the contributions of theorists, I have chosen not to use the word intervention for its imputation of an aggressive insertion of the self into other’s worlds, but intercession in its sense of mediation. Not to assume to work on behalf of but rather for, as I will discuss in regard to respectful or faithful witnessing of transformative processes in Chapter Six. For Haraway, scholars’ “textual reading” of these worlds (metaphorically and materially) is not enough, we must “implode metaphor and materiality” in considering the effects of discourse, of story, that words matter though we may not know the effects “in advance of engaging in the always messy projects of description, narration, intervention, inhabiting, conversing, exchanging, and building” but that “the point is to get at how worlds are made and unmade, in order to participate in the processes, in order to foster some forms of life and not others...The point is not just to read the webs of knowledge production; the point is to reconfigure what counts as knowledge in the interests of reconstituting the generative forces of embodiment. I am calling this practice materialized refuguration; both words matter. The point is, in short, to make a difference - however modestly, however partially, however much without either narrative or scientific guarantees. In more innocent times, long, long ago, such a desire to be worldly was called activism” (Haraway, 1994: 59-62).

As settler-colonial studies theorist Lorenzo Veracini puts it “anticolonial rhetorics remain powerful and are linked to a compelling narrative structure – decolonization is ‘progress’” (Veracini, 2011: 3). For this dissertation I was initially interested in theorizing resurgence around questions of dissonance with Fanon and correlating rhetorics in Euro-Modern strains of revolutionary and prefigurative thought on such a uni-linear, developmental vision of progress (to argue that resurgence is not a social movement nor a revolution). Yet INM and the challenge of refusal prompted not only a shift in language but my story and so project, toward considering issues of “compelling narrative structure” in Western form political theory itself and by extension the places our stories are disclosed and to what degree. In redeploying Veracini’s phrase compelling narrative structure I am making several gestures, to the forcefulness of colonial narratives, the sense of being compelled to narrate and also how an authorial narrative
structure – particularly in extreme or absolutist terms of a linear historical causation and control over outcomes, manifesting as an authoritarianism - is problematic to recounting political action, and specifically the intention of remembering resurgent Indigenous movement. The challenge posed by refusal and INM is not just to respect a principle of self-determination for storytelling but the conditions for this movement’s intelligibility in a moment of its unexpected appearance to and for settler-state and society, revealing in the interpretive confusion elicited, a lack of shared foundations for understanding despite their common ‘public’ experience.

This suggests both a tactical imperative (as Foucault calls it, see Chapter Two) to tell some stories that have been inaudible or invisible (by force or purpose or language) and the limitations and dangers in doing so. I began to ask, is it always advisable with what Haraway might call activist scholarship, to attempt to perform refigurative politics “for other worlds” by “illuminating” the hidden, obscured or silent (here, Indigenous) alternatives threatened with extermination (see Gibson-Graham, 2008 & 2014)? That is, rather than a critical gaze turned and focused on exposing structures and relations of domination and dispossession (colonial realities, one implicate order), to counter where “colonial unknowing” as willful ignorance or an “agnosia” (the selective inability to recognize by the senses) is at issue (Vimalassery et al, 2016)? As Jodi Byrd (Chickasaw) has suggested, “indigenous critical theory might, then, provide a diagnostic way of reading and interpreting the colonial logics that underpin cultural, intellectual, and political discourses” (2011: xxx). Indeed this is my approach in the first three chapters of this dissertation. Yet critique and retelling stories of colonization to reveal the colonial implicate order only goes so far. A methodological and ethical posture of modeling both refuguration and refusal must be considered when we are called to story for decolonial transformation and not only to illuminate coloniality, its ongoing violences and traumas. We must consider how our words might matter to actively foster some forms of life not only deter others. However, this is where explanatory ‘revelation’ may come with an interpretive scrutiny in a deeply unequal public still invested in Indigenous elimination by exclusion or more insidiously, by assimilation - appropriations of Indigenous stories of difference, resistance or indeed resurgence.

Situating My Storying

As I felt compelled to address the challenge of Indigenous refusal as Simpson and others articulate it, discuss what is being refused and why (what I call colonial apprehension), the first
half of the dissertation can be considered ‘diagnostic’ in Byrd’s sense. The second half begins to consider how theorist-storiers might model this refusal but also contribute “in a small way” to materializing refiguration, inflecting the direction of movement toward the decolonial realities and regenerated lifeworlds resurgence discourse emphasizes. Here I consider resources on a storytelling ethic for political theory in engaging Indigenous experiential stories, particularly of flashpoint events. There are a number of fields of work that I could have more deeply engaged for this, including Indigenous literary theory, poetics and rhetorics, queer theory, media and performance studies, critical geography, feminist methodologies and narrative theory, all providing future avenues for elaboration. In these next sections I will address the choices I made in regard to my interlocutors on story and briefly discuss several non-Indigenous scholars who have also considered the risks, transformative possibilities and ambivalences of storytelling exchanges between scholars and peoples in struggle and political movement, a few taking bearings from Hannah Arendt and Donna Haraway. This will help further situate me in relation with extant work on these themes.

With Arendt and Indigenous Thinkers on Story

On questions of modeling refusal and refiguration in theory scholarship I revisited Arendt for some consideration on what Haraway calls worldliness from the gendered margins of the Western political theory canon (Chapter Five). Arendt wrote in her time and place of a terrifying yet banal power (exceptional to her context), that ruptured tradition, assumptions of shared understanding and explanation through historical narrative, to course to the ‘unthinkable’ yet that could not be left untold, unremembered. Though she spoke to the horrors of the Shoah she also considered the recounting of action in a life with others as an aspect of political theory understood as a mode of storytelling. Arendt’s concept of the political centered in relations of power between her conception of private and public spheres, where storytelling as an intersubjective and shared activity provides a socially integrative and (as collaborative) transformative passage or transit between them. The politics of storytelling then concerns how

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30 There are several general texts on the “narrative turn” (Czarniawska, 2004) and storytelling methodologies that I recently found which I would have found helpful to my telling including a text comparing narrative theory and discourse analysis (Livholts & Tamboukou, 2015) and of particular interest Research Through, With and As Storying (Phillips and Bunda 2018).
this transit is effected - “whose story will be told, and which story will be recognized as true and given legitimacy” (Jackson, 2002: 133).

As anthropologist Michael Jackson notes, Arendt saw stories as a form of “situated thinking” within everyday struggles and plurality against pretenses to the “god’s-eye” perspective of a spectator: “in telling stories we testify to the very diversity, ambiguity, and interconnectedness of experiences that abstract thought seeks to reduce, tease apart, regulate, and contain in the name of administrative order and control” (252-3). Though she never completed her work on the importance of judgment on truth claims in conditions of relativity, Jackson and others have discerned the importance she placed on imagining the standpoint of others and submitting one’s views for deliberation to cultivate pluralistic understandings as a partial and unsettled ground (259). A question Arendt and Jackson raise is the context of intelligibility, disclosure and deliberation often being asymmetrical and censoring, though she does not appreciate this enough with regard to gender, racism and colonialism. This is a critique echoed in Indigenous challenges to feminist standpoint theory influenced by Arendt on the differential epistemic privileges associated with these power relations (Moreton-Robinson, 2002: 60).

While Arendt can and should be deliberated on concerning her own situated knowledge as Eurocentric, Seyla Benhabib suggests we might think both with and contra Arendt. Writing on Arendt’s view of the paradoxes of revolutionary beginnings, the U.S. Declaration of Independence and its Enlightenment reason as basis for the legitimation of rule, Benhabib indicates some links of relevance with my concerns on colonial apprehension (albeit with a liberal individualist framing):32

“As the issues of slavery and of the exclusion of women and Native Americans from the status of rights-bearing personhood demonstrated, the appeal to “self-evident truths” is never self-evident in politics. The light of reason does not shine equally on all, except insofar as they can be persuaded by argument and speech” (Benhabib, 2000: 164).

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31 This is a source of interest for those working on theories of agonism in relation to Indigenous-settler relations in Canada as I mention in Chapters Five and Six. Jackson takes up the implications of an ethnological extension of this as an effort to ‘understand the Other,’ which cues the issue I find in readings of Arendt’s Kantianism, among other issues in her categories with relevance to Indigeneity (particularly on the parsing of her private/public division, see Chapter Five).

32 It can be noted Coulthard critiques Benhabib’s work elsewhere on anti-essentialism and deliberative democracy (an area of though Arendt contributes to) to argue for the inclusion of Indigenous women in individualist and statist rather than collective (ie. sovereign) rights regimes, see Coulthard, 2014: 79-104.
Arendt’s work on political theory as storytelling, in relation to her work on totalitarianism bears on my questions of methodology and ethics. That is, in another context in which presenting evidence of the facts of a public event is not enough to establish consensus on a shared reality. A context where there is an imperative to assert critical understanding of Indigenous experiences and commit this to an archive of collective memory that remains imbricated with the forcefulness of settler-colonial narrativity, in a state experienced by Indigenous peoples as totalizing (Kulchyski, 2005: 69). The most topical application of Arendt’s work to such contexts might be a critical consideration of truth and reconciliation processes and the capture of testimonials of victimhood or trauma. However here I am interested in the conveyance of diverse stories of resistance and resurgence and their connective significance which is not self-evident, not illuminated for all in a flashpoint by a universal or equally applied “light of reason” and so may be deemed to require interpretation and persuasion “by argument or speech” - and not (only) to those dominant but to mobilize against and subvert dominating power. This raises the issue of the role of scholars as witnesses in giving accounts of Indigenous politics or political action, events or movement, and academia as a venue or stage of the settler-colonial “theatre of apprehension” (A. Simpson, 2014: 24).

Though I draw out how I think with and contra Arendt on these matters in Chapters Three, Five and Six my choice to engage her alongside Indigenous thinkers on story should be addressed further from the outset. As Kwakwaka’wakw geographer Sarah Hunt puts it, “Indigenous knowledge is rarely seen as legitimate on its own terms, but must be negotiated in relation to pre-established modes of inquiry. The heterogeneity of Indigenous voices and worldviews can easily become lost in efforts to understand Indigeneity in ways that fix Indigenous knowledge, suppressing its dynamic nature” (Hunt, 2014: 29). Post-Enlightenment (Euro-Modern) literate (in its primary mode of expression) political theory as Arendt describes, has disavowed itself as storytelling, which has been diminished as a primitive and non-critical, non-productive form of knowledge transfer against the ‘illuminating’ analytics of theory. To come to a place of telling a story about political theory telling stories about Indigenous politics, this disavowal and diminishment is one I found important to address for those like myself trained in this tradition, and for this I turned to Arendt for some guidance. Against its view as “a conceptually unsophisticated art that conveys conventional wisdom but not objective truth” she suggested storytelling as a “modal form of social critique” (Jackson, 2002: 253). Arendt’s
presence as an interlocutor is not an attempt at legitimation of Indigenous perspectives on story as theory in a comparative project or “situating Indigenous research within non-Indigenous imaginaries” (Coburn et al, 2013). Rather it is a meeting and so perhaps an opening from a first premise in assuming the living grounds of Indigenous authorities on Indigenous modes of inquiry into Indigenous experiences on Indigenous lands (King et al., 2015: 8-9). This is a premise that does not need to be vindicated here, though these grounds of authority are still not perceived equally to those of recognized albeit subversive Euro-Western theorists within the Academy like Arendt.

So, I am not here compelled to persuade you of the legitimacy in an assertion that Indigenous storytelling is political theory “in relation to pre-established modes of inquiry” nor that political theory in Euro-Western forms is storytelling that has been privileged. In facilitating a meeting of Arendt and some Indigenous thinkers, I have only grazed vast and intricate networks on story, particularly on Indigenous orality, literature, pedagogy and rhetorics as they trouble disciplinary regulation of methods between modes, styles, genres and mediums of political-theoretical expression. In this and my efforts not to be extractive in looking to common threads among traditions, I may indeed seem to gloss the heterogeneity that Hunt points to, though this and dynamism is at the center of my concerns and view of storytelling’s critical role in and within changing worlds (Gómez, 2005: 152-7). The storytelling principles I engage with in Chapter Six, woven outward from the work of Stó:lō educator Q’um Q’um Xiiem Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) and Stó:lō orator Lee Maracle, are only meant as an entry point to a conversation on method and ethics for recounting Indigenous experiences and practices of resistance and resurgence, in a political theory both critical and potentially refigurative.33

Many Indigenous scholars model the regeneration of their peoples’ intellectual systems and a grounded normativity that comes with immersing oneself and one’s discourse in these systems’ storytelling traditions, original languages, originary stories (including ‘land literacy’) and creative modalities of expression and inquiry. Here I can gesture by way of example to the eloquent work of John Borrows and Leanne Simpson, who have woven their projects with the richness of their Anishnaabeg epistemes carried in story, as many in their “storied community”

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33 This is also to assert as with Greg Sarris (Kashaya Pomo) that “academic discourse, with its various argumentative and narrative styles, be interrogated by and integrated with other forms of discourse, perhaps to broaden what we (academics) mean by academic discourse or to collapse the rather arbitrary dichotomy between academic and nonacademic, nonpersonal and personal discourse” (Sarris, 1993: note 7 at 70).
of thinkers are (Doerfler, Sinclair & Stark, 2013: xvi). As Simpson has indicated this is not to view these traditions as resources for extraction, nor only for the contestation of colonial narratives but more crucially to raise up and re-build their peoples’ law, socialities and political orders, and in this she speaks particularly to the limits of diagnostics and dismantling associated with critical theory (Simpson, 2011: 31-2). I remain skeptical when a project of modeling regeneration in scholarship is oriented to ‘Indigenization’ as inclusion, especially seeking to document and interpret traditional knowledge practices for purposes of recognition and interface with settler-state normativity and institutions, as Borrows’ law research might be perceived. Even projects that describe the content of certain of these for reasons of “collective self-recognition” as Simpson puts it, still also confront a possibility for appropriation or ethnographic perception of performing Nativeness/manifest manners.

Nevertheless I am here interested in how political theorists trained and writing in styles and venues perceived as more aligned with Euro-Western literate traditions might subversively operationalize what Archibald calls Indigenous storywork principles from oral traditions in ways complementary to those doing so more immersively in academia and communities like Borrows and Simpson. That is, to hold the dominant political rationality and its narrative practices to account according to and through these principles and to story Indigenous politics, practices and events in decolonial ways through attentiveness to the form of our telling. It is this emphasis on process linked inextricably with content and questions on disclosure that conversations on Indigenization as it has been taken up as a concept of infusing Indigenous ways of being-doing-knowing into academia’s institutions might be distinguished from resurgence scholarship.

Here I want to clarify how I take up the term storying as critical to my work. To be storied is to be imbued with story. To story or, engage in storying and re-storying and so be a storier in its present usage in Indigenous studies, has been attributed to Vizenor as a “poetics, a modus operandi, in his recognition of Native life as continuance, ever and wholly enactive”

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34 A recent interview with Borrows’ on his work in Indigenous law at UVic describes it as “documenting ceremonial dances, cultural practices such as the potlatch, origin stories, contact stories about settlers, totems, wampum belts and other artistic works, and then teasing out the legal principles and precedents embedded within them” with one goal as changing “a misunderstanding held by some who think there’s no such thing as Indigenous law: either Indigenous people never had legal systems because they were primitive in some respect; or if they had them, they’re broken and gone, or irrelevant in a modern context.” Though “150 years of repression” have made Indigenous laws difficult to apply Borrows sees their revitalization as “creating pathways out of an era of control, into an era of shared autonomy and responsibility” (Borrows quoted in Aherne, 2017). See for example Borrows’ Drawing Out Law (2010).
which crosses fixed categories of genre and subject against containment (Lee, 2017: 64). It has also been taken up widely in literary and discourse studies to consider the making and communication of stories, where *to story* was once a common synonym for the telling of history, not inconsequentially. In using *to story* or *re-story* here, I am referring not only to an infusion of ancestral, experiential or other stories into scholarship or the re-avowal of political theory as story but rather a political-ethical praxis of *telling of, as* (which may be *of, as otherwise from* dominating or dispossessing storying). For example, to *story INM as resurgence* is telling of INM as resurgence, otherwise than failed social movement. Many following Vizenor’s call for telling survivance stories take up the term storying to imply transformative and transitive conceptions of story in and as Indigenous theory. This is presented in contrast with the narrativizing engaged in institutional formations following a structural logic or strategy (such as the settler-state) or that engaged by others who promulgate terminal creeds in form and argument.

Following Lee Maracle, I also consider storying as *theorizing*, here a mostly conscious or tactical practice of giving accounts (or recounting) in accordance with certain political-ethical commitments, though this is not meant as a fixed definition, and I return to this in Chapter Six. Here storying as theorizing is how we give relational or linking accounts of events, practices, actions, experiences etc. - already always infused with story and situated knowledges - occurring in our worlds, that is among people, animate beings and living earth (as the relational field of political life). This includes which story lines or threads of affiliation, kinship and continuity in meaning we draw from, between or through them, and also the method or way of telling which gives shape or indicates pattern to our accounts. *How we story* can be ethically judged for the ways in Haraway’s language we “foster some forms of life and not others,” intentionally or not. Here that we might judge how our storying, storying otherwise or re-storying can refuse colonial apprehension of Indigenous resurgence and resistance and might also contribute “in a small way” to decolonial refiguration, because *words matter*.

35 As with Arendt, transitive here as passage, form of mediation or social conveyance between and across beings, land/place, time, generations, contexts in which repetitions are never of the same.
From Others on the Politics of Storytelling and Scholarship

There have been many non-Indigenous scholars who have considered how academics might help materialize or inflect transformation through retelling the experiential stories of those in struggle. There are several who speak directly or by example to methodological and ethical issues in doing so that pertain to my questions in this regard. These include sociologist Francesca Polletta, whose 2006 *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics* looks at the role of stories in social movement mobilization and activist tactics, focusing on the power in their ambiguities; Feminist educator Shari Stone-Mediatore whose Arendt-influenced 2003 *Reading Across Borders: Storytelling and Knowledges of Resistance*, argues for moving beyond deconstructive analyses of disciplinary and subjecting discourses that perpetuate unjust relations, toward ways of engaging marginalized peoples’ stories in support of liberatory politics; and J.K. Gibson-Graham (Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson) who are economic geographers influenced by Haraway, interested in storytelling as “an act of conscious, political, and creative (re)production,” with stories as “participatory, ontological interventions that might call into being alternative worlds” (Cameron, 2012: 580; Gibson-Graham, 2008). Their work shows both alignments and limits when thinking from the settler-colonial difference and position of the Indigenous scholar working for and from their communities and within Indigenous theorizing-storying traditions. While limited, my engagement with Polletta, Stone-Mediatore and Gibson-Graham here should indicate this and help situate my perspective and choices in the coming chapters to engage Arendt, Archibald, Maracle and others instead.

A first point of concern for Polletta, Stone-Mediatore and Gibson-Graham is what constitutes story. In her essay on critical geography’s engagement with storytelling that surveys, these scholars36 Emilie Cameron suggests the many ways story is taken up in her field:

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36 I recently became aware of Stone-Mediatore and more of Gibson-Graham through this essay. She suggests of her field that “the ways in which geographic knowledge was implicated in processes of colonization, racialization, visualization, and categorization was an important focus of work through the 1990s, and remains so today...[but that recent] work is less invested in connecting acts of knowing, writing, and telling with processes of domination and control, and less concerned with understanding how specific experiences, expressions, or relations exemplify broader processes” (Cameron, 2012: 586). Much of my story has been taken up by consideration of what is being refused or resisted and subverted in Indigenous storying (settler-colonial apprehension) rather than the (re) generative alternatives they model. In future I would like to consider the post or non-representational turn in geography as possibly aligned with rhetorical tactics and principles of telling aligned with refusal (for example the collection, Harrison & Anderson eds., 2010). Cameron quotes Kathleen Stewart on this project as “not so much to ‘know’ through story but to ‘fashion some form of address’, to ‘slow the quick jump to representational thinking and
“For some story is an object of knowledge, for others a form of practice, and for others it is a mode of academic expression. Some engage story as literary, fictional, or oral expression; others engage story more broadly as any tracing of relations between personal experience and a broader world. Some attend to the stories of research subjects or objects; others weave their own stories. Some use discourse, narrative, and story almost interchangeably; others tease apart the distinctions between these terms” (Cameron, 2012: 575-6).

In this dissertation story is a subject of knowledge and also a practice and mode of academic and everyday expression in varied forms (literate and oral). Story is also a tracing of relations between personal experiences, broader world and perceived patterns and I engage the experiential stories of interlocutors as intertwined with the patterns and through-lines of my own story. I also suggest rhetorical distinctions for my purposes here between different approaches to storytelling: non-dominating and decolonial *storying* that respects a principle of self-determination (drawing on Arendt and Indigenous perspectives); *discourse* in the Euro-Western colloquial sense of verbal communication, but mostly in the Foucaultian sense of discursive formations that constitute “ways of thinking and speaking delimit[ing] what can be considered sensible and possible” (Christie, 2011: 344) and that I cover at length in Chapter Two; and *narrative* as a linear-causal emplotting of events or authorial imposition of control, order and predictability which can be *authoritarian* and so colonially apprehensive. I have purposefully not provided a general definition of story and storytelling as *things*, to reflect my view of its diverse manifestations as *processes* and also the multifaceted senses I work with. However, distinctions between Indigenous and dominant Euro-Modern conceptions of story contribute to shaping the terms and stakes for engagement in Canada’s public, a pluralistic but unequal space of appearance and enunciation, as I will present it in coming chapters. This is also the case for attempts at an interface of mainstream political theory’s narrative tendencies and Indigenous storying practices.\(^\text{37}\)

In *Like a Fever*, Polletta discusses concerns similar to my own, highlighting the risks of public storytelling for “disadvantaged groups” against perceived benefits, precisely because

\(^{37}\) The former still bound up with a definition of theory Foucault encapsulated as “the deduction, on the basis of a number of axioms, of an abstract applicable to an indefinite number of empirical descriptions” (Foucault quoted in Young, 2001: 64).
stories are “differently intelligible, useful, and authoritative depending on who tells them, when, for what purpose, and in what setting” (Polletta, 2006: 3) and conditioned by structural configurations of power. Stories can reflect the particularity of events and also broader patterns or “cultural schemas...logics or models of action and interaction,” with those dominant tending to attempt to suppress alternative accounts and recast or assimilate stories that “refuse...standard cultural oppositions” or challenge those established as “canonical” (13, 14-16; 19-20). In this Polletta argues the need to grapple with the “twenty-first-century common sense” about storytelling exchanges - “what makes a story,” how to construct, when and why to tell a story and how to respond to one. These norms pertain to Euro-Modern literate conventions, a specific but ascendant “epistemology of storytelling” whose pervasiveness she sees originating in Western institutions (21-22). This conception of storytelling is equated to the narrative as a discursive form that can be embedded in but has characteristics distinct from others, such as speeches, chronicles, songs, “arguments, descriptions, explanations, and reports” and analytical frameworks. It is consciously intentioned and evaluative account giving or tale-telling with “an identifiable beginning, middle, and end,” characters and points of view. Events are recounted in order of occurrence, in a plot that is linear-causal, driving “toward a normative conclusion” (8-11; 19). While story can be expectant and open to post-facto interpretation and revision, if presented as true, should be the same on repetition.

The dominant epistemology of storytelling is also organized around oppositions that Polletta highlights to outline the risks of suppression and assimilation in storytelling that also correspond to my concerns on colonial apprehension. These include deeming storytelling as suited to express the particular or idiosyncratic rather than universal, emotion not logic, the informal and personal not formal and general, moral not strategic concerns; associated with folklore not science, custom not rules; usual to private not public settings and a purview of “women and nonprofessionals” among additional corollary Others to the Euro-Western, White cis-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied, liberal capitalist-class universal Man (23-4, 176-7). There is also inconsistency or tension in this epistemology’s views of storytelling as unique or representative, exceptional or ordinary, authentic or deceptive, progressive or dangerous, potent or powerless. The postmodern turn in theory emphasized this sense of storytelling as

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38 Stories are subject to familiarity in their expression of for example, causality - reasons for action and so what action is reasonable/effectual when part of movements contesting a dominant order (Polletta, 2006: 3-5).
encapsulating “a series of contradictions” in its arbitration of experience and in regard to the power/knowledge relation (Cameron, 2012: 574; Polletta, 2006: 2). Stone-Mediatore suggests this has equated to recapitulating suspicion or dismissal of “marginal experience narratives” associated with the situatedness of people of color, women, LGBTQ2S people, persons differently abled and all others deemed outside the (still) dominant normativity and its reason, to which the Indigenous-settler opposition can be added. 39 Assessments of authority, suitability and forcefulness of storytelling are contingent on a teller’s positioning and the occasions of their telling (time, setting) as coupled to the dominant epistemology of story, which indicates how its ambivalence is weighted. As Polletta puts it, “[w]hen a man or a white person tells a story, it may be heard as an analysis or an argument” and “[e]ven if it is heard as a story, it is less likely to elicit concerns about its credibility” (Polletta, 2006: 176). However, she argues stories’ interpretive ambiguities, simultaneous particularity and generalizability, can also produce political resources for the disadvantaged to erode oppressive oppositions and canonical narratives that rely on them (Polletta, 2006: ix, 21-25; Lessard, Johnson & Webber, 2011: 7-8).

Stories are absolutely an undecidable form that can be settling or unsettling, transgressive or boundary-keeping, hegemonic or subversive, oppressive or liberatory, injure or heal, be a poisonous or a restorative medicine and sometimes both according to one’s standpoint. 40 Stories’ ambiguities, and the range of their possible affects and effects when told are well appreciated in Indigenous epistemologies of storytelling that place story at the center of our worlds, providing many ways of knowing and changing them, being transitive and generative. That is, story aids us

39 Stone-Mediatore suggests both empiricist and poststructuralist views of experiential stories are as “unreflective reports of spontaneous awareness” that also “overlook[s] the capacity of readers to attend to phenomena that are only intimated by metaphors or tensions within texts, phenomena that are not directly articulated because they defy our categories for representing experience” (though this point could be made of both oral and written exchanges; Stone-Mediatore, 2003: 2). This resonates with my discussion in Chapters Six to Eight. I certainly see my own rhetorical approach in the “strategies” she describes of these narratives, primarily by “Third World” women and LGBTQ2S people of color cited, including Gloria Anzaldúa. These include “references to the subjectivity and particularity of the text’s sources, creative descriptions of phenomena that cannot be subsumed under given analytic categories, and experimental forms that subvert “common-sense” ways of organizing the world” and employ rhetorical strategies that “destabilize dominant discursive logics and highlight aspects of life that are occluded by those logics” (Stone-Mediatore, 2003: 8).

40 Jacques Derrida describes a conceptual condition of indeterminacy or irreducibility to binary opposition as poison or remedy with reference to the Greek concept pharmakon (pharmacy), and applies this notion to the practice of writing (Derrida, 1981). While a complex concept in Indigenous intellectual and spiritual traditions, medicine as not necessarily good or bad, that medicine can heal or harm is a possibly appropriate metaphor for story that aligns with Derrida’s sense of un-decidability here. Dian Million’s 2013 Therapeutic Nations considers a how a narrative of trauma or victimhood in reconciliation discourse in Canada positions ‘Indigenous disclosure’ storytelling as primarily healing, in ways that demonstrate this ambivalence and its political (and possibly harmful) implications.
in discerning patterns from our lived and sensory experiences as embodied beings and has transformative power to alter them (Stark, 2013). As the editors of a collection on Anishnaabeg studies suggest, story is wondrous and dangerous, can deconstruct, destroy and divide, “create and transcend, affirm and deny,” having “abilities to do all sorts of things, sometimes all at the same time” and this should not be feared (Doerfler, Sinclair & Stark, 2013: xxvii; Stark, 2013). They submit that among its many possible offerings, story can provide roots or foundational principles for understanding, constitute, reaffirm, challenge or destabilize relationships, bring revelations that illuminate existing realities and possible pathways, express resiliency as “both acts and accounts of survivance,” can counter narratives of subjugation by providing alternative conceptions of relationality and so be a form of resistance, can facilitate the reclamation of a peoples’ being and becoming through time, and reflect their lives.

It is the balancing of risks and possibilities of Indigenous storytelling in a settler-colonial context that occupies me. As I discuss in Chapter Five, Arendt saw that story’s undecidability reflects the irreducible plurality and contingencies of political life, our life among and with others, which is why she “held that storytelling, not explanation, is the work of the political theorist” (Disch 1996: xi). Following Arendt and feminist standpoint theorists, in Reading Across Borders Stone-Meditore asserts that because experiential stories are “creatively reproduced” and their “meaning is realized in their interpretation by specific communities,” they contribute to political thinking. Yet she still argues the necessity of a universal framework for their critical judgment and assessment of their liberatory potential from different perspectives, specifically those of people who have struggled against oppression (Stone-Meditore, 2003: 5). She is interested in considering how scholarly re-telling of what she terms “marginal experience narratives” as itself an imaginative practice can “responsibly transform” them into “a resource for her own critical knowledge.” Here I find the tenor of appropriation in the aspiration of critical scholars to “think from other’s lives” for their projects of “self-cultivation” or social justice (see Gibson-Graham, 2008: 618). Particularly conceiving of their aim as narrativizing, as “transpos[ing] a plurality of ambiguous, boundless, existentially rich experiences into a coherent pattern of beginnings and endings and actors and actions that are intelligible” for the supposed benefit of all (3; 163-5).41 Ethnographic refusal challenges such self-instigated projects as

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41 In my here initial engagement with Stone-Meditore, I can note several divergences with my views and engagement with Arendt that I cannot pursue here but could further consider. Despite her emphasis on diversity,
extractive especially when scholars are positioned as ‘outsiders’ to their interlocutors, as I discuss in Chapter Three.

Gibson-Graham have spoken to their own decision made in the “undecidable terrain” of politics to intervene in the documentation of alternative economic practices, and sketch techniques for scholars to theoretically elaborate, and themselves perform, heterogeneous and alternative economies and so contribute to processes of materializing a refuguration of reality away from capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 2008: 614, 618). They call for scholars to “disinvest” in the paranoia and determinism associated with critical theorists and the drive to a “mastery of knowledge” associated with Euro-Modernity (that I will discuss in Chapter Two) and ask: “What if we were to accept that the goal of theory is not to extend knowledge by confirming what we already know, that the world is a place of domination and oppression? What if we asked theory instead to help us see openings, to provide a space of freedom and possibility?” (Gibson-Graham, 2008: 618-9).

Gibson-Graham argue for “weak theory” that refuses to “extend explanation too widely or deeply...or to know too much” (619). I do not agree with this label of weak theory as much as a rejection of “thick description” as Audra Simpson considers refusal. Nevertheless, Gibson-Graham’s suggestion of how this implicates the scholar in interdependence with their worlds of ‘study’ and so a “profound” responsibility that enlarges the “notion of academic ethics,” does speak to the modeling of both refuguration and refusal in political theory, though the kind of “doing thinking” they forward to enact “new” worlds and modes of inquiry is far from new.
Cameron describes their position as “willfully optimistic” or hopeful on the need for “actively storying the margins” as contribution to a “conscious politics of emergence” (581-2, 588), upholding the affective power of stories to move people and make the “tacit,” “bodily,” “emplaced” and obscured “legible” (quoted in Cameron, 2012: 581). It is the assumption of decisional power in rendering this legibility that for me is at issue and requires an ethic for disclosure and meaning-making by drawing story from the sensed, implicit, silences, the unsaid.

Gibson-Graham suggest techniques for reframing structural “givens” to open spaces of freedom and possibility conceptually in support of their further actualization, re-reading to uncover existing differences and creative thinking that “often involves bringing things together from different domains” (625). Much of this aligns with Indigenous thinkers on resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations and also theory-story, including Archibald and Maracle who have helped shake me from a deep-seeded pessimism, as I will draw out in Chapters Six through Eight. The scholarly program Gibson-Graham forwards involves tactical use of the privileged position of knowledge mobilization and codification in the academy as part of “research collectivities including but not limited to academics.” Their proposition of scholars facilitating the “credibility” and “visibility” of the existence of “more than capitalist” ways of life and those stories’ provision of resources for wider change (627-9) might be critiqued similarly to Stone-Mediatore. However more egregious for me is a tone of manipulation in the depiction of their stated attempts at “cultivating subjects” among their interlocutors during storytelling exchanges as part of their Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects, suggesting their ethics does not involve a robust principle of self-determination or as I will consider in Chapter Six, respectful witnessing. A line between collaborative processes of refiguration and colonialist vanguardism seemed tread very narrowly by them in my view thus far.45

45 In A Postcapitalist Politics (2006), Gibson-Graham discuss stories from PAR projects they were involved in that reflect feminist conceptions of storytelling to communicate embodied knowledge and indicate where subjects are not wholly determined by oppressive processes of subjection. In this they suggest that while the later Foucault began to give insights into the importance of alternative discourses and “ethical practices of self-cultivation,” he was less so on “actual techniques” for liberatory re-subjectification, which in their project is to transform from capitalist to non/postcapitalist subjects (2006: 129). Through their PAR project they describe resistance they encountered from research partners when attempting to destabilize dominant discourses with efforts at “reframing and renarrativizing” experiences, the production of “positive affect” and then the creation of “spaces of identification and ethical openings to communality” (2006: chapter 6). Their turn to psychoanalysis in approaching their relationship with interlocutors, to move them away from “shoring up their fantasies” and persuade them that their (the scholars) own self-conceived project is desirable is what I find highly problematic. Approaching their role as interventionist, to initiate and enable rather than take guidance from and support the transformative processes of the people on the
Listening and Telling Well

The imperative not simply to tell, but to do so responsibly is at the ethical core of Indigenous storytelling epistemologies and marks a departure from the scholars’ points of reference on academic activism discussed above. Returning to what this involves for the experiential stories I am concerned with, I recall Maori scholar Linda Tuhikai Smith that Indigenous scholars and activists (often as both) are tasked with “getting the story right and telling the story well” (Smith, 2012: 226 emphasis mine). Here she was speaking mostly of stories that belong to a particular people’s traditional knowledge. While stories of INM are not traditional in this sense, they connect to many and are part of traditions of transformative movement (as I discuss in Chapter Seven). We cannot tell them apart, not entirely. Storying INM to assert a critical understanding of their patterns and linkages, mindful of the settler-colonial theatre of apprehension in which we story, evokes the responsibility Smith suggests.

Telling well in settler-colonial contexts can involve contesting storytelling that positions the winter we danced for judgment as what Elaine Coburn and Cliff Atleo call an “instance” illustrating the “ideational frames” or “political opportunities” of mainstream theories of political movement in ways that might be appropriative or neutralizing of their decolonial transformative power (Coburn & Atleo, 2016: 176). Particularly where the dominated spaces of this telling – the public theatre of academy, courts, legislature, mainstream media etc. - is not construable to a “home” or hospitable to Indigenous stories despite being Indigenous land (Coburn & Atleo, 2016: 179; see also Chapter Five). As I discuss in Chapter Seven, this responsibility might also be considered in regard to commentaries on INM not only as a missed opportunity for anti-colonial revolution but for its prefigurative approaches and ‘new’ tactical and technological alignments with other contemporary social movements like Occupy Wall Street (James, 2014: 99, 104-7),\(^4\) whose successes or rather failures may then be assessed in keeping with these alignments (see for example Martineau, 2015: 231, 236, 243-4). This raises complexities of the

\(^4\) We might also consider the dialogical intercessions by Indigenous and settler activists in solidarity to address the emblematic coloniality of ‘Occupy’ on stolen lands which if met with the unwillingness of even ostensible radicals to confront a notion of complicity (James, 2014: 113-4), is hardly heartening as to context of enunciation confronted. The observation by Jackson that it might take an experience of “enforced displacement” for those in dominance to extend themselves into a pluralistic place of judgment regarding that of others cannot be ignored (Jackson, 2002: 257). For summations of arguments of Occupy as discursively problematic to Indigenous politics see Barker & Lowell, 2015: 75-78; Fortier, 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012: 23-28.
need for engagements among Indigenous scholars on the aims and emplacements of our internal critiques mindful of external perceptions.

Telling well in settler-colonial contexts may involve an imperative to ‘historicize’ or otherwise link INM’s practices in a continuity and also as expression of cultural dynamism regardless of the modes of their mediation, with stories committing experience to the archives of collective consciousness. In this I think on theorist David Lynes’ view that decolonization can imply a “debilitating dialectic” between cultural and political imperatives (Lynes, 2002: 1043) and thus the longer the tradition of resistance, “the greater the need to represent this resistance as itself part of the evolving nature of the cultural tradition to be affirmed” (Lynes, 2002: 1061). For example in her political history “Aysaka’paykinit: Contesting the Rope Around the Nation’s Neck” (2007) my Masters supervisor and mentor Kiera Ladner (Nêhiyaw) holds that “awareness of the movement” of Indigenous resistance and resurgence can and should be storied by scholars and others when the connective foundations of its diverse practices, from blockades to round dances, “are not so evident” and thus to account for a seeming “lack of movement” (Ladner, 2014: 228; 244; 248-9). Contrary to the aims of understanding in much social movement theory that “takes the state for granted” (246-9), she stories continuity in Indigenous politics through both inexorable flux and colonial violence, as a tradition of contestation and negotiation between nations that both precedes and informs how Indigenous peoples have resisted and subverted colonialism. In her 2014 continuance of this story line, resurgence discourse and INM as an expression of weariness at “dancing around the table” of status quo politics has been linked. Ladner asserts INM “survived the test of winter” and though its effects into the future remain uncertain, its movement has seemed to inspire young Indigenous leaders and scholars “who are spreading a message of nationhood, decolonization, language, peace and righteousness, the rebuilding of Indigenous legal traditions, responsibility for land/territory, political systems and constitutional orders, resistance and resurgence” (241).48

47 This is not to suggest I am ignoring the work by those like Richard J.F. Day who emphasizes the anarchist concept of affinity in the “newest social movements” and troubles the focus on hegemony in considering the logic of their action and demands (see Day, 2005 and for a summation 2004). However I raise some concerns with the discourse associated with this current as well in Chapter Three.  
48 Ladner contemplates whether this movement may be toward the lighting of the Eighth Fire, a prophecy of regeneration that is shared across nations and held to speak to decolonial liberation and freedom, that this is the Seventh Generation who will ignite it (Oshkimaadiziig for the Anishnaabe, L. Simpson, 2008), though this may not yet be known.
Theorists on the representation of political movement have long debated interpretive negotiation between the categories utilized by “analysts” as observers with a sociological “eye” (for studying Euro-Modern people) or an ethnographic one (everyone else), and the “voices” of actors within them. Richard Sennet suggests in his foreword to New Social Movement theorist Alain Touraine’s work in this vein The Voice and the Eye (1981), that “[p]art of the life of a social movement is the effort to say what it is, to see its contours in order to speak in its name” (Sennett in Touraine, 1981: xi). Yet INM has many voices, many eyes, speaks many stories that refused a settler-state and society desire for an intelligible and communal ‘we’ to speak in its name, say what it is categorically or preferably to settlement, what it was. While not a revolution or social movement of mainstream “ideational frames,” the perceived need to speak in a name that could signify a political vision going forward persists, as the shift to Indigenous Nationhood Movement Alfred and others advocated in the spring, summer and fall of 2013 might attest. Thus for scholars such as myself to story INM as resurgence as I do, might itself be construed as a pretension of the ‘observer’ to see the contours of movement better than others within it and impose an exposition of this. But story lines I draw in this dissertation is only one attempt to tell of that winter well in multiple senses, but not professing that I got it right.

Telling of the movement in the winter we danced as seasons have changed, like much story is an act of remembrance and I have considered deeply the responsibility this entails for political theory storying INM’s then present for this present, into possible futures and with the past. And this is not only from our own memories if we were there, our emplacement or standpoints. In engaging other accounts already shared, we approach them as experiential stories, memories of action that we then re-experience to make that winter live again in another season. We must make interpretations and judgments in drawing story lines through them and linking our memories, our stories with others. This process does not only rely on the word (or image) alone but as I discuss in Chapter Six, requires an attempted attunement to the implicit, invisible,

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49 See Chapter Three and Five on over-determined “characterological” (A. Simpson) political language as potentially including ‘resurgence.’ This reflects old questions of vanguardism and the role of intellectuals to break down ‘false consciousness,’ being in an elevated analytical position in contrast to the grassroots. While I admire the great thinker James Baldwin a great deal he encapsulates this perspective well here
“A revolution can fail long before it gets off the ground if it isn’t understood. After all, it does begin in the mind. There is no place else for it to begin. It is the ferment occurring in hundreds of thousands of minds or hearts that begins to attack a society to change or overthrow it. The people who are responsible for it, as distinguished from the people who are simply in the streets, have to be aware of what the revolution is supposed to accomplish. What values it is trying to destroy and what values it is trying to preserve” (quoted in Walker, 1989: 130).
inaudible, intangible forces in story as “much meaning is made in silence surrounding the words, where memories are not simply reflections of a referent experience but dynamic in themselves” (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 235). However this attunement may tell us to exclude, refrain and trace around some of what we may perceive or are told, rather than make this legible or intelligible.

So, the decolonial imperative for storying the winter we danced is to affirm survivance, continuity through flux, while also attending to the vitality of movement, though we may not understand it as a single narrative, developmentally or progressively linear or dialectical in its cycles, nor be sure of the outcomes in movement or storytelling. It does not compel how or what we tell. As Pamela Palmater suggested as the visibility of INM’s mass gatherings in urban places receded from dominant viewpoints, this should not be taken to “assume that because there are no flashy media events happening every day that First Nations are not acting…Those actions are [just] sometimes hard to see amongst the sea of political media releases, government propaganda, commentator rhetoric and co-opted organizations” (Palmater, 2013a). INM may not have been the remaking of Canada as those like Ken Coates might hope, though it may yet be a sign of its unmaking as a colonial state, as those like me might hope. In his poetic 2005 monograph Like the Sound of a Drum, Kulchyski considers his learning from Indigenous storytelling epistemologies around the careful listening to difference set against ethnographic ways of seeing Indigenous cultures, the eye of the Euro-Modern anthropologist tuned to observe and record reaching a limit when the gaze is returned and their “descriptive apparatus can no longer accommodate what it discovers.” It is at such a limit that my account here unfolds and like Kulchyski I can only say that “[t]his too is a work of stories: stories of communities, of people, of theories, of histories, of ideas, of stories. In the moment of relating these, my only consolation is the hope, like a breath of prayer, that I have listened well” (Kulchyski, 2005: 37).

After-Word on Linking and Chapter Outline

This chapter has attempted to serve as a summation of the story I am telling in this dissertation, unfolding more or less as the larger telling unfolds. However a short outline of the chapters here could assist in orienting the reader more comfortable with a predictive outline that maps the journey ahead. Before I turn to this however, a word on my preferred rhetorical approach above is merited, as this can be considered an aspect of my effort to model resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations. Walter Mignolo and Anibal Quijano,
theorists in the (primarily Latin American) ‘Modernity/Coloniality’ project, who I engage throughout my story and discuss in coming chapters, suggest that concerted reorientations away from Euro-Western epistemologies and discourses might be deemed a “delinking” toward what they call decoloniality (Escobar, 2007: 451-2), where “decoloniality means decolonial options confronting and delinking from coloniality, or the colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo, 2011: xxvii; 2009). When I employ the term decoloniality, it is to indicate practices and ways of thinking with others that actively and in an ongoing sense reproduce and refigure decolonial power relations (as non-dominating relations and practices of freedom), while decolonization is a more specific structural dismantling of colonial power relations, the process of liberation, which I discuss further in Chapter Two.

I want to emphasize before proceeding that the epistemic and discursive delinking Indigenous resurgence implicates is also a relinking with, of and through our stories, storied practices and theorizing-storying traditions. Linking, drawing correspondences (as Arendt calls them) or concatenations (as Lee Maracle does), in the practice of theorizing-storying, and especially theory-story in relation to public (common but differently experienced) political events and action or movement in place and through time, is a theme that will appear throughout. The story as I set forth in this first chapter is meant to give you a broad sense of many linkages I am making, where these may not be obvious and even where they are, though not intended to be presented in an absolutely explicit or deterministic authorial tone. Also, I make extensive use of quotation and notes not as qualifications but as connective tissue, or elaborative and collaborative asides and injunctions that foreground the sociality of knowledge reproduction and disrupt my telling as strictly sequential and complete, or as only my own story throughout, which I will return to in the opening to Chapter Six.

As already mentioned, Chapters Two through Four are broadly diagnostic, focused on the problematic of colonial apprehension that resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations unsettle and refuse. As I have an introduction to Chapter Two and Three, I will not describe them in great detail here. This introduction includes a short discussion of colonial systems and coloniality, drawing on anti-colonial theory and the Modernity/Coloniality thinkers and where I will first address utilizing theoretical sources from diverse colonial contexts to speak to Canadian settler-colonialism. With this in mind, Chapter Two describes some general features of epistemic and discursive coloniality and how this connects to my understanding of ‘the problem of colonial
apprehension’ (and whose problem it ultimately is). It is divided into two parts, the first is a detailed elaboration of key conceptual terms and my relationship with them for purposes of my story: (Euro) Modernity, epistemic/epistemology/episteme, discourse/discursive domination, subjectification/subjection and (transformative) power. Here I have a detailed engagement with Michel Foucault on power/knowledge in relation to coloniality (partly through postcolonial and subaltern studies literatures). The second part describes my initial struggle with the concept of a problem of colonial apprehension as one of Indigenous epistemic and discursive dependency in the “debilitating dialectic” of cultural pain versus political gain as Lynes put it, which I come to reject.

Chapter Three contextualizes the conceptual discussion in the previous chapter within the theatre of apprehension here. It is also divided into two parts, the first sketches Canadian settler-colonialism as a specific formation of domination and dispossession, considering features forwarded by the emergent field of settler-colonial studies, and drawing on examples from my present location in the Pacific Northwest where appropriate. This specifies the dynamic play of exclusion/inclusion, elimination/appropriation in the colonial drive to apprehend that Indigenous peoples confront here as settler-colonial apprehension. The second part considers the challenge for scholarly forms of analysis and telling prompted by Indigenous refusal, through an extended engagement with Audra Simpson and her characterization of this refusal as ethnographic.

Chapter Four addresses in further detail the mode of apprehending Indigenous peoples through ethnological classification and description of difference, which relegates Indigeneity to a racialized ethno-cultural rather than political domain of knowledge and discourse. I discuss how Euro-Western political theory as much as anthropology is implicated in this and reflect on the position of the Indigenous scholar trained in these disciplines rejecting the position of ‘Native informant.’

Chapters Five through Seven constitute the normative contribution of the dissertation. I consider methodological and ethical re-sources on theory-story I have found helpful to think through the challenge of telling of resurgent Indigenous political movement and practices while accounting for the refusal of settler-colonial apprehension discussed in the first half. Chapter Five is a detailed critical engagement with the work of Arendt to discern where and how her views of political theory as storytelling might connect with Indigenous thinkers on story, and where it diverges or must be amended to align better, particularly around questions of what
constitutes political action, the importance of public disclosure of stories and the risks and potentialities of this imperative in totalizing contexts of domination. Drawing on a number of Arendt scholars I also consider how she exemplifies commitment to a political theory and scholarship that modally reflects political life. Chapter Six is a discussion of principles and patterns of Indigenous storywork (following Archibald) that might be drawn on to weave a storytelling ethic for (Euro-Western form, literate) political theory scholarship engaging Indigenous experiential stories. Here I also discuss the practice of respectful witnessing of transformation articulated from Coast Salish tradition as offering a stance for the political theorist to model such an ethic, especially in relation to flashpoint events.

While *Idle No More* arises throughout the chapters, Chapter Seven is my re-telling of the winter we danced storied as resurgent movement, and can be considered an application of what I have learned in the previous chapters. I discuss the tracing of story lines through diverse memories and accounts of experience, consider some that may be apprehensive and two that I discern and draw out on women’s leadership and *INM*’s forms of mediation. By way of a summation I would refer you back to this Chapter One as the closing Chapter Eight is a reflective essay on my own return to the beginning of my story. I contemplate overcoming my apprehensiveness and ongoing questions on modeling refiguration and not only refusal, toward materializing decolonial transformations by doing story-theory in academia as an Indigenous scholar - the risks and uncertainties of both. In so doing I will revisit many of the interlocutors of the past chapters. I will reaffirm how I came to share my first words and not only trace around silences and refusals, to affirm my ability to tell stories of political theory telling stories of Indigenous politics.
INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS TWO & THREE

Colonial Apprehension and the Challenge of Refusal

“Colonialism” as Jean-Paul Sartre set out with concise acuity in 1956 in regard to Algeria, “is a system.” By this he did not mean that it always operates in the same way everywhere but that it is systematic:

“And when we talk of the ‘colonial system’, we must be clear about what we mean. It is not an abstract mechanism. The system exists, it functions; the infernal cycle of colonialism is a reality. But this reality is embodied in a million colonists, children and grandchildren of colonists, who have been shaped by colonialism and who think, speak and act according to the very principles of the colonial system. For the colonist is fabricated like the native; he is made by his function and his interests” (Sartre, 2001: 51).

The imperative of all colonial systems is fundamentally the theft of land and territory and it is thus land and territory that shapes and focuses both colonizer/settler and Native subjects’ “function and interests” within it. While not an “abstract mechanism,” colonialism is also not only an economy of accumulation by dispossession rationalized and legitimated by ideology.\(^1\) Rather it produces Native and Colonizer subjectivities and its practices and processes are always “imagined and energized through signs, metaphors and narratives” where “even what would seem its purest moments of profit and violence have been mediated and enframed by structures of meaning,” as anthropologist Nicholas Thomas wrote in his influential Colonialism’s Culture (Thomas, 1994: 2).

The structural practices and processes of European colonialism and settler-colonialism since the 19th century are enmeshed with concomitant racist, gendered and Eurocentric systems of social hierarchy, knowledge and culture dominant to Euro-Modernity (Quijano, 2000). This integrality of colonialism and Euro-Modernity is what Peruvian theorist Aníbal Quijano termed

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\(^1\) Geographer David Harvey’s influential work has suggested that what Marx called the ‘primitive accumulation’ of land is not only a beginning stage in the development of capitalism but its perpetual insatiable condition, the current global neoliberal economy still functioning on accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2004). On the spatiotemporal dynamics of accumulation and imperialism see Harvey, 2007. See some further discussion in Ch. 2.
the *coloniality of power* (Quijano, 2000, 2007). This has denigrated, marginalized and repressed the plurality of Indigenous, traditional and alternative ways of knowing-doing-being – has been a drive to what Portuguese scholar on coloniality Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls *epistemicide* (de Sousa Santos, 2014). Argentinian theorist Walter Mignolo would extend the concept of coloniality of power/knowledge to that of ontology and the *coloniality of being*, focusing on “the lived experience of colonization and its impact on language” to which Fanon so *affectively* spoke (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 242; Wynter, 2003).

It is in the nexus of colonial systems’ imperative to dispossession and Euro-Modernity’s epistemic violences, in the fabrication of dependent and depoliticized Native “subjects of Empire” (Coulthard, 2007), in the modes of discursivity, classificatory representation and signification through which Indigenous peoples become known as Natives - and then how in the Coloniality/Modernity theorists’ idiom to tell of Indigenous politics *otherwise* - that the concept of *apprehension* as the diagnostic problematic of this first half of the dissertation emerges.

The specifically settler-colonial system in Canada involves what Tully describes as concretized “structures of domination” but also relies heavily on a disciplinary regime, those “techniques of government,” which are the “totality of modifiable discursive and non-discursive ways and means used in strategies for guiding the conduct, directly and indirectly, and responding to the resistance of indigenous peoples” (Tully, 2000: 38). Tully’s characterization here engages Foucault on the emergence in Euro-Modernity of what he names biopower and governmentality. Tully and the scholars in the field of settler-colonial studies influenced by Foucault highlight how governmentality becomes crucial in settler-colonial states where the use of direct force and aggression gives way to a coloniality that is nebulous, muted and obfuscating, that is adaptive, tolerant and incorporative. This is not least in an era of liberal reconciliation and apology confronting its discontents.

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2 This is a concept expanded on by a number of thinkers in mostly Latin American, Spanish and Portuguese decolonial theory including Maria Lugones, Sylvia Wynter, Walter Mignolo, Arturo Escobar, Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Enrique Dussel, who are part of the Modernity/Coloniality project (Escobar, 2007; Mignolo, 2007).

3 Here I should address the concept of colonial strategy and a distinction between *tactics* and *strategies of power* that I employ, between strategies as effects produced by regularities of power in institutions and structures and (often intentioned) resistive tactics of especially subjugated groups and individuals which are never entirely determined by the former. Michel de Certeau suggested this distinction in his influential *Practice of Everyday Life* (1980). Heller (1996) suggests institutions can function with those involved having conscious awareness of its actual social effect or function or not, with an example of the latter as the prison, ostensibly being for rehabilitation but effecting punishment. Such a disjunction can be maintained when certain groups perceive benefit without needing to recognize the disjuncture (Heller, 1996: 87-90). This is pertinent to the benefits accrued by those working within settler-colonial institutions.
From the same collection in which I first engaged Tully’s resonant depiction of the settler-colonial system in Canada, I also first read the work of Audra Simpson, who addressed Indigenous nationalism as a “problem” for political theory in a way that implicated the field’s complicities in feeding this system’s desires to internalize Indigenous peoples - particularly through interpretive defusing of conceptual and discursive challenges to its terms. In her “Paths Toward a Mohawk Nation” Simpson focused on the liberal multiculturalist recognition theory that Coulthard would unravel for its coloniality, but also theory “predicated upon a praxis of listening,” including Tully’s work on dialogism (A. Simpson, 2000:114). Simpson suggested that “the strident nationalism of native peoples turned within [this] political thinking into a deep, subterranean and theoretical movement for reconciliation” that could enable the formation of spaces for “new and more substantive conversations between previously silent peoples” (113). While such theory could reveal some “hidden languages” of domination some also demanded discourse (listening and speaking) within domesticating terms.

It was here that Simpson for me prompted consideration of not only the coloniality in certain theoretical abstractions of the conditions for decolonization in Canada, but in the terms of enunciation it demands of Indigenous peoples’ politics. Particularly, the need to give accounts of the “history and vocabulary” of these terms such as nationhood or citizenship, some in a shared “grey area” (116) and how Indigenous resistances, subversions and alternatives to them might themselves have hidden languages which are not capturable, indicated by this “grey area” of discourse. This cued for me the problem of colonial apprehension and its disruption by Indigenous resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations, particularly its refusals (direct and indirect) of external intelligibility.

While I focus on epistemic and discursive coloniality and its refusal in the following chapters, I do aim to also give an account of the systematicity of colonialism. That is, both the materialities and structures of colonial domination and dispossession and the coloniality of power. I want to emphasize how efforts at epistemic and discursive domination and the production of ‘Native’ (and so also settler) subjectivities are inextricable from and operate in tandem with structural settler-colonial imperatives of dispossession. Settler-colonial governmentality requires that its subject/objects can be made known, and in this Indigenous peoples confront a nexus of power/knowledge with aspirations to totalization. I use totalization in the sense taken up by Marxist critical theory following Sartre, as in the work of Kulchyski,
Frank Tester and Peter Irniq on the Canadian settler-colonial context. Tester and Irniq describe totalization as

“a process whereby attempts are made to bring all aspects of life (spatial, temporal, social, and economic) into line with a dominant or overarching logic: in the case of Canada, that of a modern capitalist state committed to “the idea of progress.” Totalization is a process that includes not merely incorporating as yet unincorporated geographical fragments of a nation (as was true of the eastern Arctic), but also affecting the consciousness, beliefs, and behavioural patterns of those seen to be within the state’s influence” (Tester & Irniq, 2008: 51).

Through their discussion of Inuit practices of resistance, Tester and Irniq critically emphasize as I do that as aspirational, totalization “inevitably encounters contradiction and resistance.”

In this dissertation I name the coloniality of the dominant Euro-Modern approach to knowledge and discourse, and in particular the ways of knowing and perceived rights to know and discourse on/with Indigenous peoples that are implicated in totalizing settler-colonial imperatives to domination and dispossession as colonial apprehension or apprehensiveness. Similarly to theorist Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Goenpul, Quandamooka) in her recent articulation of the “white possessive logics” of ownership in racialized concepts and practices of settler-colonial sovereignty, I am presenting colonial apprehension as

“a mode of rationalization, rather than a set of positions that produce a more or less inevitable answer, that is underpinned by an excessive desire to invest in reproducing and reaffirming the nation-state’s ownership, control, and domination…[and is] operationalized within discourses to circulate sets of meanings about ownership of the nation, as part of commonsense knowledge, decision making, and socially produced conventions.” (Moreton-Robinson, 2015: xii).

Apprehension is a descriptor for the coloniality of the dominant Euro-Modern regime, order or schema of knowledge and its mode of discourse in general. But I charge that it is particularly apt in regard to how Indigenous peoples and practices are made known in ways that help facilitate their dispossession and domination through various techniques and technologies of colonial rule and governmentality. As a logic or “mode of rationalization,” it manifests in many and various ways that can be indicated through some lexicological unpacking of the English
words formed from their Latin ancestor *apprehendere* (to grasp or seize). In the multifold uses of *apprehension* (noun), (to) *apprehend* (verb), (to be) *apprehensive* (adjective) and (to be) *apprehensible* (adjective), other related words from the ancestral root such as *reprehend, prison,prehensile, comprehend and comprehensive* among others are also evoked.

Def://

*Def:*

*Apprehension* (noun) / (to) *Apprehend* (verb) / (to be) *Apprehensive* (adjective) / (to be) *Apprehensible* (adjective):

To discern or perceive [as *grasping* and *acquisition*] // to know, understand or comprehend [as *possession* and *accumulation*] // to capture, seize or take into custody [as a neutralizing *immobilization* or authoritative *containment*] // to anticipate with anxiety [as in perceiving threat or discomfort in the unexpected or uncanny, to be *unsettled*] / to be capable of being recognized or understood [as *intelligible, sensible or rational*]

When I use these words throughout the dissertation I aim to imply all of these linkages between them but can draw a few of these out here in regard to the ordering of knowledge and Indigenous peoples as objects and sources of knowledge *in order to* dominate and dispossess them:

- An emphasis on pursuing certainty and truth through what is perceptible and discernable by the ‘unbiased’ senses and can be processed and affirmed by universal Reason (as in empiricism and positivism)
- An acquisitive desire for understanding that seeks predictability, generalizability and comprehensiveness, that is totalizing in the aim for completion
- To approach knowledge as a puzzle, mechanism, thing or essence that can be deconstructed, dissected or *extracted* (from contexts, peoples, places, times, the living earth), commodified as a resource and owned like property, collected, quantified, accumulated
- The authority of certain knowers to forcefully capture and appropriate from their ‘objects,’ to organize, regulate and render them controllable
- To expect objects’ adherence to the knowers’ classifications or categories and so see deviation or non-conformity as insensible, intolerable, reprehensible, threatening, which causes suspicion and anxiety
The following two chapters describe what the problem of colonial apprehension presents itself to be and how a concept of refusal as Simpson has articulated it shifted my sense of what this problem really is and whose it is. Each chapter is divided into two parts, which all follow from each other. I chose to group the four parts into two chapters rather than four because the first two are conceptual and the last two are contextual. Chapter Two describes general features of epistemic and discursive coloniality and how this connects to my understanding of the problem of colonial apprehension. Part One sets out and situates the dissertation’s core conceptual terms (and associated phrases): Euro-Modernity, epistemic/epistemology/episteme, discourse/discursive domination, subjectification/subjection and (transformative) power. Part Two describes and refutes the problem of colonial apprehension as one of epistemic and discursive dependency for Indigenous peoples, that we are beholden to demands to articulate ourselves politically (our difference and similarity) in ways sensible (readily perceptible and prudent) and so knowable within an asymmetrical public domain of intelligibility and enunciation. This chapter threads influences in the modernity/coloniality, postcolonial theory and subaltern studies literatures into my conception of colonial apprehension and also takes Foucault as a central theoretical interlocutor.

Chapter Three contextualizes the concepts introduced in Chapter Two within what I, following Audra Simpson, call the ‘settler-colonial theatre of apprehension’ in Canada and presents the challenge of Indigenous refusals to scholarship giving accounts of Indigenous resurgence, telling stories of its resistances, subversions and alternatives as part of a tactical imperative to decolonization. Part One sketches features of settler-colonialism as a specific formation of domination and dispossession that seeks to both displace and internalize Indigenous nations as governable subjects of the state. This will help indicate the structural forcefulness of the demands for apprehension that Indigenous peoples confront. I will here engage with the burgeoning field of settler-colonial studies’ to describe features including sovereign replacement (with a logic of elimination and narrative disavowal), the production of subject populations and its spatiotemporality. I will also outline how Canada exists in/as an unsettled state despite settler-colonial aspirations to totalization. Part Two discusses the concept of (ethnographic) refusal prompted as a challenge for me by Audra Simpson, as a self-determining disruption of the apprehensive desire to know Indigenous peoples, including their resistances and alternatives. This turns the problem of apprehension to one of ethically giving public accounts of
these, especially in the academy as a stage of the colonial theatre of apprehension. The challenge for political theory is to consider forms of analysis and telling after refusal and a coming to terms with the coloniality in its culturalist foundations and inclinations in regard to Indigeneity.

I agree with Walter Mignolo on the need to redress “imperial disembodied and un-located assumptions about knowing and knowledge-making, both by agents as well as by institutions created to support, promote, and disseminate both principles and results” (Mignolo, 2013: 118-9). I believe this includes our re-sourcing of critical theory from diverse contexts. Mignolo also encourages thinking ‘from the colonial difference’ as I will discuss, but attending to colonial differences in these critical resources is also important to gauge both specificities and alignments. The limits of inferring ‘cross-projects’ are raised by a number of Indigenous scholars responding to estrangements from critical theory and the dislocations of transnational analyses (Warrior, 2011: 89-90, 2009). Eve Tuck (Unganax Aleut) and K. Wayne Yang have recently suggested that the question “‘What is colonization?’ must be answered specifically, with attention to the colonial apparatus that is assembled to order the relationships between particular peoples, lands, the ‘natural world’, and ‘civilization’” because “[c]olonialism is marked by its specializations. In North America and other settings, settler sovereignty imposes sexuality, legality, raciality, language, religion and property in specific ways” and so decolonization “likewise must be thought through in these particularities” (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 21). Conversely Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith suggest that because “the conditions of Native peoples are inextricably linked to the conditions facing other oppressed groups, a different political imaginary would require an engagement with intellectual work from these other sites of struggle in order to build stronger intellectual and political solidarities,” based not on “intellectual isolationism but on intellectual promiscuity, sympathy, and solidarity” (Simpson & Smith, 2014: 11). I proceed with both suggestions in mind.
CHAPTER TWO
Coloniality and the Problem of Apprehension

PART ONE - Locating Core Concepts and My Relationship with Them

Which Modernity, Or Rather Whose?

In this section I am setting out to unpack the conception of Modernity that I take up in the dissertation, as this forms a large part of the backdrop to my sense of the origins of a drive to colonial apprehension. I forward a specifically Eurocentric conception of Modernity in my use of the term *Euro-Modern* to implicate that the *systematically colonizing* dispersal of its dominant, apprehensive epistemic and discursive ordering had an epicenter. And I do so fully cognizant of the longtime concern, described by Nicholas Thomas, that despite investment in exposing the “false universality and hegemony” colonial and imperial narratives trade in, many scholars “seem unwilling themselves to renounce the aspiration of theorizing globally” (Thomas, 1994: x). This remains prevalent for analyses of dominant knowledge-power systems but also those marginalized by them. The theoretical “charismatic mega-category” certainly remains a problem of discursively obfuscating diverse “Indigenous peoples and their laws and philosophies” (on Reddy in Todd, 2016: 6). As mentioned in the introduction to Chapters Two and Three, I will address this homogenizing categorical tendency and also the importance of particularity in analyses of colonial systems (as an aim of settler-colonial studies) in the next chapter. Here I will speak to generalizations of a Euro-Modern epistemic orientation and discursivity as retaining a critical and political forcefulness. That is, to argue shorthand yet expansive terms such as ‘European,’ ‘Western’ and ‘Modern’ continue to do important rhetorical work according to the relational contexts of their usage.

In a 2011 essay Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty discusses how a once broadly normative conception of *Modernity* has become “muddled” vis-à-vis the non-European. Particularly, how use of the term to connote a developmental periodization of historical time, cultural characteristics and societal form (from pre-modern/traditional to modern to post-modern) according to a supposed ‘Western’ model and trajectory is no longer uncontroversial. This is due to the interventions of critical and non-European historiography on the concept of
multiple modernities, not least by the Subaltern Studies School of scholars, that Chakrabarty is counted among.¹ The now discredited concept of Modernity is presented as a period (with varied beginning points in post-Medieval Europe) marked by a specific assemblage of processes and changes that include but are not exhausted by ‘modernization’ - economic, political, technological and communicative, with their relevant institutions, structures and expansions such as democratization, urbanization and the consolidation of the international state-system and industrial and market capitalism in its ‘later’ stages. This also includes an ensemble of accompanying cultural and intellectual developments such as scientific rationality and a secular humanism holding up ideals of progress toward equality and freedom. Since the 1980s, the Subaltern Studies project of “histories from below” focus on the emergent political movements and everyday resistances of the underclasses of the (ostensibly) post-colonial and post-imperial Global South that do not conform to the previously normatively Modern characteristics (particularly their ‘traditionalism’), nor theories of revolutionary change that fixate on mass uprising and the spectacular.

In Subaltern Studies there are certainly alignments of interest to consider categorical representations of Indigenous resurgence practices in settler-colonial contexts of the Global North, particularly when a highly visible flashpoint event of (more easily) apprehensible political activity such as Idle No More occurs.² The amalgam of “Indian modernity” as presented by Indigenous scholars such as Philip Deloria (Dakota) underscores the unsettling potential of highlighting the interface of Modernity and Indigeneity in Indigenous political practices, as I return to in Chapter Seven. Yet a question arises as to how appropriating or “democratizing” the concept of Modernity on grounds of “equal opportunity” may muddle the coloniality of its once-normative connotations, to use Chakrabarty’s phrasing. It obscures Modernity’s once and ongoing effectual operation as Euro-Modernity with hegemonic aspirations to envelop the earth

¹ These include Ashis Nandy, Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee and Gayatri Spivak. I return to Subaltern Studies scholarship a number of times throughout the dissertation. For Chakrabarty’s “Small History of Subaltern Studies” see Chapter 1 of his essay collection Habitations of Modernity (Chakrabarty, 2002).
² While the agrarian peasant movements of Subaltern Studies’ concern are distinct from the land defence resistances of Indigenous peoples in the North in many respects, there are alignments in their practices and demands’ non-conformity to categories of traditionalism opposed to ‘modernism’ especially for analyses that are decidedly Euro-Modern at their foundations. Critiques of Subaltern Studies’ project as holding that there is no longer or never was a normative model of Modernity generally emerges from an empiricist development studies and/or Marxist historical-materialist perspective that suggests they expunge an effective account of class struggle and represent a conservative and populist turn to ethno-nationalism and identity politics. The disparagement of a rejection of utter cultural hegemony and a Foucaultian turn to consider subalternized knowledges (taken up in Modernity/Coloniality literature) is another line of materialist critique that is also familiar to Indigenous scholars of our movements.
well past the mid 20th century decline of European imperialism. The assessment of the Modern may not be down to an objective catalogue of traits that can be enumerated but does involve a self-projection and commitment to connect the past and future in accordance with a judgment from a present political positionality (Chakrabarty, 2011: 672-3). Any assignment of the term ‘Modern’ also still implies a valuation against that which (or whom) is not Modern. The analytical and not least political clarity of associating Modernity with Eurocentrism and coloniality is to me still important.

The association of Modernity with Eurocentrism has been disputed on the grounds that this accepts a fictive and chauvinistic evolutionary narrative of Europe as the locus of a universal human civilization and solitary authorship of the preeminent ideas and practices associated with the Modern, its standards and patterns of standardization - making their ‘adoption’ by non-Europeans or non-Westerners tantamount to imperfect Europeanization/Westernization. This has prompted many redemptive rebuttals to be forwarded: claiming origination, contributions to or distinctive iterations of practices and ideas once considered Euro-Modern innovations, assertions of subaltern political and historical protagonism and the existence of multiple modernities. While Modernity has been assessed and assigned from an array of positions, the categorical and classificatory logics and regime of knowledge from which the supposed necessity of this assessment and assignation derived does have an epicenter.

Following the Modernity/Coloniality scholars, the specific Modernity of my concern is a Eurocentric phenomenon (or rather phenomenon of Eurocentrism) that denies and occludes its intersubjective constitution through a relationship with a non-Modern, “non-European alterity.” More specifically, a New World birthed at the encounter with Indigenous peoples of this continent in 1492 (Dussel, 1993; Wynter, 1995; also Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 243-4). They argue that Latin America is as Enrique Dussel put it the teixtli (Nahuatl for “other face”) of Modernity, a contention formulated from our particular colonial narratives of domination (such as the Conquest of Mexico). Nevertheless their relocation of the birth of this (normative) Modernity to (and with) the Americas at the both metaphoric and actual moment of Encounter, and the simultaneous birth of the Indian/Native as its fundamental constitutive Other is transformative. This can help bring us Southerners into decolonial conversation with our
Northern cousins on Turtle Island who also grapple with questions of Indigeneity’s opposition to Modernity.³

Spain and Portugal are in this conception the disavowed harbingers of a Modernity that would materialize structurally through a burgeoning transatlantic mercantilist capitalism from colonial pillage and eventually find its intellectual elaboration with more Northerly theoreticians in the following four centuries from Hobbes and Locke to Kant, Hegel, Mill and Marx, who would narrativize Modernity for all of Europe along with ‘Western Civilization’ back to Greek antiquity. This metanarrative has a linear temporality as the force of Historical maturation, with a corresponding spatial apex at the expanding frontier of the ‘West.’ The spatiotemporal organization of Modernity in Eurocentric developmental terms required the anteriority and superseding of its Others as past/prior/primitive and repression of their own “forms of knowledge production, models of the production of meaning, symbolic universe, and models of expression and of objectification and subjectivity” (Quijano, 2008: 189). Euro-Modernity’s post-Enlightenment promise of emancipation through Reason and “unified ego” came at the cost of the “redemptive sacrifice” of its victims (‘the colonized, the slave, the woman, the ecological destruction of the earth’), a myth that sought to conceal their alterity or have it only reflect back a projected image of its ‘archaic’ self (Dussel, 1993: 66, 75). In this only the Orient would be seen to have the ancient dignity (or dignity of age) sufficient to be acknowledged Other to the Occident in this geo-cultural classification system (Quijano, 2008: 188, 190) - not ‘America,’ not its Indian. Anibal Quijano points out the New World is both America and Euro-Modernity in that with the metaphoric-actual Encounter, a “new space/time was constituted materially and

³ The Modernity/Coloniality school are certainly more closely aligned on the particulars of the epistemic and discursive production of Euro-Modern and Indian or Native subjects/subjectivities than South Asian postcolonial theory and the analysis of Black racialization in African anti-colonial theory. In reflecting on accusations of Lakota philosopher Vine Deloria Jr.’s presentation of “world view collision” as essentialist and dualistic, Mignolo had the following to say nearly 20 years ago regarding the linguistic and state-nationalist analytic borders between “Native Americans and Amerindians.” These are medicine lines for harm I have long been preoccupied by: “I do not have the time here to dispel a form of criticism when it comes from a postmodern leftist position that is just blind to the colonial difference. Of course, America is not a two-sided struggle between Anglo and Native Americans. The force of the national ideology in scholarship and, as a consequence, the lack of comparative works (that will place Native Americans in the context of Amerindians in Latin America, Aborigines in New Zealand and Australia, but also in comparison with Islam and Hinduism) hide the fact that what really matters is the colonial difference” (Mignolo, 2000: 8).

For a discussion of Indigenous transnationalism in North America, see Altamirano-Jimenez, 2008. It is noteworthy here however that Deloria Jr. himself expressed concern at focusing on the shared identity of Indigenous peoples in the Western hemisphere through “shared sufferings” as getting caught up in “nebulous generalities” at the expense of understanding more immediate and specific concerns (Deloria Jr, 1998: 27-8).
subjectively’ (Quijano, 2008: 195). This inaugurates a ‘New World system and order’ of power/knowledge, desiring, if not gaining, totalization in all spheres of existence. This did effectually make one self-centered worldview dominant and coercive in its seeming indispensability for the last 500 years. I will consider the idea of the New World and the role of Nativeness as a pre-Modern savage difference to Euro-Modern political theory further in Chapter Four.

Quijano concedes that if Modernity “only, or fundamentally, refers to the ideas of newness, the advanced, the rational-scientific, the secular” then it must be acknowledged as a “phenomenon possible in all cultures and epochs” (Quijano, 2008: 191). In this vein thinkers on Modernity/Coloniality such as Dussel also wish to disrupt a monological and hermetically Eurocentric metanarrative of Modernity but from a different angle, signposting its constitutive exclusions by focusing on the complex inter-relational production of ‘Western/European’ and ‘non-Western/European’ identities beginning in the 16th century.4 The ideas of Europe and the West are absolutely (inter) subjective and shifting constructs, but this is largely the point. They are still powerful and this makes them not just analytically helpful for purposes of critique, but politically apt for decolonial rhetorics. The normative force of Eurocentrism in a ‘New World order of power/knowledge,’ accompanying and facilitating imperial, colonial and settler-colonial expansion (ism) must be accounted for.5 The idea of the West/Europe’s totalizing epistemic authority has been mutually reinforced with the structural-material exercise of power in the radial spheres of that expansion. In this way the Modernity of my concern here must always also be paired with coloniality as its “dark side” (Mignolo, 2007, 2011). As Quijano has reminded while explicitly “Eurocentered colonialism” (direct domination from the old Metropoles) has mostly been overturned, the varieties of coloniality of power it generated prevail not least in violent classificatory discriminations that were variously “codified as ‘racial’, ‘ethnic’, ‘anthropological’ or ‘national’” (or cultural) and have assumed the character of objective categories with which to know the ‘properties’ of diverse human beings and societies (Quijano, 2007: 168, 171).

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5 As Chakrabarty suggests: “If a language, as has been said, is but a dialect backed up by an army, the same could be said of the narratives of “modernity” that, almost universally today, point to a certain “Europe” as the primary habitus of the modern...This Europe, like “the West,” is demonstrably an imaginary entity, but the demonstration as such does not lessen its appeal or power (Chakrabarty, 2007: 43).
Quijano is clear that the coercive rationality of the Modernity at issue displaced and overwhelmed alternative ways of knowing-being-doing “as much in Europe as the rest of the World” (Quijano, 2008: 198). Certain of its own “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 2003: 7) or hidden epistemologies and dissenting discursive forms may absolutely be amenable to Indigenous knowledge and discursive systems targeted for epistemicide, and drawing these correspondences is important decolonial work as I argue with Chapter Five. However the infernal inheritance Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must still contend with is the dominant Euro-Modern strain. We all live in the long shadow of the colonizing and imperial prerogatives of the European 16th to mid 20th centuries. We struggle against, across and between its boundaries and borders that expand and contract to meet and subsume our resistances. This enframing is generalizable in several ways. Political theorist William Connolly has suggested that seemingly diverse and even opposing Euro-Western thinkers into/on/of Modernity share an “economy of thought” or “patterns of insistence” that effect an acquisitive closure. He selects Hobbes, Rousseau and Hegel as examples of a set of theoretical variations or valences that anyone who wants to participate in “modern political discourse” must appeal to “or strive to repeal” (Connolly, 1988: 5). To define and delineate Modernity, to “articulate the container into which its own discourse has been poured” is one of its paradigmatic aspirations (Connolly, 1988:

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6 Ashis Nandy has suggested the possibility for such a critical interface (seeing Gandhi as particularly adept in this appeal to the “other West”). This would disrupt the totalization of the “dominant West” and refute a notion of resistance as only dialectical reversal (Nandy, 2009: 72). Māori theorist Carl Mika suggests similarly: “That there is some striking anti-colonial thinking in some forms of Western philosophy and, moreover, even some propositions that can be drawn on to *thetically* assert aspects of indigenous experience, should be acknowledged by us. But for the West, the need to tap into this hidden but real form of knowledge is even more pressing” (Mika, 2015: 1139). Mika, also a Heidegger scholar, has recently written several articles reflecting on some of these potentialities and a monograph forwarding a conception of “worldedness” as an Indigenous educational paradigm (see Mika, 2016 & 2017; see also Turner, 2006: 100 on examples). One strain of Western thought that has been considered of interest for such projects is the holistic tradition of which Leibniz and Spinoza are a part, taken up in the work of Deleuze and Guttari among others. Conversely such insular Western projects that do not equally account for Indigenous philosophies are contestable. Métis scholar Zoe Todd has recently critiqued the post-humanist “ontological turn” in the field of anthropology and environmental ethics in particular around its citational practices that exclude Indigenous intellectual traditions and “thinkers in their own right, not just [as] disembodied representatives of an amorphous Indigeneity that serves European intellectual or political purposes” (Todd, 2016: 7). For another critique of Deleuze and desire toward “valuing the irreconcilable” by an Indigenous scholar see Tuck, 2010.

7 Connolly selects Nietzsche as a thinker that produced rhetorical strategies to disrupt this categorical necessity: “Nietzsche aspired to call modernity into question without either lapsing into nostalgia for one of the worlds it has lost or postulating a future utopia where we could finally reach a ‘home in the world’” (Connolly, 1988: 6). The utter loss of alternative ‘home worlds’ is one I refute along with utopian thinking that disregards their existence throughout this dissertation. The relevance of a conception of existing ‘home worlds’ (and accusations of nostalgia in asserting their existence) will arise in this vein in the chapters on Arendt and storytelling as a survivant non-Euro-Modern rhetorical strategy/mode of inquiry and discursivity that both indicates and symbiotically reproduces/regenerates these worlds.
It is a drive to containment. Its violence is in the attempt to order the relational world and living earth, where to enframe and order is a “drive to mastery” in Connolly’s phrase that subordinates what it seeks to know and define. This closure is also acquisitive. Another paradigmatic aspiration he points to is the desire for perpetual newness and becoming that orients Modernity to an ever-receding horizon of futurity, despite any avowed end of absolute human knowledge and perfectibility or utopia. It is then capable of absorbing even the post-modern aspiration to supercede it. It colonizes the imaginary of alternatives, as I discussed in Chapter One and will consider further.

So, it is important to reiterate that the dominant/dominating Euro-Modern orientation to knowledge and discourse I refer to is not its only one but rather the one that despite the flurry of debate among theorists on the postmodern, post-structuralist and post-humanist turns in response to its supposed internal crisis, has continued to effect the so-called First World ‘all the way down,’ through to the Indigenous Fourth World “on our Turtle’s back” (Simpson, 2011) and in the process reinforcing this hierarchy of worlds. It courses through the arteries of the globalized New World system/system of worlds, materialized in structural relations of unequal distribution, exploitation and accumulation by dispossession. Indigenous peoples continue to have claims to land and life adjudicated as such in the terms of the sovereign state system and the settler-colonial state. This continuity is an aspect what Mignolo calls the “colonial difference” that shapes Indigenous experiences in distinction from Euro-Modern societies,’ though they may seemingly share the same spatiotemporal locations – that it is the colonial difference that matters (Mignolo, 2000: 8). The colonial Euro-Modern world may be both ‘first’ and still foundational, but it is not the only one.

Which Epistemology or Rather Whose Épistème?

In the previous section I began to suggest that dominant Euro-Modern approaches to knowledge remain effectually colonial despite that these have undergone deep and far-reaching
immanent critiques by theoretical movements such as postmodernism, that along with other destabilizing factors in the 20th century, brought its reason to (internal) crisis. This reason is centered on the subject/object distinction – the individual human reason-bearing subject as knower of external objects of knowledge in the world - from which the other dichotomous dualities noted above are elaborated. As Quijano suggests, despite the atomizing implications of this reason, an idea of social/cultural/political totality for Europeans at ‘home’ had aligned with colonial and imperial structural imperatives to naturalize its extension as a “total logic” over the earth with Europe as and at the head of this expanding Euro-Modern home world.9 Colonized and especially Indigenous colonized Others would be apprehended by this total logic as objects rather than subjects of knowledge, unconscious components of the system with some developmental or utilitarian function yet ultimately vestigial and destined for sacrifice. The dominant Euro-Modern rationality and the mythos of its metaphysics would become paradigmatic with colonizing and imperial doctrine - Western philosophy’s “white mythology” claiming historical universality (via Derrida, Young, 2004). This section will outline the structuring concept of episteme in regard to my sense of colonial apprehension.

I have referred to Indigenous resurgence’s reorientation in ways of knowing as both epistemic and epistemological and so can begin here by indicating the relevance of distinguishing these terms as I use them before proceeding to episteme. The epistemic refers to that which pertains to knowledge – as in knowledge systems, orientations to, or ways of knowing. Epistemology refers to particular theorizations on the nature of knowledge and knowing (which relate to conceptions of truth, judgment and justification), a 19th century term from the Ancient Greek epistēmē and suffix –logy to denote a field of study as ‘logical discourse’ on a topic. The latter is quite wrapped up with post-Enlightenment rationality and the formation of scholarly disciplines. Indigenous resurgence involves an epistemic reorientation of meaning-making and authority back to knowledge practices that can decolonially refigure Indigenous lifeworlds. In so doing, colonial apprehension is refused, which calls into question the motives and epistemological presuppositions or underpinnings of any scholarly engagement with Indigenous practices. Here I am not focused on articulating specific traditional and dynamic

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9 Quijano suggests this totalizing impetus understood society in mechanical or organic terms “as a closed structure articulated in a hierarchic order with functional relations between its parts…and a rationality consisting in the subjection of every part to [a]…total logic.” This “leads to conceiving society as a macro-historical subject, endowed with a historical rationality, with a lawfulness that permits predictions of the behavior of the whole and of all its parts, as well as the direction and the finality of its development in time” (Quijano, 2007: 176 also 174).
Indigenous epistemologies in the discussion of resurgence but rather a diagnostic of Euro-Modern epistemic coloniality. However a few broad contrasts in their patterns or indeed “collisions” across Indigenous diversity can be briefly sketched to move this diagnostic forward (Cajete, 2000: 86; Deloria Jr, 1999; Little Bear, 2000).

Among many Indigenous thinkers, ‘Western epistemologies’ are associated with a number of tendencies in the dominant Euro-Modern approach to knowledge. These include the drive to know as a drive to mastery demonstrating a fear of the unknowable and uncertainty. Diametrical or dichotomous categorical separations of subject-thing/object-thing, Self/Other, interiority/exteriority, being/becoming, physical/metaphysical, thought/feeling, perception/conception, form/substance, time/space-place, before-a priori/after-a posteriori and overall propensity to compartmentalize and so fragment experience, are deemed to contrast with an Indigenous emphasis on wholism, coexistence and integrality of different aspects of existence (Ermine, 1995: 101-3; Mika, 2015: 1138). This propensity is also reflected in Western epistemology’s division (especially in analytical and positivist philosophy) from the metaphysical fields of ontology and cosmology that theorize the nature of existence and reality, establishing premises and first principles for knowing these. The dominant Euro-Modern rationality is centered on an ontological division of subjects from objects which requires identification and organization of what is inside and outside the knowing subject/self, establishing the properties of animate and communicative entities or subjects and inanimate objects as things-in-themselves. The basis of epistemology becomes the unidirectional relation of an individual, human, reason-bearing subject toward external objects. Knowledge is its product, the truth of which can then be assessed logically.


11 Cree methodologist Margaret Kovach considers the term epistemology to connote a “self in relation” approach to knowledge apt to Indigenous theorization (Kovach, 2009 Chapter 3) but I would not say this inherently refers to an intersubjective understanding of knowledge production. She notes that there is debate on the terminology even of theory (McLeod, 2007: 98) which I acknowledge while still using ‘theory,’ ‘philosophy,’ ‘epistemology’ etc. for their continued relevance in asserting the status of Indigenous knowledge systems when discussed in scholarship. These are all imperfect words for their Euro-Modern definitional baggage, particularly in regard to emplaced, wholistic and integral perspectives (the terminology of ‘politics’ also). I also use hyphenates such as ontology-epistemology and ways of knowing-doing-being to signal this, one rhetorical tactic that I engage whenever I reach a linguistic limit that needs to be signposted. Vanessa Watts uses “place-thought” (2013) and Jarrett Martineau “ontoeipstemic” (2014) to disrupt divisions similarly.
Eminent Lakota philosopher the late Vine Deloria Jr. described the contrast with Indigenous metaphysics, that understand “the world, and all its possible experiences, constituted a social reality, a fabric of life in which everything had the possibility of intimate knowing relationships because, ultimately, everything was related” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001: 3 emphasis mine). The anthropocentrism and decontextualization of Euro-Modern knowledge production and producers alienates human reason and judgment from what Deloria Jr. called the creative energetic power of the non-human and the living earth, where emplacement enables the understanding of our relations with one another (see also Ermine, 1995: 104). Willie Ermine (Cree) has described how in this sense embodied or physical and metaphysical knowledge production form a nexus (Ermine, 1995: 107 see also Watts, 2013). This knowing from and within a perceived reality of sociality, interdependent relationality and grounding in place shapes the values and ethics integral to Indigenous knowledge practices (Moreton-Robinson, 2017: 71-3). Māori scholar Carl Mika articulates the consequential distinction for practices of Indigenous philosophy as not beginning by “assessing the truth of a proposition through logic, but in how the self is located in the world” (Mika, 2015: 1137). I will take up these themes and Indigenous epistemologies-ontologies in regard to story further in Chapter Six.

Here I can turn to the concept of episteme or episteme and my engagement with Foucault in characterizing the coloniality of Euro-Modernity. The relationship of non-Western and Indigenous thinkers on decolonization, self-determination and Indigeneity and certain tendencies in Continental postmodern and poststructuralist philosophy like anti-foundationalism remain strained. However the influence of Foucault’s work on power/knowledge and his lexicon is pervasive in scholarship diagnosing coloniality in transnational, state, governmental and sociocultural practices and institutions of domination, as much as Marxian theory is on the material imperatives and structures of dispossession. My presentation of colonial apprehension is no exception and so it is important to name this (and him) to situate the concepts I engage and that have made Foucault (and his interlocutors) omnipresent. As Osage scholar Robert Warrior has noted (citing Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Taiaiake Alfred), “‘theory’ has become too often in Native and Indigenous studies a code word for various stated and unstated versions, in fact, of theory that owes varied allegiances to Foucaultian ideas” and there is a “lack of a thoroughgoing critique of Foucault that might give a sense of what is at stake in adopting his brand of analysing power/knowledge” (Warrior, 2011: 88). Here Warrior is discussing a lack of nuance in
Foucault’s interpreters, which Robert Young also discusses, and Gayatri Spivak’s critique of Foucault through subalternity as alleviating some of this, both of which I will return to. It is my attempt to engage Foucault in this project critically, with nuance and by name. As with Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Athabaskan scholar Dian Million, I consider Foucault’s insights on Euro-Modern discourses and governance indispensable but incomplete in regard to the experiential (Million, 2013: 28-30) and thinking from the colonial and settler-colonial difference.

It is apt to start with Foucault’s specific notion of épistème in The Order of Things in which the relationship of (Euro) Modern knowledge as a regime that (re) produces an order of knowable worlds, to power is described. Épistème (anglicised episteme, from the Greek root) refers to the assumed or seemingly self-evidentiary premises that define “the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice” in a particular society and epoch (Foucault, 1994: 168). The épistème indicates the “strategic apparatus” of knowledge/power systems that form these conditions, including the separation of “fields” of knowledge such as Science, and what may be included in them (and then assessable as true or false) and what may not be included in the field at all (Foucault, 1980a: 197). This has consolidating power effects as enforcing (often tacitly) an order of exclusion and constraint, producing a set of necessary premises for the knowable, verifiable and then communicable – effecting discursive boundaries to thought and language. Criteria for truth and epistemic authority become spatiotemporally contingent to a period and place:

Each society has its regime of truth, its “general politics” of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980b: 131).

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12 My engagement with Foucault has much indebtedness to Robert Young who has long been an influence on my intersectional perception of postcolonial and anti-colonial theory beginning with his Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction (2001), which I draw on here. I do not engage with Derrida to a great degree in this dissertation and acknowledge this as a gap that could be filled to its benefit at a later point.

13 Aileen Moreton-Robinson suggests that though Foucault himself did not extend his analyses adequately to colonialism (acknowledging the critiques of Young and other postcolonial theorists including Homi Bhabha), his conception of biopower is particularly relevant to what she refers to as “postcolonizing” states whereby “the racialized application of disciplinary knowledges and regulatory mechanisms…function together to preclude recognition of Indigenous sovereignty” (Moreton-Robinson, 2015: 129). Though she calls for a new research agenda in this regard, Settler-Colonial Studies is pursuing a similar agenda, as I will outline in Chapter Three.
Foucault’s diagnostic in-sight, from within the dominant Euro-Modern episteme, disrupts its claims to natural authority establishing the necessary premises for knowledge. These premises are shown to be contingent expressions of the biases, commitments and needs of particular societies at particular junctures. The evaluation of Modernity as a condition was thus shifted from a “longitudinal relationship to the Ancients” to consider its discourse’s emplacement and “present-ness” (Foucault quoted Olssen, 2003: 76). Euro-Modern humanism for example, presents a condition of discursive possibility with which Indigenous peoples must still grapple to articulate intrinsically non-humanist or non-anthropocentric conceptions of political and epistemic relationality. This humanism, just as its epistemic and ontological foundations, involves an understanding of the human subject that is racialized, gendered, Eurocentric. It was universalized not for its truth but because the Euro-modern episteme emergent from the context of Western expansionism in the 17th to 19th centuries was imperialized along with its political and economic machineries, as their crucial fuel and lubricant in fact – the stakes in which were far from abstract for many Great White Fathers of Euro-Modern political theory and science.15

Discourse and Discursive Domination

“Colonial discourse never just consisted of a set of ideological (mis) representations: its enunciations always operated as historical acts, generating specific material effects within the coercive machinery of colonial rule, its enunciative sites and formations of power simultaneously inciting material and psychological effects upon colonized subjects” (Young, 2001: 410).

Foucault did not adequately contend with how imperialism and colonialism enabled the global dominance of the Euro-Modern episteme and its subjugation of other ways of knowing and discoursing in his work. Historian of postcolonialism Robert Young has pointed out this is curious given how his work has been taken up to analyze just this, beginning with the seminal

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14 Foucault’s ‘excavation’ of the operation of power/knowledge is itself derived from the critical imperative he perceives as emerging from the same Euro-Modern épistème. He was an avowed Kantian that repurposed Kant’s views on the conditions of possibility for knowing, the basis for Spivak’s critique I discuss in Chapter Four. This relates to the contention that Foucault was himself mostly a diagnostician of Euro-Modernity rather than a critic of it.

and perhaps still most contentious text, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (Young, 1995; Young, 2001: 383-410). Said made an important contribution in connecting both structuralist and postmodern theory with the “political commitments and ideological critiques of the anti-colonial movements” (Young, 2001: 384), amending and expanding Foucault’s frame of reference on the episteme from European societies’ internal organization to relations with its Others. Evident in this move is the influence of anti-colonial thinkers’ depiction of Europe’s double or Janus face that Fanon so eloquently pointed to in his assessment of Western humanism’s reliance on racist dehumanization, with Euro-Modern Man tethered to their dark reflection, the Black slave and the colonized (Bhabha, 2004: 62; Young, 1995: 10).¹⁶ Foucault’s conception of *discourse* was of particular importance to Said and this would initiate discourse analysis as a concentration of postcolonial theory, which remains divisive particularly among adherents of anti-colonialism’s structuralist and even psychoanalytical strains.

Sartre may have dismissed Foucault as the “last barricade of the bourgeoisie” for his disruption of historical materialism (Miller, 159) but for the diagnosis of the systematicity of colonialism and so its necessity to resistance or decoloniality, I do not believe in a trade-off between structural and discursive analyses. The intersection of these analyses is where Foucault remains so relevant. Despite the emphasis on literary texts in postcolonial theory, Foucault was opposed to the logocentric “reduction of discursive practices to textual traces” rather than approaching them as multidimensional and relational communicative events, that demonstrate the materiality of language (Young, 1981: 50; 2001: 398-9).¹⁷ Foucault’s connection of discursive practices to the (re) production of social realities and subjectivities can align with subjugated theoretical traditions on transformative discourse and discursive transformation such as Indigenous storytelling practice. These may offer methodological openings to address colonial apprehension, which the specific Foucaultian sense of *discourse* bears on as I will outline here.¹⁸

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¹⁶ For a discussion of Fanon’s critique of this humanism’s conception of Man as “European Man” see Gordon, 1995. There has been contention on whether Said’s work was ultimately humanist and in opposition to or aligned with postmodern and poststructuralist theory (see Spanos, 2009).

¹⁷ Foucault saw poststructuralist thinkers like Jacques Derrida as representative of a long Western tradition of (literate) textual logocentrism. As I will consider in the chapter on an Indigenous storytelling ethic for theory, Western logocentrism can be distinguished from Indigenous views on the centrality of language in knowledge production in oral tradition. Here language and communicative capacity are not humans’ alone nor immaterial, with the limitations of verbalization and meaningfulness of silence acknowledged.

¹⁸ Despite being taken up to suggest forms of discursive resistance to domination and subjugation, Foucault is not considered by some to be a critical methodologist as much as a “diagnostician of culture and society” (at least on a strictly descriptive reading, as per Hook 2001: 522) – and I would amend *Euro-Modern* culture and society and its
I take the colloquial (Euro-Western and tending to the logocentric) meaning of *discourse* to be any (mostly) verbalized, conversational or communicative exchange such as storytelling, or formal discussion (as in academic discourse) on a topic taken to be authoritative. What Young calls Foucault’s “radical” and non-textual view of discourse is in considering the way in which a knowledge is constituted as part of practices “at the interface of language and the material world” (Young, 2001: 399). He described all instances of discourse in the colloquial sense as organized by rules, procedures and systems of signs regulating its production that render an expression, utterance or performative speech-act meaningful. These can be reductively traced to their most basic units that have this function (what he called “statements”). Together with their contextual enunciation, they form a discursive event. He presented the concept of a structure of *discursive formation*, as the relational aggregation of their “regularities” (Foucault, 2002) that condition the formation and so existence of elements included in a discourse, its field of expression and appearance - as in the discourse of Science, History or Politics. In his inaugural 1970 lecture at the Collège de France “The Order of Discourse,” Foucault set out the thesis: “in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality” (Foucault, 1981: 52).

For Foucault, it is through discourse’s definition by forms of exclusion and constraint that “power and knowledge are joined together” (Foucault quoted Young, 1995: 2; Young, 1981). The rules and procedures for discursive practice form an *order* that establishes an “enunciative domain” determining the possible positions of speaking/discoursing subjects, the conditions and modalities of enunciation or expression (ways of speaking, telling) for valid statements in a discursive field, and the authorization to speak and be heard within it (Foucault, 2002: 137). While Foucault suggested the drive to mastery characterized the discursivity of “every society,” it is an observation situated in Euro-Modernity’s particular will to knowledge as one to dominate. As such I consider this drive as (long) characteristic of dominant Western epistemes rather than all, and this is one of his notions that can be thought from the colonial difference.

epistemic genealogies (see notes above). *Archaeology of Knowledge* is considered his only overtly methodological work. However methodological principles for discourse analysis have been inferred from the analytical tasks he sets out, as Hook (2001) and Young do from his “Order of Discourse” (those of reversal, discontinuity, specificity, exteriority) (Young, 1981: 50).
Foucault identified three groupings of procedures that establish a general order of discourse through exclusion and constraint that have been mobilized in diagnoses of coloniality and epistemicide. Not least, as reproduced in academic orders of discourse(s) such as those of the ‘human sciences,’ with anthropology being of particular interest as I delve into in Chapter Four. These include external procedures such as the establishment of prohibitive distinctions on what can enter a discourse that fluctuates. He gives examples of forbidden speech and distinctions between truth/falsehood and reason/madness (Foucault, 1981: 52-56). There are also internal procedures of self-regulation and limitation that function as principles of ordering and distribution for a discourse’s predictability and toward the “rarefaction” of meaning (to thin and make scarce). These include “gradation” in discourse (he points to the example of distinguishing primary and secondary texts in academic commentary), and *authorship* as the focus on attribution to ‘original sources,’ as establishing a discourse, formation or grouping’s *origin* as well as coherence and unity (58). Procedures of rarefaction also include the production of *disciplines* delineated by “a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments” which rather than authorship is an anonymous system for anyone to take up, and rather than commentary on existing propositions, sets the prerequisites for ‘new’ propositions that can belong to it. The discipline is thus crucially a “principle of control over the production of discourse” (61).

While discipline inhibits the content and form of discourse, the third set of procedures for ordering discourse inhibits speaking subjects, restricting access to a discourse and setting out stipulations for its enunciation (with specialized languages for example). This positions a subject’s rights, status and authority pertaining to the discourse. The example of a doctrine is given by Foucault, which indicates the connection of discursive procedures of exclusion to social power relevant to colonial domination and its scholarly reproduction. The doctrine

“always stands as a sign, manifestation and instrument of a prior adherence to a specific class, a social status, a race, a nationality, an interest, a revolt, a resistance or an acceptance. Doctrine binds individuals to certain enunciation and consequently forbids them all others; but it uses, in return certain types of enunciation to bind individuals amongst themselves, and to differentiate them by that very fact from all others” (64).
As already mentioned, Edward Said is largely responsible for the move to theorize Eurocentric colonialism not only by its exploitative political economy but its epistemic violence through “discursive domination” (Young, 2001: 383). Robert Young suggests “Order of Discourse,” rather than Foucault’s other works like the Archaeology of Knowledge, seems to have been most influential to Said’s linking of the discursive production of knowledge on/of the Other to colonial and imperial power (Young, 2001: 385). Discursive domination in Said involves the prior imagination of its object of knowing as a “projection onto and will to govern over” the Orient, and not as a conscious ideological rationalization deployed to justify processes of materially subjugating the referent peoples and territories (Said, 1994: 95). Orientalism then in his view developed “simultaneously” with its structural colonial deployment to “both manage and produce” the Orient (Young, 2001: 388; Said, 1994: 3):

“Since one cannot ontologically obliterate the Orient…one does have the means to capture it, treat it, describe it, improve it, radically alter it…The point I am trying to make here is that the transition from a merely textual apprehension, formulation, or definition of the Orient to the putting of all this into practice in the Orient did take place, and that Orientalism had much to do with that – if I may use the word in a literal sense – preposterous transition” (Said, 1994: 95-96 first emphasis mine).

The rules and signs of the discourse of Orientalism, its statements, are perceptible as repeating across vocabularies and modalities of enunciation and institutions, both academic and governmental, though Said would focus on a body of textual (mis)representations without offering counter-representations of the actual as he saw it, and this would be a point of critique and divergence from Foucault (Thomas, 1994: 37; Young, 2001: 388, 391). Said did not entirely diagnose the rules and procedures of exclusion in order to exist as subjects or objects of knowledge operating as a colonizing form of discursive domination, rather than domination by a discourse. The nature and force of this power, the ability to think beyond or outside these discursive limits this evokes, is different when considering the rules that precede enunciation. Judith Butler potently summarizes this different sense of discursive domination in considering the question of whose lives are considered mournable in America, that it “is not simply…that there is a “discourse” of dehumanization that produces these effects, but rather that there is a limit to discourse that establishes the limits of human intelligibility” (Butler, 2004: 35).
Subjectification as Subjection and Governmentality

With his presentation of Orientalism, Said has been critiqued extensively for assuming “too readily that an unequivocal intention on the part of the West was always realized through its discursive productions” (Young, 1995: 152). Particularly, offering its referent peoples no clear way to account for an independent reality, or at least experience of their alterity, that could speak for and by it’s self. Foucault has also been interpreted as offering a totalizing or deterministic view of the constitution of all human subjectivities by power/knowledge, and subsequently a fundamental incapacity for real self-determination and resistance, with especially aporetic implications for colonized peoples’ claims of subjecthood, political and ontological. This interpretation relates to Foucault’s role in destabilizing and decentering the formation of the Euro-Modern knowing/discoursing individual subject through his concept of subjectification (sometimes spelled subjectivation). However this interpretation can be troubled to unsettle a totalizing or utterly deterministic view of discursive and epistemic domination, while suggesting its force is in exclusionary rules and procedures of enunciation affecting and structurally effecting, the intelligibility of dominated peoples’ subjecthoods within Euro-Modern parameters. In this section I will discuss a non-totalizing reading of Foucault on processes of subjectification and attempts at the subjection of peoples into governable subject-objects as central to my conception of colonial apprehension.

In his entry for subjectification in the Cambridge Foucault Lexicon, Todd May pointed to the double meaning of ‘subject’ that Foucault evoked in coining this term in both the political sense of subjection as subjugation to an external power and also the self-conscious subjectivity or Selfhood at the centre of Euro-Modern philosophy. In Foucault’s own words, “subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge,” with both to him suggesting “a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to” (Foucault quoted in May, 2014: 496). With the concept he aimed to suggest the way in which subjectivity is formed by social power, as an intersectional effect and affect of embodied interactions and discursive practices. For Foucault a “subject’s ability to speak is ontologically bounded by the discourses through which [their] subjectivity is constructed” which is conditioned by their location in a social formation (Heller, 1996: 91).
Foucault’s subjectification was influenced by Marxist theorist Louis Althusser’s conception of *interpellation* as a process of the ideological and institutionalized reproduction of deterministic class identities and conduct.\(^1\) This described how we come to be identified as a certain kind of subject in the ways we are addressed or ‘hailed’ in social interactions, and in responding accept the identification, assuming all the expectations of behavior for the role we are assigned by the speech-act of another. Althusser’s interpellation in turn was inspired by psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s concept of the “mirror stage” in the formation of the Ego or self-consciousness, the alienating disjuncture between self-perception and appearance when we see ourselves in a mirror as an infant for the first time. Fanon would affectingly draw on both to describe his embodied experience of racialized subjectification as a Black man in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), in which he is “overdetermined from the outside…a slave not to the “idea” others have of me, but to my appearance” (Fanon, 2008: 95).\(^2\) Relating the story of an encounter on the streets of Paris with a small child who exclaims “Maman, look, a Negro; I'm scared!” Fanon would famously describe the alienating experience for his sense of subj ecthood:

“I was responsible not only for my body but also for my race and my ancestors. I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features; deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas, slave traders, and above all, yes, above all, the grinning *Ya bon Banania*. Disoriented, incapable of confronting the Other, the white man, who had no scruples about imprisoning me, I transported myself on that particular day far, very far, from my self, and gave myself up as an object” (Fanon, 2008: 92).

For Fanon the gaze and address made him not only a ‘being for another’ but their dark reflection, a projection without capacity to be self-creating or self-determining, the lie of Euro-Modern humanism was laid bare to him, his subjecthood was effectively and affectively an objecthood.\(^3\) Here Fanon focused on the psycho-affective results of racialized and colonial

\(^1\) Among others, Judith Butler extended the conception of subjectification’s psychological effect/affect (1997).

\(^2\) It should be noted Althusser was an avowed structuralist critic of Marxist-humanism’s emphasis on human alienation from an ideal free “species being” as the end or telos of history in the early writings of Marx such as that of Sartre, who would come to have an influence on Fanon (see Althusser’s coining of “antihumanism” in *For Marx*, 1965).

\(^3\) For a postcolonial analysis of Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* see Homi Bhabha’s “Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the Postcolonial Prerogative” (Bhabha, 2004). Bhabha elsewhere writes of this moment: “From within
processes of subjectification on the dominated,\footnote{For a feminist critique of the subject of psychoanalytic theory as ‘Western Man’ and discussion of its engagement by anti-colonial thinkers including Fanon, Sartre, Césaire and Memmi see Ranjana Khanna \textit{Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism} (2003).} as Coulthard has drawn out in applying his insights to the politics of recognition for Indigenous peoples (Coulthard, 2007, 2008 & 2014). Though linked, my interest is how these processes delimit Indigenous political intelligibility or intelligibility as political - how the expression of alternative subjectivities that do not conform to what is designated Nativeness nor political become discursively inadmissible. Foucault worked from within a Euro-Modern context and this must be accounted for to think his conceptual insights from the colonial difference, and bring him into conversation with those who lived within it like Fanon (see Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018: 72). Yet to consider how processes of settler-colonial subjectification in particular operate to displace and dispossess Indigenous peoples (for example as having political societies equivalent to states), a consideration of processes of subjectification internal to ‘Western’ societies – where these are also colonial spaces - remains highly relevant.

Like his assertion of discursive definition by procedures of exclusion, Foucault’s presentation of subject formation as involving a fundamental \textit{subjection} or subjugation, must be contextualized in regard to his presentation of changes in the operations of power/knowledge in the Euro-Modern episteme. Specifically, the rise of a creative or inducing rather than inhibitive form of power he named \textit{governmentality} in his late 1970s lecture series at the Collège de France. It refers to an internal tendency in the West toward a managerial or regulatory reason and practice of governing power – a power that maintains order (of which discipline is a mode, Foucault, 2003: 253) even over what he calls the “juridical” modes of ruling power still associated with Euro-Modernity like sovereignty, which it has supplanted (Foucault, 2009: 236-7). As he indicated in \textit{Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison} (1975), the force of governmentality’s subjectification of people is not an illusion or “ideological effect” on the perception of a sense-able material reality,

“On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished – and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a
machine and supervised for the rest of their lives” (Foucault quoted in May, 2014: 497 emphasis mine).

This form of power has greatly though not exclusively, displaced exercises of direct force in the Western neoliberal state through various historical processes and shifts in the discourses and apparatuses of government, which since the 18th century became fixated on managing and regulating human biological life, as the prime “object of political strategy” (Foucault, 2009: 1). Governmentality is thus also presented by Foucault as the “ensemble” of institutions, procedures and practices of power/knowledge that exercise this strategy, which has the production, organization and control of populations as its object (their wellbeing, health, growth, life and death) and which necessitates the penetration of governance into all areas of life (Rifkin, 2014: 153). This control is operationalized through various technologies and mechanisms of security – toward secure spaces, certainty and normalization (Foucault, 2009: 11-63) and a supporting discourse of political economy.

In 17th century Europe, the state had become the dominant way of “conceiving, analyzing and defining the nature and relations” of already established elements of social organization or “given realities,” such as “constituted bodies,” law, territory and its inhabitants. The state itself (its “integrity…completion, consolidation, and its re-establishment if it has been compromised”) had also become the objective of governmental reason at that time “in the sense that it is that which must result from the active interventions of this reason or rationality”:

“the state is essentially and above all the regulatory idea of that form of thought, that form of reflection, of that form of calculation, and that form of intervention called politics: politics as mathesis, as rational form of the art of government. Governmental reason thus posits the state as the principle for reading reality and as its objective and imperative” (Foucault, 2009: 286-7).23 Though governmentality named a shift in the predominant form of power in the West, evident in transformations of the objects and objectives of political strategy away from the state for itself, the state has remained what Foucault called the “regulatory idea” and “schema of intelligibility” not only of governmental but political reason in the Euro-Modern episteme. This point is

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23 Foucault referred to this double meaning with the French phrase for the ‘national interest’ as raison d’État (reason of State), in which the state was its own reason for being, or raison d’être.
important to Indigenous people’s ongoing experience of colonial subjectification involving a
discourse of politics or the political that is still statist and indeed sovereigntist.

As Australian critical anthropologist Nicholas Thomas has reiterated, governmentality
was not understood by Foucault as a “transhistorical” feature of all societies, but rather endemic
to Euro-Modernity, which can itself be deemed a “colonialist project in the special sense that
both the societies internal to Western nations, and those they possessed, administered and
reformed elsewhere were understood as objects to be surveyed, regulated and sanitized”
(Thomas, 1994: 4). So I will consider the apparatuses of settler-colonial governmentality and the
imperative of securing Native and settler populations (in which racialization is an important part)
in Chapter Three. Chapter Four, on ethnological reason forwards how, along with this
governmentality, Indigenous peoples are still apprehended through a discursive cultural
classification system that Foucault would suggest belongs more fully to a different episteme in
the West (“classical” rather than Modern). Together these Chapters will substantiate the
specifically settler-colonial difference in Indigenous peoples’ experiences of power/knowledge.

Transformative Power and Practices for and of Freedom

Here, I want to return to the assertion that Foucault’s presentation of subjectification and
discursive domination is totalizing, and makes the locating of both repressive power and
resistance to it difficult. This will set up the conceptions of transformative power, resistance for
liberation and practices of freedom I evoke throughout the dissertation. Robert Young
emphasizes that part of the problem in the interpretation of Foucault as totalizing and in regard to
colonized peoples in particular, is a reading of him on discourse through Said. As already
mentioned, Said suggested a discursive formation can be produced and defined by “invoking a
common object or set of concepts and representations” in regard to that object (eg. the Orient),
rather seeing its unity or regularity in the rules and conditions that operate on, and so form, its
object (Young, 2001: 401). Foucault emphasized the latter, allowing for contradiction,
heterogeneity and change among the elements of a discursive formation, which are then not
uniform, “monological or monolithic” (404). Similarly, law scholar Kevin Heller has attributed a
general pessimistic inclination to interpret Foucault on subjectification and power as
deterministic and totalizing, to many of the diverse and most well known thinkers on these concepts.\textsuperscript{24}

According to Heller, the features of a pessimistic interpretation of Foucault include that subjects do not consciously or intentionally exercise power but are its “passive objects”; that because of this the formation of subjectivity is a homogeneous process; as power is all-determining, resistance is just a metaphysical principle; and that all power-relations involve subjection or domination and so “liberated power-relations cannot exist” (Heller, 1996: 78-9). Heller’s rebuttal of this interpretation is helpful to indicate how I aim to present the power/knowledge relation in the problem of colonial apprehension and also the epistemic and discursive reorientations of Indigenous resurgence. The pessimistic interpretation suggests power does not have a source against which to direct critique or judgement (and resistance). Yet for Foucault power is not self-generated, it does not exist outside of power-relations, which are imbued with intention, though not causally explainable or reducible to an individual subject (who is always also an object of power). As Heller points out the institutional and social changes and “political anatomy” like governmentality Foucault describes in his genealogies such as \emph{Discipline and Punish}, do involve the conscious aims and tactics of actors, though this may be articulated through “innumerable localized, intentionally-produced processes” (Heller, 1996: 81). There also may be a disjuncture between intentionality and effect or actions and their consequences, which are always contingent (87).

Power for Foucault is the medium for social change, a \textit{transformative} capacity the exercise of which is not inherently repressive, negative or positive. He did not wish to reify power as a thing that can be possessed (ie. by a dominant class), but did suggest that it can be differentially and asymmetrically organized in a society through structural or institutional mechanisms that enable greater control over its exercise by particular individuals or groups (Heller, 1996: 83-86).\textsuperscript{25} While not absolute or monolithic these mechanisms give processes of power consistency. Their specificity and regularities in a “given period, in a given field” can still be traced (and by implication, judged and located) through “lateral co-ordinations, hierarchical subordinations, isomorphic correspondences, technical identities or analogies, and chain effects”

\textsuperscript{24} These include Jurgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser, Charles Taylor, Anthony Giddens, Nicos Poulantzas and Peter Dews. With more flourish, Heller summates this interpretation as “power is repression; agency is a myth; subjectification is enslavement; resistance to power is futile; freedom is impossible” (Heller, 1996: 105).

\textsuperscript{25} See notes for Introduction to Chapters Two and Three on tactics and strategies in relation to power.
(Foucault, 2009: 2). He characterized such theoretical undertakings as an analysis of the “politics of truth” and that the role of this analysis is to show the “knowledge effects produced by the struggles” in societies (Foucault, 2009: 3).

As will unfold throughout the second half of the dissertation, I take this theoretical tracing or linking as important to accounting for liberatory transformations in power like those of Indigenous resurgence, as much as for those of domination like colonial apprehension - particularly the power in their discursivity, their storytelling or narrative practices. Indeed the Indigenous processes and principles of storying I will engage with delineate or define subjects and fields by connecting and relating, disrupting an assertion that all societies’ epistemes’ are produced through exclusion.

The interpretation that Foucault’s decentering of an unconditioned and autonomous Cartesian subject is either inherently or practically incompatible with an idea of liberatory subjectivity or the existence of non-hegemonic subject positions can be disputed. Heller points out this decentering does not indicate if, how and what kinds of subject positions and “subject-constructing discourses” might coexist and indeed contradict each other in a society or social formation (Heller, 1996: 94). While Foucault rejects the idea of an unconditioned independent subject, the formation of our subjectivities is not homogenous or singular, it is not determined only by a dominant subject wielding repressive power and so the “distillation of a single will” as Hobbes might have it (Foucault quoted in Heller, 1996: 94), but rather intersectional and heterogeneous. Crucially in Foucault’s model of power no group can ever render another “completely powerless” or direct the whole whether they are the “caste that governs,” “control the state apparatus” or “make the most important economic decisions,” and the mechanisms of power they use to dominate – such as discourses - are contestable and “liable to re-appropriation, reversibility, and re-utilization” (Foucault quoted in Heller, 1996: 101).

Foucault’s assertion that it is in “discourse where power and knowledge are joined together” gains a different intonation with an understanding of power as transformative capacity that can take on many forms, whether repressive, creative, resistive, or ambiguous. Yet questions remain that are important to my characterization of Indigenous resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations (of refiguration and refusal) and the connected methodological-ethical challenge to an accounting of them in scholarship. Can liberatory theories

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26 Heller uses this phrase to describe power and borrows it from Anthony Giddens.
of transformation “ever hope to escape the power/knowledge relation in non-repressive ways”? (Harvey quoted in Heller, 1996: 103); and can subjugated peoples speak-act *their* truth to those implicated in repressive power in a dominant domain of enunciation, which is also a regime of truth that demands subjugated peoples’ intelligibility within it?

I have found some recent corroboration to my thinking these questions of apprehension through concepts I came to with Fanon but have found elaboration with Foucault, in Daniele Lorenzini and Martina Tazzioli’s suggestion that both saw in the creative moment of processes of subjectification “the very core of the practices of freedom that subjugated subjects can enact in order to resist and contest the mechanisms of power trying to impose on them a certain identity as well as a definite conduct” (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018: 73). They describe how subjugating subject formation connected to a dominant regime of truth appears in several ways in Foucault. They frame these with his conception of the practice of “confession” as a technique of power, with an expectation of authenticity or injunctions to tell the truth of oneself being a current through the genealogy of Western epistemes. There is discursive subjectification, which they relate to interpellation by address, which is ‘assented to’ by response or speech-act. There is also objectification where ‘truth’ is *extracted* through one’s observation by the gaze and interpretation of another, as in clinical examinations (75). I have already imputed that Fanon’s racialized subjectification suggested both, and Lorenzini and Tazzioli call this the “interpellation-gaze.” However they emphasize objectification, where the Black man or the colonized is diagnosed as incapable of speaking or acting truthfully, as being deceitful or incoherent when they do speak or act (78-81).

Fanon indeed described his affective experience as a retreat from discursive exchange, as there can be no defense against the epidermal evidence, the evidence of his skin. There is a retreat and also an immobilization or imposed fixity. Lorenzini and Tazzioli suggest that the colonized’s “confession” in asymmetrical power relations is demanded to confirm (as an *admission*) the “reality of diagnostic categories” that serve to define them through classification and pathologize their conduct (82). It is in response to this demand that they suggest Fanon posits the space for resistance: when “the colonized refuses to behave and to conduct himself or herself in a way that is ‘readable’ and intelligible to the colonizer” (84). Lorenzini and Tazzioli emphasize that for Fanon while the immobility of racialized and colonial subjectification can be broken by a reactivity borne of resentment, this is not enough to move decolonization forward
(they associate refusing conduct with counter-violence in Fanon). Here is the connection with Foucault. In a 1984 interview shortly before his death, Foucault began to articulate a distinction between *processes of liberation* and *practices of freedom* that maintained his commitment to a decentered subjecthood and view of power relations as widespread and perpetual:

“I am not trying to say that liberation as such, or this or that form of liberation, does not exist: when a colonized people attempts to liberate itself from its colonizers, this is indeed a practice of liberation in the strict sense. But we know very well, and moreover in this specific case, that this practice of liberation is not in itself sufficient to define the practices of freedom that will still be needed if this people, this society, and these individuals are to be able to define admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society” (Foucault, 1997: 282-3).

Lorenzini and Tazzioli do not draw out the distinction Foucault makes between liberation from domination and freedom as the ethical practice of non-domination. This relates to how power as the capacity for transformation is engaged and so establishes a distinction with the colonizer’s practices. A condition of domination by one group over another occurs where the capacity to modify their power relationships has been immobilized as asymmetrical by economic, political or military means (Foucault, 1997: 283). As Heller put it, an egalitarian freedom between groups or individuals is for Foucault an allowance of or opening to, the “proliferation of possibility” for transformation, or fluidity in their power relationships (Heller, 1996: 104). This condition of freedom must be consistently and consciously maintained through conduct oriented to it, there is no final state of liberation: “Liberation paves the way for new power relationships, which must be controlled by practices of freedom” (Foucault, 1997: 283-4). Crucially Foucault defines ethics or ethical conduct as the reflexive practice of freedom as non-domination. Shifts in power relationships (structural or epistemic and discursive) allow different subjectivities to emerge and be articulable. Lorenzini and Tazzioli emphasize that in the resistive moment of the colonized’s refusal of intelligibility there is an escape from “the hold of diagnostic knowledge” (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018: 83). This refusal provides an opportunity not to free one’s truth as derived from an authentic or essential nature that has been repressed,
but to make space for an active subjectivity formed through counter-conduct that is neither subjection nor objectification.  

Here I can finally contextualize how these concepts have informed my thinking on Indigenous practices of resurgence as those of resistance and freedom. I owe much in this regard to conversations with Tully and his essay “The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples For and of Freedom,” which I first encountered nearly 15 years ago in the collection *Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, a book that on reflection now, influenced my academic path near the same time as *Wretched of the Earth* and another collection of mostly Indigenous writers, *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (Tully, 2008a & 2000; Ivison, Patton & Sanders, 2000; Battiste, 2000). The essay forwarded a characterization of Indigenous decolonial struggles that came to be named resurgence, as involving not only structural decolonization and direct practices of liberation but also the regeneration of Indigenous lifeworlds by reengaging alternative ways of knowing-being-doing as an exercising of “freedom of thought and action with the aim of modifying the system in the short term and transforming it from within in the long term” (Tully, 2000: 50). In Foucaultian terms these are practices for and of freedom that carry Indigenous definitions of “admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society,” both internally and with other societies, and so reproduce or *refigure* alternative subjectivities, socialities and knowledge systems. Taiaiake Alfred would articulate this within the discourse of resurgence in one of its initilazing scholarly texts *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways to Action and Freedom* (2005). As I spoke to in Chapter One, a problem of temporality I found in Fanon’s Marxist-humanist discourse of revolutionary transformation made it less resonant with resurgence for me than refigrative practices of freedom, which bears reiterating with the context I have established in this chapter thus far.

As Lorenzini and Tazzioli stress, Fanon emphasized the need to gain structural independence as a dialectical “precondition” for the founding of a *new* society and universal subjechthood (a “New Man”). Asserting that decolonial practices must unfold in a linear sequence and result in a new and singular universal subjechhood is problematic to Indigenous struggles in settler-colonial contexts. In settler-states such as Canada, complete structural independence for Indigenous nations may be deemed impossible or undesirable, and then decolonial

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27 It should be noted that they suggest that Foucault calls this third form subjectivation (the French spelling for subjectification). In my reading of Foucault all modes of subject formation through power relations whether dominating or not are referred to as subjectification.
transformation is an aporetic idea, where the ‘success’ of the struggle is a foregone conclusion. Resurgence involves rebuilding spaces of self-determination through practices that do not attempt to prefigure a state of independence on an anti-colonial model but actively refigure or transform conditions of freedom for Indigenous peoples. These are not what Lorenzini and Tazzioli call “new ways of life” with practices involving the “invention of social values” and “experimentation of new forms” of subjectivity with “no pre-established model” and emerging from the specificity of colonial conditions (85). Resurgence does not privilege the colonial relation nor condition as one of irreparable damage to pre-existing ways of life (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005) and while the source of traditional practices that regenerate alternative (and diverse) subjectivities is not an authentic Indigeneity that is to be recovered, these practices have never been static or closed. While for Fanon decolonization could not result in the liberation of the Black man or Native, as these are deemed a construction of a racialized and colonial subjectification or “interpellation-gaze,” resurgence enacts Indigenous freedoms.

Indigenous peoples are absolutely embedded in a state of domination that impacts the ability for their own ways of knowing and being (their transforming power) to emerge fully or be articulated as intelligible in their own lands, to everyone. For example, a colonial subject/objecthood as Native partly constituted through discursive practices of exclusion can emerge more fully than a Lekwungen Coast Salish subjectivity constituted by relationships denoting nationhood in many settler-dominated spaces here in present Victoria, British Columbia. However as Todd May reminds, unlike the colonial Native/Colonizer duality Fanon saw as totalizing, Foucault’s conception of subjectification does “not arise solely along one register or in conformity with a single type of power arrangement” and so neither can resistance to a dominating form. Therefore “politics is both subtler and more widespread than it would be in a Marxist or liberal model” (May, 2014: 497-8). This also indicates the potential presence of other ways of knowing and being, though they may be subjugated. Forwarding a decentred,

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28 U.S. theorist Kevin Bruyneel has suggested a concept of decolonization in settler-colonial contexts must reject the liberal rights framework of state efforts at Indigenous peoples’ domestication but so too a nationalist anti-colonial agenda of liberation as a false dichotomy. Rather he sees the seeming contradiction in both a demand for rights or resources and challenge to colonial imposition in U.S. tribal politics as effectually contesting the state’s limits on their self-determination, seeking to “secure and expand their tribal expression” across them (Bruyneel, 2007: xv). He sees in this the manifestation of a “third space of sovereignty” compatible with settler sovereignty yet “inassimilable to the institutions and discourse of the modern liberal democratic settler-state and nation” (Bruyneel, 2007: xvii). What this might look like in practice is likely diverse. In Canada revitalizing treaty relations as a possible answer to settlers “being here to stay” is a prominent line of thought on the possibility for such third spaces (see Asch, 2014). For the range of delimiting and domesticating arguments against Indigenous decolonization, see Tully, 2000: 54-8.
multiple and relational understanding of intersubjectivity and suggesting discursive domination has a material reality does not negate a political principle of self-determination nor the need for practices of liberation “in the strict sense” to dismantle structures of domination. Here I make a distinction between practices of decolonization/liberation and the active decoloniality of practices of freedom as non-domination. These are alternative modes of relationality, which in Indigenous traditions are often premised in understandings of fundamental intersubjectivity and interdependence.

Finally, I also part from the notion that refusal, as Lorenzini and Tazzioli characterize it, is part of a merely reactive ‘stage’ of dialectical oppositionalism, “the first and unavoidable step of an effective process of decolonization” (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018: 84).\(^{29}\) Rather I aim to suggest it is likely an ongoing practice (both discursive and embodied) of avoiding the closures of apprehension and holding spaces for freedom; following Foucault that balanced power relations must be constantly sustained and negotiated with no end state of perfect reconciliatory unity or mutual understanding. Liberation is fragile, contingent and can fail, though not permanently. As the late cultural theorist Stuart Hall suggested, this suggests a politics without guarantees. This is not to be pessimistic but remain accountable. The idea of ethical conduct as reflexive practice intentioned to be non-dominating is important to consider the kinds of ongoing transformations or effects we aim to and do initiate (as these do not always follow from each other). Such mindfulness is important to practices of resurgence on the ground but also to modelling and respecting its epistemic and discursive reorientations in a critical yet ethical scholarship that always involves the exercise of judgment, which may not be correct and may cause harm.

Following the broader conceptual location and theoretical groundwork of Part One, I will transition here to Part Two, which unpacks how I initially saw the problem of colonial apprehension as one of dependency for Indigenous peoples more specifically in regard to political discourse as a hegemonic field of enunciation. This contextualizes how I came to see the problem otherwise.

\(^{29}\) While Lorenzini and Tazzioli are right that Foucault also suggests liberation “paves the way” for different power-relations he does not share Fanon’s commitment to teleology and this different power relationship (and so subjectivities) are not necessarily unprecedented.
“Is this use of ‘nationhood’ in political circles and mainstream media a symbolic and semantic indulgence? Or is it some form of historical residue, a marker of colonialism's simultaneous beginning, end or continued life? Is ‘indigenous nationhood’ merely a perversion of signs and simultaneity rather than a set of concrete political objectives that are attached to collective experience? Is the notion of an Indian or indigenous nationhood merely a vagary of colonialism's living consciousness? Is its use in Canada among Indian peoples and Canadian intellectuals a curious case of appeasement? Is it an innocuous form of tolerance that precludes or sidesteps serious conversations and settlements regarding land?

As a concept and a practice, indigenous nationhood is not an exercise in liberal appeasement nor an exercise in indigenous cultural invention” (A. Simpson, 2000: 115).

Walter Mignolo has suggested that “dependency at large is the basic strategy in the exercise of colonially of power” structurally, discursively and epistemically (Mignolo, 2008: 230). This is an eminently apt summation of the shift in how I conceived the ‘problem of colonial apprehension’ as one for Indigenous peoples: from assuming or assenting to a political position and subjectification of post-colonization dependency, to seeing the production of an idea of dependency as a colonial strategy that needed to be disrupted. When I thought apprehension as a problem of dependency, the implications flooded through a nexus of the philosophical, political, discursive, material, linguistic, experiential and psychological. These converged in my perception of a hegemonic realm of enunciation and appearance for Indigenous peoples, particularly in political discourse oriented to making claims of the colonial state as the arbiter of rights and title. The range of questions Audra Simpson listed above before her response whirled through my mind at each use of a ‘loaded word’ such as nation. When the “first condition” of all effectual communication is intelligibility, for our speech-acts to convey “an interpretable meaning” (Dussel, 1996: 24), that we can only be known and make ourselves known in the language and for the gaze of the colonizer, seemed a despairing proposition.
Compelled to concede to our apprehension by necessity, locked in the Master’s house by structural relations of domination, from which there could be no escape but to ask for our emancipation, to dress in the Master’s clothes and fool them into our release, to steal their tools to break open the door and flee etc. To return to the manifold definition I presented in the Introduction to these chapters, the problem of apprehension was the requirement for Indigenous life and lives to be apprehensible, to consider how we are made discernable/identifiable, allowing us to be understandable/knowable, which can allow us to make political claims but also facilitates our capture/control/governability, created in me a definite anxiety about our capacity for epistemic and discursive liberation, never mind structural. I was engrossed with reconciling a forceful but sometimes reactionary and essentializing rhetoric of decolonizing the mind as the extrication of invasive foreign influences toward a liberated state of self-sufficiency, and an experience of heterogeneity, flux, openness and vitality in Indigenous intellectual traditions. I did not adequately consider how the coloniality of power paints hegemonic horizons of perceptibility and permissibility as false limit conditions within which to enact and articulate Indigenous subjectivities, practices of liberation and freedom.\(^{30}\)

One of the greatest provocations to my thinking came from the argument by Vine Deloria Jr. that to make a struggle for intellectual decolonization or sovereignty a preoccupation for Indigenous peoples is a distraction tantamount to tilting at “windmills in our minds.”\(^{31}\) He suggested that terms such as self-determination and sovereignty had once been taken up politically in “a context in which they had specific meanings and from which, when the opposition agreed to their meanings, changes and benefits then flowed” (Deloria Jr., 1998: 25). He expressed pragmatic concern at Indigenous intellectuals’ increasing abstraction of Indigenous peoples’ struggles by focusing on conceptual barriers such as hegemony and colonialism itself, that this was pulling energy from material problems such as land loss. Deloria Jr. took particular issue with individualist notions of self-determination that alienate scholars from their

\(^{30}\) In an unpublished 2009 course paper entitled “Decolonization as Aporia, or Windmills in the Mind?: The Challenge of Indigenous Intellectual Self-Determination,” I considered my aim was to “attempt to affirm the importance of an idea of Indigenous intellectual self-determination in regard to discourses of liberation, if we are still committed to the prospect of decolonization and Indigenous freedom.”

\(^{31}\) At this juncture in the late 1990s debates on who had the right to contribute to the formation of the field of Indigenous studies was in the U.S. especially couched in the language of intellectual sovereignty and critiqued as essentializing “insiderism.” Deloria Jr. was critical of its proponents such as Elizabeth Cook-Lynn despite his role in path-finding for such projects (see Howe, 2013: 110-1; Turner, 2006: 105-6). For a defence of insider/outsider distinctions in research see Innes, 2009.
communities and the responsibilities that sustained tribal societies. In the midst of his scathing rebuttal was a call to take seriously and have confidence in the resilience of Indigenous intellectual traditions. In this way and somewhat ironically, Deloria Jr.’s body of work has itself been considered to offer an opening for the declaration and exercise of “intellectual sovereignty” in shaping struggles for liberation and of freedom. Robert Warrior suggested this opening is in the rejection of the “death dance of dependence” – the dichotomous choice between an insular and essentialist culturalism and abandonment to the categories of Euro-Modern thought - and the affirmation of Indigenous transformative power as individuals and communities. Warrior forwarded that for Indigenous scholars a declaration of intellectual liberation or self-determination is a decision, the committal to a praxis or way of life that does not set out to “define a political ideology” or have “detached discussion about the unifying structures and essences” of Indigenous intellectual traditions, but to have their work “grow from the same landscape” as that of their peoples (Warrior, 1995: 123-4).

The rest of this chapter will consider the forcefulness of a demand to be intelligible in the normative terms of the dominant political rationality, to convey agreed-upon and “interpretable meanings” for concepts such as nationhood and sovereignty, against a possibility that the resurgent and liberatory discursive and epistemic landscapes of Indigenous peoples challenge these terms fundamentally and may not be communicable within them.

“Derivative Discourse” and “Epistemological Dependency”

“Today, when 'Westernization' has become a pejorative word, there have reappeared on the stage subtler and more sophisticated means of acculturation. They produce not merely models of conformity but also models of ‘official’ dissent. It is possible today to be anti-colonial in a way which is specified and promoted by the modern world view as ‘proper,’ ‘sane’ and ‘rational.’ Even when in opposition, that dissent remains predictable and controlled. It is also possible today to opt for a non-West which itself is a construction of the West” (Nandy, 2009: xii).

Indian Subaltern Studies historian Partha Chatterjee used the phrase “derivative discourse” in identifying how modernizing yet anti-colonial nationalism affects a contradiction in asserting independence from European domination, while appearing trapped by an imposed
Euro-Modern political rationality (Chatterjee, 1986). This is a concern that has been expressed by many (including Fanon) regarding the revolutionary potential of national consciousness. Specifically, in regard to pursuing processes of liberation involving a dialectical reversal of the discourses that have subjugated colonized peoples without a fundamental shift in values or articulation of an alternative decolonial form of life to follow, and so remaining structured by the kind of power relations ostensibly being sought to repudiate. While seeing non-Western and anti-colonial iterations of nationalism as absolutely displacing aspects of the Euro-modern political rationality (through elements of traditionalism for example), Chatterjee points to how ruling classes have appropriated it as an ideology that ossifies statist institutions in ways that benefit them regardless if they fully capture it in actuality. This is a critique that has been prevalent in debates on Indigenous political discourse here, more recently between a recognition politics deferring to a co-optive colonial status quo in contrast to prefigurative or refigurative politics and resurgence as Coulthard and Alfred have argued.

While I have addressed this to a degree already, I want to specifically address the notion of Indigenous peoples’ political discourse as derivative. That is, I am not interested here in assessing the substance of this discourse for levels of external influence or defending Indigenous sovereignty and nationalism’s difference, but the apprehensive coloniality in the notion of derivativeness itself. Whether a conscious and strategic appropriation of imposed discursive terms or not, the imputation of intellectual and not only structural dependency, can prove to be a distraction as Vine Deloria Jr. suggested - especially when this seems to deny an Indigenous capacity to exceed colonial modes of subjectification even in their approaches to liberation and so ‘fully’ decolonize.

What Foucault called juridicial forms of power such as statist sovereignty, continues to inform colonial techniques of government seeking to subdue and contain Indigenous peoples’ resistance to their dissolution as societies and polities. That is, despite the shift to

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governmentality as a form of power in the West.\textsuperscript{33} This is important to appreciate the specific and layered discursive pressures of settler-colonial contexts that have given recognition politics a forcefulness that cannot be underestimated. While land remains the “essential value” to Indigenous peoples in settler-colonial contexts, imperviousness to emulating “white values” as Fanon asserted of the Algerians (Fanon, 2004: 9), is a more complex proposition with this form of occupation. Indigenous peoples are here expected to articulate rights and title within an asymmetrical domain of enunciation that defers to Euro-Modern conceptions of political power as dominion and peace as order, that may conflict with or indeed be antithetical to Indigenous models of action and freedom, a concern expressed by Alfred.\textsuperscript{34} Yet arguments for the utility of sovereignty discourse especially are generally couched in its necessity for a “national existence” centered on self-preservation (Alfred, 2005a: 135), and so an assumption of the need to render Indigenous claims to land and life intelligible within a state system still premised in indivisible territorial and decisional integrity and autonomy (despite neoliberal globalization). While narratives of a single and hegemonic settler sovereignty that Indigenous sovereignty and self-government must then be reconciled with are mythological, Alfred acknowledges the forcefulness in how the idea has “nevertheless limited the ways we are able to think, suggesting always a conceptual and definitional problem centered on the accommodation of indigenous peoples within a “legitimate” framework of settler state governance” and that when “we step outside this discourse, we confront a different problematic, that of the state’s “sovereignty” itself, and its actual meaning in contrast to the facts and the potential that exists for a nation-to-nation relationship” (Alfred, 2005b: 34-5).

Annishnaabe political theorist Dale Turner has depicted this discursive and political problematic as Indigenous peoples being made to “explain themselves within the discourses of the dominant culture,” using the “normative political” conceptual language of rights, nationhood and sovereignty (Turner, 2006: 73 emphasis mine). This language shapes the contours of “intellectual landscapes” that have not only been imposed on those of Indigenous peoples and the land itself, but have “subjugated, distorted and marginalized” them (Turner, 2006: 88). Nevertheless he asserts that it remains a defensive necessity, arising and so specifically pertinent to power relations with the settler-state and society. Sovereignty is normatively necessary

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{33} For a treatment of Indigenous peoples in Western legal thought see Robert Williams (Lumbee) \textit{The American Indian in Western Legal Thought} (1990).
\end{footnotes}
according to Turner because “Aboriginal peoples assert it, constitutions recognize it, comprehensive and specific land claims are negotiated because of it, and public policies have been designed and implemented to undermine it” (69 also 81).\(^{35}\) The structural materialities of colonial juridical power relations Turner points to, and the discursive and epistemic conflict with Indigenous conceptions of political life Alfred points to, are certainly everywhere to be seen and heard. For example, advisor anthropologist to the Coast Salish Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group Brian Thom has suggested the “seeming paradox in the notion of representing cartographic boundaries” as “discrete, mutually exclusive units” for an “indigenous community whose core social relationships are embedded in a moral ethos of borderless kin networks...[and whose] territorial relations are underwritten by a relational epistemology - a way of knowing the world through relationships” (Thom, 2009: 179). Yet here the structural decolonizing prospects for a “declaration of interdependence” to counter the settler-state’s unilateral assertion of sovereignty (Borrows, 2002) has unsure footing to say the least.\(^{36}\) Thom’s observation cues a more insidious issue in regard to a preoccupation with the apparent problematic of Indigenous dependency, which is ‘cultural’ difference taken as the basis for external assessment of political difference.

Lenape scholar Joanne Barker suggests that rather than having a fundamental association with ‘Western’ values or Euro-modernization, for many Indigenous thinkers, particularly in the U.S. context from which she speaks, sovereignty “emanates from the unique identity and culture of peoples and is therefore an inherent and inalienable right of peoples to the qualities customarily associated with nations” (Barker, 2005: 3 emphasis mine). This is a characterization others like Deloria Jr. name self-determination rather than sovereignty (Alfred, 2005b: 42) as I do also. The extent of ‘legitimate entitlement’ to the political qualities Barker refers to, is nevertheless tied to acknowledgement by other polities of a comparative like-status gleaned through identifiers of distinct peoplehood of a similar kind. Yet this dynamic has been a trap for Indigenous peoples in seeking recognition of self-determining nationhood status itself (akin to

\(^{35}\) Alfred outlines the standard colonial strategies within this normativity and its narratives of preeminent settler sovereignty that Indigenous people must respond to as the outright denial of the existence of Indigenous rights and title, theoretical acceptance of them as historical but extinguished and most intransigently as existing but domesticated – that is contingent on state law. The most prevalent counter-strategies have been asserting prior and coexisting sovereignties and a right of self determination in international law, all of which are in a sense deferent to dependency (Alfred, 2005b: 36-7).

\(^{36}\) Turner points out of John Borrows’ emphasis on the integration of Indigenous law and legal practices into Canadian constitutionalism here to remake it falters when the legitimacy of Indigenous ways of knowing as alternatives remains unrecognized (Turner, 2006: 111).
the settler state’s sovereign authority) as this has been seen to contradict depoliticized ethnocultural characteristics of Native difference ascribed to them. This narrative has been evident in land claims and self-government negotiations and particularly the conception of Aboriginal rights within Canadian jurisprudence, to be contained to parcels of “distinctive” practices. In this logic, sovereignty is not deemed a *sui generis* self-emerging and inherent power of peoples that includes *self-definition*, but indicates a transformation away from an essential or primordial Nativeness.

The problem of apprehension as one of Indigenous discursive and political dependency assessed culturally, presents what myself and others have characterized as an impossible choice between “cultural pain and political gain” (Lynes, 2002), an “inescapable double bind in seeking renewed self-rule, in that the effective political clout needed to ‘decolonise’ by way of asserting sovereignty may only be achieved by losing cultural authenticity, so submitting ever more to cultural and psychological colonialism” (Howe, 2013: 113). As a “double-bind that plagues representations of non-Westerners, in which cultural difference is denounced as exotization and likeness as an imposition of Western rationality” (Lamana, 2009: 6), this is a perceived tradeoff that is certainly not unique to Indigenous peoples in settler-states. What is most pressing is its normativity seemingly locking Indigenous peoples’ self-representations in a colonially subjectifying “prison of culture” far from only (mis) representational as Said was most concerned of discursive domination (Murphy, 2009).

As many critics of colonial juridical power’s extension over Indigenous nations have attested, the idea of cultural discontinuity and its link to constitutional extinguishment has been crucial to mythologizing narratives of sovereign domination (see Tully: 1995: 124-9). Yet the idea has had purchase enough to make suggestions of philosophical and ethical incompatibilities or issues of articulation in the dominant Euro-modern discursive domain, susceptible to being

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37 In the *Van der Peet* decision on Aboriginal rights, following the first step of establishing that a particular practice is integral to and continuant with a pre-colonial distinctive culture, it must be “rendered cognizable to the non-Aboriginal legal system” (Barsh & Henderson, 1996: 998) – and though in the SCC *Delgamuukw* decision on title the standing of oral histories was recognized, infringement can be consistent with the State’s objective of “the reconciliation of Aboriginal pre-occupation with the assertion of Crown sovereignty” (quoted in Borrows, 1999: 567). For more on the “distinctive culture test” see Barsh & Henderson, 1997; Borrows, 1997 & 1999; Asch, 1999; Murphy, 2001a, 2001b, 2004 and 2009.

38 I have elsewhere indicated this as the “double-bind of recognition.” On the general predilection for recognition politics to “bind” as well as alternatives to its conception of identity-centered justice and liberation in the Western tradition see Patchen Markell’s *Bound By Recognition* (2003). In regard to liberal multiculturalism and Indigenous authenticity in the Australian context see Elizabeth Povinelli’s *The Cunning of Recognition* (2002).
arrogated to political arguments seeking to denounce the capacity for decolonization. That is, these suggestions can be erroneously or maliciously taken as accepting a historicized culturalism that immobilizes and insulates Indigenous lifeways and intellectual traditions. While working on my MA thesis years ago, I came upon the phrase “epistemological dependency” used by Canadian political scientist Douglas West to refer to the condition in which Indigenous peoples must “describe their cultural and political uniqueness” (West, 1995: 280), which now strikes me as more dangerous than “derivative discourse” in this regard. The sense of peril this induces in me has shifted however. Once, I sensed the danger was in floundering on a slippery slope toward considering concepts of liberation and freedom indispensible to decoloniality (like the nation), as themselves logocentrically couched in Euro-Modern political subjectivities derived from the Euro-Modern episteme. If even engaging these concepts may always be determined to reflect a basic dependency, this implies a kind of vicious regress in which the problem is continuously reintroduced in the solution – in a word, an aporia. I was also preoccupied with the risks of conflating the cogency (or merely clout) of a postmodern decentering of the autonomous subject, and its alignments with Indigenous theories of intersubjectivity, with a foreclosure on certain kinds of political argumentation around bounded collective subjectivity as peoples. Now I consider this an example of the insidiousness of coloniality affecting an anxiety in colonized intellectuals (not traditional Indigenous philosophers), with its pretensions to hegemony, to have contention and alternatives retooled as acquiescence and appropriation.

As a critic of sovereignty, Alfred does not deny the forcefulness of the normative political rationality in settler-states nor the inroads that both legal and cultural sovereignty discourse has made. He does question an assumption of the inability for a reorientation to what Coulthard and Leanne Simpson call Indigenous peoples’ own “grounded normativities” as the primary conceptual resources for understanding and articulating processes of liberation and the governing practices of the “postcolonial systems” they should model (Alfred, 2005b: 39). For Alfred deferring to the problematic of structural asymmetries produces disunity between Indigenous peoples’ core relational values on respectful coexistence (balance - between human people and with the land for example), and what is perceived to be pragmatic or expedient adaptation. This leads to discursive inconsistencies that the settler-state has exploited in judicial

39 Alfred acknowledges the investment in these variations of the discourse in the U.S. particularly, with federal designation of tribes as ‘domestic dependent nations’ or ‘nations within’ (Alfred, 2005b: 35-6; see also Deloria Jr. & Lytle, 1998).
and negotiating contexts, and contributes to “alienation and political fatigue” in Indigenous communities (41-2). He sees this deference as defeatist participation in the myth that Indigenous peoples do not pose a fundamental challenge to the doctrine of sovereign dominion as model of political power (44-5), nor have the capacity and resources to imagine a “post-sovereign future.” Following Deloria Jr. Alfred’s intercession here is that rather than an aporetic state of hegemony, discursive and epistemic dependency is foremost a problem of colonial “mentality” which is not totalizing. Certain colonial limit conditions on our political and intellectual imagination can be seen for what they are – “false horizons” - while appreciating the ongoing structural constraints on transforming the power dynamics between Indigenous peoples and settler-state and society (Borrows, 2016: 129). The latter can absolutely prevent the reemergence of spaces of Indigenous freedom, and thus practices that address both epistemic and discursive domination, as well as structural asymmetries are crucial to decolonization, and both will be a struggle.

In his most recent monograph *Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism* (2016), John Borrows considers Indigenous pathways to freedom in this regard, with freedom (*dibenindizowin*) in Anishnaabe intellectual tradition understood not as an “independent state of being in the world” (129) and more than the “absence of coercion and constraint,” but also the ability to “choose, create, resist, reject and change laws and policies that affect your life” cooperatively with others (Borrows, 2016: 12). Freedom is then connected inextricably to the

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40 Ashis Nandy makes a number of observations very similar to Alfred’s in this piece (2005b). One, that there is little engagement in Indian political discourse around Westernization “with what is commonly believed to be the traditional Indian definitions of state, political authority, or political leadership” (Nandy, 1997: 224) and that many Indian thinkers have attempted to establish that Indian societies had all of the “prerequisites” for a modern state that once “rediscovered and revalued” would dissolve the contradictions between their traditions and Euro-modernity (227). And on futurity: “It is a remarkable feature of our times that so many individuals and collectivities are willing and even eager to forego their right to design their own futures. Some societies do not any longer have a workable concept of the future. They have a past, a present and someone else’s present as their future” (Nandy, 1989: 264).

41 Borrows similarly notes this distinction in acknowledging real limits on individual and community life but also how teachings from Indigenous intellectual traditions can “vigorously challenge and overturn ideas and practices that are not ‘real’ limits” (Borrows, 2016: 9). He helpfully quotes James Tully on the notion of such limit conditions in regard to subjectification:

A ‘limit’ can mean either the characteristic forms of thought and action that are taken for granted and not questioned or contested by participants in a practice of subjectivity, thereby functioning as the implicit background or horizon of their questions and contests, or it can mean that a form of subjectivity (its form of reason, norms of conduct and so forth) is explicitly claimed to be a limit that cannot be otherwise because it is universal, necessary or obligatory (the standard form of legitimization since the Enlightenment)...Humans can develop the capacities of thought and action to question and contest both types…” (Tully quoted in Borrows, 2016: 219 at note 36).

42 Alfred suggests similarly:
cultivation of a good life (*mino-bimaadiziwin*), conceptions of which are formed contextually and relationally, consistently revised and contested in interpretation rather than expressing absolute truths (11). Crucial for Borrows, is to consider Indigenous traditions as living and dynamic *practices*, which he considers through the notion of the “mobility” of their grounds against “originalism,” as an example of the “ordinal structuring of thought and action” (129) prevalent in Euro-Modern epistemologies - and the theories of resistance and decolonization informed by them I have taken issue with.

With the phrase “epistemological dependency” West was questioning the extent to which ostensibly Euro-Modern “forms” may be “filled by Native substance” (West, 1995: 289), but in a way that appears to replicate an “originalist” frame of classificatory culturalist thinking as Borrows sets out. I will address this formalism further in Chapters Three and Four, but it will suffice here to say that West’s concern is not the same as the caution regarding means and ends forwarded by Indigenous thinkers on resurgence and critics of sovereignty such as Alfred. They take seriously the transformative and (re) subjectifying power in the *form* of decolonial discourse and action – ways of communicating and doing - to refigure the *substance* of the condition of freedom sought. That is, as constituted by ethical practices of non-domination that can be enacted now, not just reserved for a post-liberation future. What Alfred rejects with his conception of traditionalism (and not uniquely among Indigenous theorists), is the successful epistemicide of the resilient and vibrant, the *survivant* “spirit and consciousness” of Indigenous social and political forms, the resurgence of which is “explosive in its potential to transform individuals and communities by altering conceptions of the self and the self in relation to other peoples and the world” (2005a: 131).43

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43 Though it is not uncommon to see the regeneration of Indigenous knowledges from colonial losses referred to as a process of “recovering” (see Warrior, 1995; Doxtator, 2004; Waziyatwain, 2004a & 2004b, L. Simpson, 2004), Alfred objects to the terminology of “recovery” rather than resurgence (Alfred: 2005a, 130). This objection is in emphasizing what Nandy calls a “traumata of uprootedness” in historicized readings of the past (Nandy, 1997: 238).
So, in the journey to and through my dissertation project, I had long been worrying about hegemony, the extent to which colonialism as an “intimate enemy” extended from the external governing of bodies to the internal governing of minds, where the apprehensiveness of Euro-Modernity captures its dissent and makes resistance in its terms another iteration of its “drive for mastery” (Nandy, 2009: x-xi). I like another of my influences Ashis Nandy, once wondered on whether “conventional anti-colonialism” such as Fanon’s was in this case an “apologia for the colonization of minds,” in the same instance as a violent denunciation of Euro-Modernity and colonial consciousness (xi), indeed because of this violence. Theories of dialectical anti-colonial resistance can be critiqued for privileging the oppositional binaries created by colonial relationality (see Alfred 2005a: 130), and can be assessed as inappropriate to describe resurgence, as I maintain. However taking up a universalizing anti-colonialism is not the result of a colonized mind subconsciously shaped by a single totalizing hegemony. The colonial mentality at issue is not one of cognition but the idea of dependency, promulgated to obscure the failures of colonial power/knowledge to homogenization and epistemicide. In the words of Kanien’kehaka scholar T’hohahoken Michael Doxtator, this pretense is to privilege the “master-narrative” of a “Western knowledge fiduciary acting as guardian over its Indigenous knowledge ward” (Doxtator, 2004: 618). Fanon perceived the destruction of Indigenous traditions’ transformative power as having been realized in dealing with the viscerally embodied realities of domination in Algeria, but Indigenous political imaginations and forms of subjectification were not destroyed.44 The implications of this, questions of their necessary disclosure to others as have come to inform my thinking on the problem of colonial apprehension for especially critical political theory as ethical and methodological.

In taking a stand on the continuity of Indigenous imaginations and subjectivities, I have come to consider that decolonial discursive and epistemic struggles are contending a colonial “dominance without hegemony.” This is a phrase used by Subaltern Studies scholar Ranajit Guha in discussing British colonialism’s claim to dominance in India as reliant on coercion, but without achieving an assimilative hegemony existent in Britain, inhibiting the “homogenization

44 Laura Hengehold suggests that subjugated peoples may not always appreciate “unexpected capacities for action,” with a sense of innate limitation on their political imaginations imposed “by the power relations vested in their bodies – the most real thing they know” (Hengehold, 2007: 12, 11).
of the domain of politics” in the colonial state (Guha, 1997: 72). Guha’s distinction on the form of power at work in the Indian context is not directly transferable to settler-colonial states that operate on both coercive juridical forms of power such as sovereignty and also governmentality. Nevertheless, I have found the concept helpful, first thinking it in conjunction with accounts of subversive Indigenous praxis by one of my former instructors and early intellectual influences, Marxist anthropologist Peter Kulchyski who I introduced in Chapter One. Like the critics of an anti-colonial fixation on opposition, he stresses the need to continually examine both domination and its subversion, “because a theory that focuses exclusively on the former falls prey to a reinscription of the very power it seeks to critique through a reification of that power” (Kulchyski, 1992: 173; see also Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 601).

Kulchyski is interested in asserting the coexistence of Indigenous with capitalist modes of production and exchange (for example gift economies), despite colonial-capitalist efforts to totalization (see Kulchyski, 1992, 1997, 2005, 2016). As I will consider further in the next chapter, these efforts involve strategies and logics of dispossession and domination by excluding, expelling, marginalizing and silencing difference, as well as by appropriation, attempting to “manage, assimilate, absorb and subsume” difference. Both operate in colonial relations with Indigenous peoples, though there has been a ‘postmodern’ shift to an increasing predominance of dispossession by appropriation. As a Marxist, Kulchyski emphasizes appropriation by commodification (Kulchyski, 1992: 175; 1997: 615-6). In regard to so-called ‘cultural’ production (products and practice - which has been divisively categorized by mainstream anthropology as material, intellectual, social, linguistic etc.), he argues appropriation and subversion as “two sides of the same coin.” Appropriation denoting dominant groups’ deployment of dominated groups’ ‘cultural’ production for their own interests, and subversion as the opposite (Kulchyski, 1997: 614).

Kulchyski’s characterization of appropriation/subversion suggests the unsettling potential in practices that transgress designations to cultural categories or types, and also the possibility of transforming dominant modes of knowledge production and exchange without assimilating to them (while mindful of means and ends). I will speak to these potentialities more in coming chapters. Here I want to focus on how following an affirmation by thinkers on resurgence of a reorientation to Indigenous ways of knowing-being-doing to lead decolonial discourse and practices, still confronts the demand for intelligibility by and to settler-state and society, a
communicability tied to legitimacy. There is then the subsequent need to consider the potential of subversion and decolonial transformation by inclusion, against the risk of appropriation in a context of struggle and domain of enunciation marked by structural power asymmetries. This becomes particularly important to consider the role of scholarly accounts of resurgence activities and the traditional knowledges and practices of self-determination they are regenerating.

It is apt to return once again to Foucault to outline the issue of historicizing accounts of subversive struggles and asserting the continuity and regeneration of alternative knowledge practices. In a 1976 lecture in the series at the Collège de France, he spoke to the “returns” and “insurrections” of what he termed “subjugated knowledges” in two senses. In the first sense he was referring to the situated “historical contents that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systematizations,” whose existence had been revealed through meticulous scholarly critique. Here we can point to the ‘disclosure’ or revelation of coloniality for example as an “implicate order” (Simpson, 2011). In the second sense subjugated knowledges are:

“a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity. And it is thanks to the reappearance of these knowledges from below, of these unqualified or even disqualified knowledges…it is the reappearance of what people know at a local level, of these disqualified knowledges, that made the critique possible” (Foucault, 2003: 6-7).

Here Foucault was suggesting that the forms of power/knowledge at work to install the Euro-Modern episteme and its orders of discourse and processes of subjectification as dominant have not been totalizing nor obliterated other forms, but indicate persistent struggles against the “the tyranny of overall discourses.” Indeed that it has been the people “local” to these knowledges - expressing “what people know,” their “raw memory of fights” - that have allowed the scholarly critique of the masked historical logics he describes in the first sense.45 He proposes his genealogical method as one of theoretical linking, coupling these and so allowing “us to constitute a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of that knowledge in

45 Foucault clarifies what he means by “local”: “this is by no means the same thing as common knowledge or common sense but, on the contrary, a particular knowledge that is local, regional, or differential, incapable of unanimity and which derives its power solely from the fact that it is different from all the knowledges that surround it” (Foucault, 2003:7-8).
contemporary tactics” (Foucault, 2003: 8). This tactical political imperative to make accounts of knowledge struggles and then also the subjugated knowledges themselves is an important one, though it comes at the risk of their appropriation to the dominant by attempting to articulate them in unequal domains of enunciation, in which they may not be entirely capable of emerging as intelligible on their own terms.

The issue of emergence as intelligible in dominant domains of enunciation can be considered in regard to Foucault’s difficulties in his own early genealogical work, *History of Madness/Madness and Civilization* (1961). In the 1970 lecture at the Collège “Order of Discourse” that I have already spoken to at length, he was interested in considering the assignation of some as being outside the normative limits of most discursive exchanges, that the mad person is one who cannot be comprehended by their reason, that they make “unassimilable statements” (Foucault, 1981: 64). Robert Young has suggested that with *History of Madness*, Foucault faced a difficulty in avoiding “repeating the habitual exclusion of madness by making it once again the object of analysis, without ever allowing the disclosure of its own voice.” In attempting to retrieve or hear this voice or indeed “silence” he became consigned that “finding its form of discourse elsewhere was impossible” (Young, 1981: 48). This is because the mad person as Foucault approached them (and arguably as Said approached the Orient), was only as a subjugated Other, an oppositional construct of the normativity they were defined against, an alterity without an independent existence that was being excluded. Here Young suggested that Foucault came to consider that discourse, as an unstable transmitter of transformative power, is “not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it any more than silences are” (Young, 1981: 50). Yet can the subjects producing/produced by non-subservient discourse (and indeed silences) be communicated effectively to those structurally installed as dominant?

The problem of a desire to speak for and interpret the madwoman or “hysteric” was famously extended by Gayatri Spivak to the colonial desire to do so for the subaltern subject, contending in a Marxian vein that both are iterations of the same patriarchal, ideological formation (Spivak, 1994). Spivak’s exemplary subaltern subjects are those produced as “the third world woman,” whose own distinct voices and speech-acts are muted and distorted by this formation’s rules of enunciation. In terms of their ability to fully emerge in conditions of domination and speak their truths to power, specifically through scholarly attempts at alternative historiographies, Spivak was cautious. While for Spivak their own utterances could here not
“escape ideology” as bound up in the discourse of History for instance, and be an absolute “truth of the women who uttered them,” they could at least express the instability Foucault came to acknowledge (Morris, 2010: 3). Spivak’s intervention raised challenging questions on the conditions for subjugated knowledges’ audibility and legibility within discursive formations that have operated to subjugate them. That is, when appreciating the very ‘real’ constraints on their transformation when the structural power relationship of the referent peoples has been nearly immobilized into one of domination (as I will discuss further in Chapter Four).

Spivak raised the problem of the extent to which subjugated knowledges or truths must or could be rendered intelligible enough for mobilization in liberatory political projects supported by critical scholars. On this score Ashis Nandy has returned me to the concern with making accounts of decolonial struggles for liberation, that are also struggles of epistemic and discursive reorientation such as resurgence (albeit in a more nuanced sense than my initial dissonance with anti-colonialism). That is, in confronting the apprehensive Euro-Modern “laws of obedience” on how dissent itself must be made audible or legible and indeed “respectable” to be taken seriously within its categories. In a 1989 essay “Shamans, Savages and the Wilderness: On the Audibility of Dissent and the Future of Civilizations,” Nandy considered how “radical dissent today constantly faces the danger of getting organized into a standardized form” in the ways it “begins to borrow from the dominant worldview to sustain itself, to reach out to the mainstream, to model itself on the previously successful and popular” (Nandy, 1989: 265).

While Nandy could be speaking equally to the new social and protest movements now, his observations strike home for those considering the articulation of Indigenous knowledges in accounts of practices of resurgence such as those of Idle No More. He considers the shaman as a metaphorical figure of “resistance to the dominant politics of knowledge” who cannot be coopted: the “shaman is one whose style of negation and whose categories do not make any sense centre-stage but always seem to touch the disempowered in the wings” (265). In this sense, he compares the shaman to the figure of the “lunatic” Foucault and Spivak also considered (266). Nandy suggests that when the shaman themselves attempt to use “available institutional instrumentalities,” they effectively become a priest, who can never be subversive in their employment of these instrumentalities.

Nandy considers how utilizing a supposedly Euro-Modern programmatic language of liberation (for example the terms of ‘revolution’), becomes a prerequisite for ‘non-moderns’ to
describe their transformative politics and the “travesty” even by its norms, in implicating this is necessary to qualify “for what the moderns call liberation” (268). In this context “resistance to the categories imposed by the dominant language of dissent is part of the struggle for survival” of the so-called savage world (269). I could not be in greater agreement and this I would venture is an intercession of the discourse of Indigenous resurgence. However, in regard to the ‘shaman becoming a priest,’ I have already indicated a similar danger in characterizing Indigenous engagement in certain rhetorics and practices of liberation and freedom as signifying acculturation and a dependency that can never be subversive.\footnote{For Nandy the Indian adoption of nationalism was a way of stabilizing their “modern selves” by “internalizing the colonial ideology of the state they confronted in the nineteenth century” (Nandy, 1997: 227), where the “purism” of its ideals comes with a “certain fear of clumsiness, ambiguity, and the dirty imprint of life” (225-6).}

Nandy does describe a distorting appropriation that is at issue for those giving accounts of resurgence however. This appropriation is the attempt by a shaman’s outside “interpreters” to scrutinize and then “rationally and systematically” explain shamanism “properly.” This either turns the shaman into “a guru or, worse, a priest” and if they cannot be explained, the interpreter consigns them to the past as an anachronism. Despite that the shaman’s “ultimate responsibility is to an inner-vision,” their positioning as a guru to the dominant society suggests they can be made to represent some atavistic knowledge or repressed possibilities latent in its own world (266). In either case, the shamanic mysteries are made predictable and knowable within this world’s sphere of intelligibility - they have been appropriated.\footnote{On first reading Nandy’s playful concession here I laughed aloud: “Probably, I am being unfair. The sane, the rational and the mature, too, will like to explore the shamanic possibilities, but only if the hazards can be foreseen or, at least, cast in the language of probability theory” (Nandy, 1989: 266).}

Nandy extends this issue of appropriation to a formidable argument in regard to scholars who make efforts at translating categorically resistant freedom struggles into the dominant terms of dissent in order to criticize oppression and violence. He suggests that while this still has a value, it remains a form of “in-house” or internal criticism (to the dominant idiom) that does not exhaust all others, and particularly, those imbued in the ways of life and stories of oppressed peoples that are not usually “cast in the language of liberation”: “We, standing outside, can try to translate these self-expressions into our language and construct for ourselves a theory of liberation out of the ‘primitive’, ‘populist’ theories of oppression and spontaneous acts of subversion, but these are our needs, not theirs” (270 emphasis mine). While Nandy’s argument becomes somewhat ambiguous for Western-educated Indigenous scholars as intermediaries,
boundary dancers or otherwise interstitial thinkers (see Chapter Four), I cannot ignore the
provocation it presents. While giving accounts of the continuity of Indigenous existing worlds,
struggles through change and the regeneration of subjugated knowledges is a tactical imperative
as Foucault suggested, their representation and explanation may be an apprehensive undertaking,
whether translating into the dominant language of political rationality or attempting to
transliterate from Indigenous languages: “the language and worldview of those who refuse-or
are unable-to speak the language of change, history, revolution and liberation but who
nevertheless, in their own way and with the help of their own categories, resist domination and
theorize about it” (Nandy, 1989: 268 emphasis mine).

I would like here to come back to Dipesh Chakrabarty, who has also spoken to this
tension and further extended it, while also contracting the challenge of Nandy’s position. Like
many theorists on coloniality, he notes how concepts including the nation, citizenship, civil
society, human rights, legal equality, the individual, democracy, social justice etc. that have roots
deep in the intellectual traditions of Europe, entail a universal, secular idea of the human that has
been a strong foundation for the critique of oppression. Yet those who have attempted to harness
this in the service of decolonization (he names Fanon in particular) have had to wrestle the fact
that European imperialism had reduced humanity to the “figure of the settler-colonial white
man” (Chakrabarty, 2007: 5). Beyond this more conventional assessment, Chakrabarty points to
two concepts that have an uneasy but seemingly indispensable relation to giving accounts of
decolonization movements. These are historicism (“that to understand anything it has to be seen
both as a unity and in its historical development”) and “the very idea of the political” itself
(Chakrabarty, 2007: 6 emphasis mine). Uneasy, as these concepts have been deployed in the
service of exploitation and dispossession, seemingly indispensable because through imperial
processes they have become a lingua franca to claim difference, presence and “historical
injustice,” and their rejection would then be “suicidal” in many situations (45), as Dale Turner
also argues.

Chakrabarty suggests the need to claim the concept of the political and historicism now
as “everyone’s heritage” and renew them “from and for the margins,” calling this project
“provincializing Europe.” He considers Ranajit Guha’s critique of the classification pre-political
applied to non-Western societies, movements and their “persistent worlds” in his depiction of the
protest movements of Indian peasants, in whose “everyday relations of power…involve kinship,
gods, and spirits” (13). As this does not accord with the dominant Euro-Modern conception of political rationality, the danger Chakrabarty identifies is to then consider “political” as an inappropriate category to apply to them, hence the imperative of provincializing it. Yet herein is an issue. Including historicism and the idea of the political as broader and foundational concepts that are sources of tension in accounting for decolonial struggles is an extension of Nandy. It is a *contraction* of his provocation in a somewhat logocentric location of their *necessary* referents and definitions as what ‘the moderns’ call history and the political. Chakrabarty does concede that the dominant narratives in/for which historicism and the concept of the political have functioned, “assimilate to the projects of the modern state all other possibilities of human solidarity” (Chakrabarty, 2007: 45) and thus any project of renewing them from the margins should “look toward its own death by tracing that which resists and escapes the best human effort at translation across cultural and other semiotic systems, so that the world may once again be imagined as radically heterogeneous” (Chakrabarty, 2007: 45-46). Nandy asserts that such imagining is possible now, as a multiplicity of different ways to understand liberation, freedom, history (unity through change) and politics through equivalents in other conceptual languages may have been subjugated but never extinguished. The question that remains for me is how might these and the practices they involve, be accounted for or disclosed otherwise, as a tracing of what resists translation that does not attempt to explain and thus *apprehend* them.

**From a Problem of Dependency to the Challenge of Giving Accounts**

I began by considering the need for Indigenous peoples to articulate a political subjectivity consistent with self-determination as individuals and political-cultural collectivities, as a rendering of intelligibility within the dominant domain of enunciation and legitimacy of Euro-Modern political rationality at large. In this there is also an expectation of conforming to an authentic ethnocultural Nativeness in practices and discourse, which are not eligible for recognition of a political status commensurate with that of the settler-state, or are otherwise unintelligible to its rationality. This results in the double bind in which a discourse of sovereign nationhood in particular is considered derivative, and so an inauthentic or at best pragmatic

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48 For Chakrabarty provincializing involves locating the epicenter of the dominant conceptions of Modernity as provincial but spread through imperialism and colonialism while asserting “that this equating of a certain version of Europe with “modernity” is not the work of Europeans alone” (Chakrabarty, 2007: 43). Yet his project has been critiqued as paradoxically affirming the necessary universality of the Eurocentric definitions of modernity he sets out to provincialize (see Nguyen, 2013).
translation of Indigenous peoplehood conforming to the structural realities of domination. I then went on to reject the notion of “epistemological dependency” which implicates the colonization of minds and not only discourse or language, as an aporetic problem. In not imagining a shared social world irrevocably divided by “accepted and excluded” to the dominant (Heller, 1996: 102), the possibility of Indigenous political subjects whose knowledges, discursivity and transformative power may be dominated but not totalized, is affirmed. And yet, the “general categories” of the anti-colonial theorists that asserted just such a divided world in the experience of the oppressed, were formed precisely “to constitute an object both for analysis and for resistance” as Robert Young has observed (1995: 156). And so, many feminist and postcolonial theorists have pointed to their continued transitive efficacy to relay histories of struggle, the mobilization against domination and for structural transformations that such accounts can effect.

I did not get into some of the strategies of speaking to (dominant) power and giving an account of power struggles in this language after the “fall of the essential subject” and its end of “innocence” that embroiled critical theorists for a long while (see Hall, 2003; Chang, 1995-6).49 For some, this entailed the view that what may be required is a strategic essentialism (coined by Spivak),50 or some other form of self-conscious anti-essentialist “line drawing” in order to speak from difference (see Heyes, 2000). For others only a politics that emphasizes the performativity, contingency and ambiguities of identity outright, to present a hybrid, queer or otherwise decentered subjectivity is appropriate to dismantle oppressive binaries like cisgender normativity. The aptness of such approaches that may stress constructivism or the dissolution of boundaries, has long been questioned for a politics of Indigenous rights and self-determination (Kulchyski, 2005: 52-4; Lawrence, 2003: 22-3; Grande, 2004) as well as for the insidious ways they can replicate colonial racialized culturalism (Young, 1995; Ashcroft, 2005).51 What I have addressed so far is the premise of a need for these strategies: the idea that there are no (longer)

49 For one articulation of a view of Euro-Modernity as racialized in a way that does not essentialize a biological referent in order to mobilize this critique against the elision of race in accounts of modernity see Hesse, 2007.
50 As described by Gayatri Spivak in regard to Subaltern Studies’ project of history from below, this is a “strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” she aligns with among others “the Nietzsche who offers us genealogy in place of historiography, the Foucault who plots the construction of a ‘counter-memory’...and the Derrida of ‘affirmative deconstruction’” (Spivak, 1988: 205).
51 Some of the standard critiques of postcolonial theory as characterized by Stam and Shohat in an article on Indigeneity’s troubling of its axioms include tendencies to avoid political economy, “subjectivize political struggles by reducing them to intrapsychic tensions,” an “obsessive antibinarism that ignores the intractable binarism of colonialism itself” and an “inordinate privileging of themes of hybridity, diaspora, and elite cosmopolitanism.” (Stam & Shohat, 2012: 371-2). See also notes to Chapter Three.
any viable alternative grounds of subjectivity from which to contend domination that are not dependent on imposed categories, or that these categories cannot or do not have subversive non-essentialist meanings or modes of enaction from within other intellectual traditions.

It is nevertheless possible that such grounds and subversions make up a “landscape of clandestine and incommunicable selves” (Nandy, 1997) that as Indigenous scholars we may be attuned to, but face methodological-ethical challenges in relating. In this way, Simpson suggested that Indigenous nationhood “demarcates identity and seizes tradition in ways that may be antagonistic to the encompassing frame of the state, may be simply unintelligible to the western and/or imperial ear” (A. Simpson, 2000: 114). The apprehensive demand to speak to this ear or be discernable to its eye (A. Simpson, 2007b), is bound up with a critical imperative to give accounts of and disseminate on, decolonial struggles and the experiences, “subjugated” knowledges and alternative lifeworlds they self-affirm. While the structural context of the demand and imperative to disclose, and refusal as an aspect of Indigenous resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientation, will be a topic of the next chapter, I can indicate the re-direction of the problem of apprehension refusal will make here by way of transition. This is the challenge it poses to consider a methodological ethic or orientation and approach for scholarship in general and political theory in particular, in (re) telling of Indigenous resurgence practices. That is, an ethic for giving accounts of what Nandy refers to as “inaudible dissent” against and within conditions of colonial domination and dispossession, by traditions whose own conceptual languages may make its political rationality inaudible (or invisible) in the dominant and dominated domain of enunciation, when these traditions are under threat of both elimination and appropriation (Nandy, 2007: 243).

Apprehensiveness at giving accounts of Indigenous resistance and resurgence in dominant languages, for the risks of the appropriation of our stories, particularly in the still-colonial institution of academia (despite pretenses to its Indigenization), may be an anxiety that is irreconcilable. In his opening of “Order of Discourse,” Foucault dialogues his desire not to begin it: “I should not like to have to enter this risky order of discourse” with its preemptory decisiveness, wanting instead transparency, openness and the emergence of truths “one by one.” To which an institution replies that discourse has “always belonged to the order of laws” and that a place will be made for his, “that honors but disarms it.” Foucault reflects that
“perhaps this institution and this desire are nothing but contrary replies to the same anxiety: anxiety about what discourse is in its material reality as a thing pronounced or written; anxiety about this transitory existence which admittedly is destined to be effaced, but according to a time-scale which is not ours; anxiety at feeling beneath this activity (despite its greyness and ordinariness) powers and dangers that are hard to imagine; anxiety at suspecting the struggles, victories, injuries, dominations and enslavements, through so many words even though long usage has worn away their roughness.” (Foucault, 1981: 51-52)

I have chosen to give an account, to tell stories in words with powers and dangers to efface our existence according to a time-scale that is not ours, of honor and disarmament all too easy to imagine, whose outcomes – for healing or harm - may be uncertain. The rest of this dissertation is concerned with coming to terms with this decision and ways of telling that might mitigate its affects and effects, if not control them.
CHAPTER THREE

Unsettling and Refusing Colonial Apprehension

PART ONE - The Settler-Colonial Theatre of Apprehension

Setting the Stage

“The settler is right when he speaks of knowing “them” well. For it is the settler who has brought the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence. The settler owes the fact of his very existence, that is to say, his property, to the colonial system” (Fanon, 1968: 36).

“The theater of apprehension…is a theater that is more than a neutral and performative dramaturgy; it is in fact a settler-colonial nation-state with particular optics, expectations, and possibilities for interpretation” (A. Simpson, 2014: 24 emphasis mine).

Audra Simpson is incisive in the above quotation when she indicates that the ways of giving accounts of Indigenous peoples’ politics in scholarship unfold in a ‘factual’ context that must account for the specific structural imperatives and organization of a settler-colonial state. This state is the particular theatre of colonially apprehensive power-knowledge in which such accounts play out to great affect and effect on Indigenous lives and life. In the previous chapter I located core concepts to my understanding of coloniality (Euro-Modernity, episteme, discourse, subjectification) and discussed the problem of apprehension as one of Indigenous discursive and epistemic dependency. I have come to refute this through my own understanding of resurgence discourse’s emphasis on survivance. However, I proceeded from this refutation by posing a prevailing dilemma regarding the tactical imperative to give accounts of resurgent Indigenous knowledges, political imaginations and decolonial practices of freedom in a dominant settler-colonial domain of enunciation. This dilemma is whether it is possible to give accounts of their resurgence that circumvents colonial apprehension and does not make them subject to/objects of appropriation. My reassessment of the problem engaged with analyses of epistemic and
discursive domination. Here I want to turn to an elaboration of some of the structural features and priorities of a settler-colonial system of dispossession; a system that is apprehensive in ways that tend to the selective appropriation of Nativeness more than its constitutive exclusion. Though this Nativeness does not neatly correspond to the self-defined subjectivities and complexly lived and dynamic Indigeneity as experienced and understood by Indigenous peoples. This assessment of a tendency to appropriation can be considered in tandem with Coulthard’s depiction of colonial relations of power in Canada reproduced through consent (if not free) in “the asymmetrical exchange of mediated forms of state recognition and accommodation” rather than “overtly coercive means” (Coulthard, 2014: 15).

My elaboration of settler-colonialism will consider features corroborated among scholars in the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of settler-colonial studies that includes Canada in its purview, with writing across Indigenous studies, political theory, history, anthropology, sociology, cultural, literary and media studies, critical geography, queer theory and gender studies. My choice of this starting point is not to indicate a carte blanche agreement on my part with the framing of a settler-colonial studies ‘project’ by some, or suggestion of its field of inquiry as homogenous and without critical debates on replicating disciplinary parameters for appropriate projects ‘belonging’ to it. Indeed any disagreements coincide with a concern on

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1 The normalization of settler-colonial terminology’s application to the Canadian context in academia and popular discourse – to assert Canada has a ‘Settler problem’ that requires a reckoning (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015) - is indeed still quite recent in my own perception and experience, perhaps due in part to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s reverberations. A decade ago my use of the term ‘settler-society’ in my Masters Thesis proposal (2007) was questioned for applicability to Canada by my then political studies department. Yet Indigenous scholars here have long identified Settlers (treated or trespassing) as such (see for example the texts in the bibliography from the Canadian Journal for Native Education in the early 1990s). A survey of the increase in this terminology’s use would certainly be an interesting exercise to gauge the extent of a rhetorical lag between (certain sections of) academia and popular discourse.

2 Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Comtassel (2014) and Carillo Rowe & Tuck (2017) point out that what has quite recently emerged as ‘settler colonial studies’ is but one banner under which analyses of settler colonialism have been collected and so it is not suggested this is a new or isolate field, but in interface and continuity with others that exceed it. Nevertheless there is enough of a common conceptual lexicon in play that Carillo Rowe & Tuck offer a table of key terms with their editorial essay. My survey here will be far from comprehensive, as the literature even under this banner has become proliferate and it is beyond my scope to reproduce an exhaustive survey. If I were to be facetious Veracini’s metaphor of settler-colony as bacterial in its self-reproduction (2015: 21-25) could possibly be applied to settler-colonial studies itself, colonizing other fields – and though this is perhaps not for the worse overall, reintroducing a stifling disciplinarity (with its own lexicon) is a concern of mine. In 2010 Veracini called for analyses of settler-colonialism to consolidate as a distinct field of inquiry and less than a decade later this can be confirmed (for an overview of the field around a ‘project’ see Veracini, 2011). The journal Settler Colonial Studies was established in 2011 and along with many articles, a number of single-author monographs theorizing its features and intersectionalities (including transnational migration, frontiers and borders, genocide, national memory, reparations and reconciliation, violence against Indigenous women, queer theory) have been published as well as comparative case studies and texts on the Canadian context (Dean (2015), Barker & Lowman (2015), Morgensen
totalizing or reifying tendencies in the depictions of power dynamics and subject identities produced (or attempted to be) by settler-colonial processes that minimize Indigenous resistances, subversions and alternatives. So I want to set out that I am proceeding from a view that distinguishes between the imaginary of settler-colonialism and its actualizations, as but one (if dominating) political and social assemblage and relational formation among others operating concurrently in the same space. Settler-colonialism is in many ways product of and caught in replicating the Euro-Modern desire for hegemonic boundaries, fixity and predictability in active and relational life that is not possible, that was not accomplished in the settler’s homelands or places of departure and has not been here. Yet my intent in the first half of this chapter is to contextualize the forcefulness of settler-colonial narratives and the character of demands for Indigenous peoples’ intelligibility within the terms of the state’s dominant political rationality. This will also help contextualize my engagement with Audra Simpson’s account of the refusal of this demand and the challenge it poses to scholarship.

As I suggested in the introduction to Chapters Two and Three, refusal turned the problem as I initially considered it (to be one of Indigenous discursive and epistemic dependency) on its head. The problem for me became the limitations of the dominant political rationality for the enunciation of Indigenous resurgence. If giving accounts of resistance and subversion of this rationality and its terms of enunciation as well as or especially subjugated knowledges and ways of being and doing that are not in reaction to or dependent on colonial relations of differentiation for their expression of alterity (are self-defined and determined alternatives) is a tactical political imperative - if this is so then how do we give accounts? How do we tell of their practices? What an acceptance of this imperative implicates is the need for a methodological ethic of telling Indigenous stories of resurgence in the academy and especially political theory in ways that aim to elude colonial apprehension. To accept an imperative to tell stories as such rather than merely a prerogative, an appreciation not only of such stories’ subversiveness when told in a dominant public domain of enunciation but the “profound asymmetries of settler colonialism” in which this unfolds is crucial. While exerting a dominance without hegemony, this is a “colonialism with relentless momentum and a comprehensive package of powers” (Harris, 2004: 180), which I will sketch below albeit not exhaustively.

Entanglements and Disentanglements

The mobilization of a theoretical language of colonialism and diagnostic tools formulated in disparate locations to describe diverse Indigenous experiences on Turtle Island and in the Western hemisphere at large has had call for more substantive comparative analyses and conceptual honing that is centered in concern for political and critical effectualness (see Howe, 2013). Prominent collative voice of settler-colonial studies Lorenzo Veracini suggests that the “transcolonial circulation of ideas and practices” often puts colonies of exploitation, settlement and their originary metropoles (ie. European states), into the same “analytic frame” (Veracini, 2010: 6-7). My depiction of apprehension as an epistemic and discursive logic of Euro-Modernity (not exclusive though crucial to colonial dispossession and specifically of Indigenous peoples) certainly reflects this drawing of correspondences. Nevertheless Veracini argues that while colonialism and settler-colonialism are often coexisting, interpenetrating and overlapping, they are distinct formations of domination (Veracini, 2010: 12 also 2010b: 179-80), and thus the project of settler-colonial studies is to seek their analytical “disentanglement” (Veracini, 2011). This project involves inquiry into their distinctions at the intersections of their structural features (often framed in the materialist terms of political economy), their theories of sovereignty and territoriality, their production of subjectivities and effect on consciousness and their imaginaries and narrativity. The latter features are of the most interest to me for unpacking here as they produce the “optics, expectations, and possibilities for interpretation” for perceptions and expressions of Indigeneity and political action within the settler-colonial theatre. These affects and effects are bound up with structures and technologies of rule (the how of dispossession) that entrench its imperatives and systematicity, and this must be reiterated but without diminishing consideration of the role of justificatory discourse in the why.

Writing before the full emergence of settler-colonial studies, geographer of the reserve system in the present Province of British Columbia (B.C. hereafter), Cole Harris critiqued the predominance of “culturalist” analyses of colonialism, specifically in discourse analysis’ focus on operations of power/knowledge in textual representation and systems of signification (privileging Imperial literary and other ‘cultural products’) as obscuring how colonialism dispossesses where it does (Harris, 2004: 165-6). As mentioned in the previous chapter, critiques of culture as the “primary locus of colonial power,” and culture treated as a totality have been
well-trod, as have calls for particularizing and de-(Euro)centering analyses of colonial domination against homogenizing metatheory and evacuating colonized peoples of agency (Colonialism’s Culture (1994) by Nicholas Thomas being especially influential). Harris noted this but also suggested a need for attention to how a discourse of culturalism itself validates dispossession and informs the technologies of rule (mapping, law, policy etc.) that help facilitate and then manage dispossession after land is seized. Here Harris speaks to a convergence of several Foucaultian concepts of power in settler-colonial studies’ analyses of processes of discursively subjectifying and materially dispossession Indigenous peoples of land. Specifically that settler-colonial subjection is characterized by sheer physical force (violence and its threat), juridical assertions of sovereignty (with a monopoloy on violence) and governmentality.

While Veracini stresses that the structural distinctions of exploitation (or “exogenous”/external) colonialism and settler-colonialism (“endogenous”/internal) are important to analytically disentangle, I like others maintain that it is also analytically and politically important for solidarity, to highlight entangling discursive and epistemic correspondences between them. It is also pertinent to highlight entanglements between settler-colonies and their former metropoles, in terms of the dominant form and strategies of power at work in these states. Vine Deloria Jr. was insightful when he suggested that Europe began to colonize itself before anyone else (Deloria Jr., 1998). In this regard a number of settler-colonial studies scholars engage Foucault on the repressive and disciplinary power relations of governmentality at work in constituting ‘Europe’ as the locus of Modernity, and the social and political norms of all ‘modern’ states. Yet this is not generally emphasized as a relational correspondence, as dialogically useful for engaging settlers for instance, rather than a basis for divergence from or extension of Foucault. Distinctions of experience that this does signal, suggest a role for colonial discourse theory attentive to contextual particularities and mindful of appropriative collapses of

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3 In discussing Veracini’s emphasis on disentanglement rather than entanglement, Banivanua Mar and Edmonds write that “while the structural distinction of settler colonialism from its colonial counterpart is critical to developing a sense of its human impact, we maintain that the two were mixed and at other times in tension with each other” (Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010: 13).

4 Veracini describes his methodology for analyzing settler-colonialism with the Spinozian notion of all definition as negation, that “to define a thing in terms of its context, we must define it in terms of what it is not” (Burke quoted in Veracini, 2015: 2). This mirrors Foucault’s view of discursive definition discussed in the last chapter. I feel definition by negation is apt to describe a dominant Euro-Modern thingification that posits a container for essential content and that I suggest Indigenous refusal counters. However I prefer an accounting of contextual definition as definition by relation (for example who someone is by their relations). This suggests a drawing of relational correspondences in the process of identification congruent with a commonality among many Indigenous onto-epistemologies.
Indigenous decolonial and other liberatory struggles. This colonial difference in B.C. was observed by Harris regarding the absence of empathy at the “edge of Empire” for Indigenous peoples from settlers, whose own close ancestors may have been dispossessed elsewhere. Harris’ observation is worth quoting in full as for me he encapsulates the particular racialized and culturalist basis of the settler-colonial apprehension of Indigenous peoples, and also a limit to analyzing the imperatives of settler-colonialism in a materialist framework of political economy that aligns this form of domination and dispossession to the forms at work in Europe that I will unpack further in this section of the chapter:

“The arguments over land in Britain were, essentially, class arguments within societies that recognized themselves as such…The argument, such as it was, between settler society and Native peoples over land in British Columbia was not a class argument, but rather one between different societies and cultures that, out of altogether different historical experiences, had only recently encountered each other. British settlers had met a much more other “other” than any stratum of British society, one that easily could be racialized (and usually was), and that, because assumed to be savage, was thought to have nothing to say to civilized people. And so the argument against custom, multiple occupations, and the constraints of lifeworlds on the rights of property and the free play of the market became, in a colonial setting like British Columbia, not an argument between classes about the distribution of wealth, nor even an argument between different economies, but rather a far more elemental, polarized, and characteristically racialized juxtaposition of civilization and savagery” (Harris, 2002: 267-8 emphasis mine).

While the mid-19th century settler’s encounter with the Native on the ground as a “much more other ‘other’” was novel to them, yet it affirmed a normative culturalist discourse of difference that had already been established in what they ‘knew’ of the New World before arriving. For Harris, Indigenous difference and similarity was then not assessed through a lens of class but I would add neither a lens of politics. In this vein a consideration of the function of culturalism in producing the disciplinary purview of political theory is the focus of my next chapter, which will also touch on how Foucault associated the operation of different forms of subjecting power with different eras and their eminent epistemes in the ‘West.’ Harris’ account of processes of dispossession in B.C. suggests a procedural shift in Canada’s efforts to exert
power over Indigenous peoples from a founding sovereign violence to governmentality, as a *staying power*. In the rest of this section I want to assert an ongoing convergence of modes of domination and dispossession, but against a totalizing view of the settler-colonial project’s successes and an emphasis on its ambiguities.

**Settler and Native Subjects, Space and Time**

To establish how settler-colonialism is structurally distinct from external colonial domination, Veracini suggests it is fundamentally characterized by a motivating animus of *sovereign displacement*. Rather than foreign rule with a minority and temporary colonist presence, engaging in an extraction economy to greater or lesser degree reliant on the exploitation of a Native majority’s labor in the interests of a distant metropole, settler-colonialism seeks to establish a sovereign claim to territory through the permanent displacement of Indigenous societies and the ostensible founding of a new society and polity. The imperative remains land and accumulation by dispossession, but also nation-building and nativization that must foreclose any Indigenous sovereign counter-claim and indeed often deny any politically

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5 Some have described the structure of the Canadian settler-colonial system as ‘internal colonialism’ (see Tully, 2000 and Alfred, 2005b). The theory of internal colonialism suggests that exogenous colonial centre-periphery dynamics could be reproduced within regions or states (see Stone, 1979 and Hind, 1984). Veracini suggests this theory is “underpinned by a necessarily hierarchical distinction between different locales within a single polity” (Veracini, 2011: 1). The resource-extraction economies of Canada organized in a North-South relation with metropolitan areas and population density greatest in the South certainly suggest that there is merit in the comparison if not as an all-encompassing analytic. In relation to internal colonialism the so-called Blue or Salt Water Thesis was adopted by the U.N. and supported by the U.S. in the 1950s during post-war decolonization to assess eligibility for self-determination according to a colonized territory’s geographical separation from the colonizer country. Originally this acknowledged the status of Indigenous nations within the borders of independent states but later separation was deemed requisite for decolonization in the name of international peace and security, as the United States like Canada was a country made up entirely of colonized territories (see Tully, 2000: 55).

6 The emphasis in Canada like similar settler-states has been the appropriation of Native land rather than labor though by dispossession Indigenous peoples were alienated from the land and their means of production, which would encourage assimilation to the capitalist economy (Harris, 2004: 167, 172-3; also Coulthard, 2014: 12; Ciccariello-Maher, 2016). The formation of a Native “subproletariat” was not in general a focus as with exploitation colonies (see Sartre, 1992: xxii), although the Residential School system did arguably involve experiment in producing an indentured Native work force (Kulchyski, 1992: 174) and in B.C. an assimilationist vision ordered the Indian reserve system toward Indigenous people joining the general laboring population (see chapter 9 in Harris, 2002). Veracini points out that the form of exploitation sought by different colonial powers and what constitutes labor in any context can be complexify this – eg. “physical, spiritual, consumption, sexual, reproductive” (Veracini, 2011: 2). The exploitation of Indigenous women’s bodies and labor in particular is an important example of this complexity. For example Sarah Hunt (Kwakwaka’wakw) and Robyn Bourgeois (Cree) both link settler-colonialism to violence against Indigenous women and girls as well as involvement in sex work although Bourgeois subscribes to the framing of “human trafficking” and Hunt does not (see for example Hunt, 2015 & with Naomi Sayers 2013; Bourgeois, 2015). On Indigenous women’s work across contexts see Williams (Ed.), 2012 and McCallum, 2014.
meaningful ongoing Indigenous presence.\textsuperscript{7} Settler-colonialism’s mode of subjectification (the production of its subjects) can also be distinguished accordingly. Coulthard has pointed to the influence of Fanon rather than Foucault in this regard, suggesting that

“in contexts where colonial rule is not reproduced through force alone, the maintenance of settler-state hegemony requires the production of what he liked to call ‘colonized subjects’: namely, the production of the specific modes of colonial thought, desire, and behavior that implicitly or explicitly commit the colonized to the types of practices and subject positions that are required for their continued domination” (Coulthard, 2014: 16).\textsuperscript{8}

Colonial projects are generally antithetical, they are structured on contrast and opposition, where colonizer subjects are defined negatively by comparison against anti-types (Veracini, 2015: 5). The external colonialism Fanon spoke to is premised in the reproduction of typological dichotomies that aim to produce a strictly inside/outside duality of colonized/Native and colonizer/Settler subjects, a “world cut in two” whose governors are “those who come from elsewhere” (Fanon, 1968: 38). Settler-colonial studies suggest a triad rather than a binary. Veracini has termed these subjects Settlers, Indigenous or Native internal Others/Alterities (more or less subordinate/desirable) and “exogenous” Others/Alterities (more or less subordinate/desirable) whom he refers to as “Subaltern Migrants.” Settlers are in his formulation a collectivity who, together at once or separately over time, have intentionally moved from their places of departure (here Britain and France) with a sense of sovereign entitlement, to establish or join in the formation of a socio-political order in another place (Veracini, 2010: 17). Migrant also evokes intentioned movement from a homeland albeit not to found another. Amending this with implications for decolonial responsibilities and alliances, Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd instead describes the third type of subject as “Arrivants” rather than Migrants to account for

\textsuperscript{7} A conceptual example often evoked to exemplify this is terra nullius (empty land), a technology of law associated with the Doctrines of Discovery and Occupation – finding empty land to allow founding - which has been acknowledged never to have pertained here by the Canadian courts.

\textsuperscript{8} Fanon delivered a cutting rebuke to intellectuals working in a reconciliatory vein:

“The intellectual who, for his part, has adopted the abstract, universal values of the colonizer is prepared to fight so that colonist and colonized can live in peace in a new world. But what he does not see, because precisely colonialism and all its modes of thought have seeped into him, is that the colonist is no longer interested in staying on and coexisting once the colonial context has disappeared.” (Fanon, 2004: 9).
“those people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe,” including the Atlantic slave trade (Byrd, 2011: xix).

This triad and the boundaries of their definition is a normative projection for the purposes of governing, it expresses a premised set of dominating power relations rather than discrete identities or subjectivities that hegemonically constitute the only social formation and organization of power in settler-states. Nevertheless, their production is a settler-colonial ‘truth’ insofar as these constructs have force, as they are operationalized in discourses, structures and techniques of dispossession and domination to circumscribe other truths of experience. Many settler-colonial studies scholars interested in broad structural distinctions like Veracini, emphasize that unlike external colonialism, settler-colonialism is not entirely invested in the permanence of this relational triad and continuity of its processes of domination and dispossession, but rather that its ostensible ends are their eventual termination. However while an independent nation-state, new society and nativization - a kind of settler home rule in a unitary state - may be a settler-colonial expectation, the promise to supercede the colonial condition is left incomplete, ambiguous and contested. In Canada this is in part through the survivance of Indigenous peoples, the idea of a British/Anglo and French/Francophone confederation, Québécois nationalism, increased diasporic “arrivant” diversity and also due to a settler desire to appropriate an originary ‘Native’ authority, which I will come back to as a general contradiction reflected on in the literature. Consideration of the settler-colonial organization of manageable subjects is merited first. Here I will focus on the production of Native populations in the establishment of settler colonies rather than the partitioned and hierarchical ‘triadic’ relationships that emerged in Canada as a federal and multi-culture tolerant “house of difference” (Mackey, 2002), with the white heterosexual cis-gender male Anglo settler of at least several generations as its normative head of household.9

9Though they take up Veracini and Byrd’s presentation of the settler-colonial subject triad, Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) forward a conception of “Settler Canadians” that is not equivalent to its normatively dominant settler subject in operation (28) - as not origin, race or class-based and “relating in complex, non-discrete, non-binary relationships with Indigenous identities” (69). Battell Lowman and Barker’s work here is collative of concepts in settler-colonial studies and intended as an overview to engage in dialogue with fellow “Settler Canadians,” and so they present this as a political category that is centered in a notion of complicity in perceived benefits. For ‘settler’ as a critical and political term implying a “set of responsibilities and action,” rather than synonymous with ‘non-Indigenous,’ see Flowers, 2015: 33-34. Against the terms of a debate on anti-racism’s ‘erasure’ of Indigenous peoples and colonialism Vercini suggests “settler colonialism should be seen as a system of power relations that
U.S. theorist Mark Rifkin’s articulation of settler-colonial subjectification’s link to dispossession might be considered paradigmatic of how this is generally discussed in the field (as much of his prolific work can). Following Ann Stoler, he points to how Foucault’s conception of the production of populations as the object of governmentality (in European societies) “presumes the geopolitics of the nation-state”: that the “juridical existence of sovereignty” is no longer in question and that its “residents are de facto the people of which the government is the expression” (Rifkin, 2014: 150, 165, 153). This raises the question of extant and pre-existing formations of collective life and what Rifkin terms their “sociospatial” organization, that a biopolitical conception of populations aim to supplant, which then has implications for delineating the dimensions within which the state’s governing authority, its sovereignty, and other ‘legitimate’ exercises of political power are to operate. So while an existing state’s exercise of biopower involves the rendering of its (presumed) people into populations, in settler-colonial contexts this can be considered a technique of establishing settler-colonial rule, being an attempted reconstitution (and not only misrepresentation, re-presentation, re-signification or recoding) of diverse Indigenous peoples and polities into racialized (and ethnocultural) populations under the jurisdiction of the new state and within its borders; which must then be ordered and secured against challenges to the settler claim to land and territory. Bonita Lawrence (Mi'kmaq) has referred to these regulatory processes as the “dismembering” of Indigenous nations (Lawrence, 2003: 4-5).

Rifkin also suggests racializing a Native or Indian population as biopolitically distinct from a white male settler normativity, functions to restrict participation in an “augmented” or privileged social, political and economic life attached to that embodied norm, as well as defining the terms of their separate tribal or Aboriginal governance and rights (in a way that neutralizes simultaneously but separately engulfs both indigenous and exogenous subalterns” (Veracini, 2015: 47; for his overview of the debate in Canada see 44-48). On slavery, anti-blackness and settler-colonialism see Leroy, 2016.

10 Here Rifkin offers the juxtaposition of population with peoplehood as “a way of tracking the process of interpellation, of marking the discursive and institutional threshold for translating Native geopolitical formations into the terms of settler governance” (Rifkin, 2014: 155). Rifkin uses the terms interpellation, coding and translation rather than subjectification but this for me implies the production of Native populations involves misrepresentation or mistranslation of existing Indigenous formations that correspond directly to what become populations. To highlight their indirect correspondence is not to say Native populations are unconnected to other and pre-existing Indigenous subjectivities however. Rifkin also discusses these as “prior” Indigenous formations to emphasize existent alternatives, but this does not immediately account for the self-determined, post-contact or post-colonization Indigenous subjectivities and polities such as those of the Métis (see Andersen, 2014; Gaudry, 2016). In regard to resurgence I consider both diverse Indigenous alternative subjectivities and prior or pre-existing formations of peoplehood.
the implications of prior treaty for example). Documentary technologies and institutions of legal classification and rule in Canada like Indian status and Band government as per the Indian Act, 1876 and Constitution Act, 1867 can be considered to function in this way to reconstitute Indigenous nations into a population of colonized Native individuals, fragmented and atomized yet homogenized and subjected to an exceptional and delegatory form of governance by and within the state. While racialization suggests an inscription of meaning in what cannot be effaced as Fanon so affectively suggested (difference evidenced in the body - the skin, the blood, the hair, the skull, the teeth), this is a population whose biopolitical difference, while not always visible through readily quantifiable physical traits, can still be “seen” as legible by the state as media theorist Danielle Taschereau Mamers has described in regard to documents of Indian status (Taschereau Mamers, 2017 & Scott, 1998). Yet Rifkin importantly points out how race as an “immutable” biological quality is attached to cultural difference in the production of Nativeness, particularly Indigenous modes of sociality defined by kinship – its customary practices presented as then necessarily distinct from ‘White’ politics and institutions and indeed apolitical.

A fusing of race and culture marking the threshold of possible political recognition for Indigenous peoples has functioned to naturalize their domestication yet ongoing separation or internal otherness.11 As Audra Simpson puts it in regard to her community of Kahnawà:ke, this produces “the state’s imaginary of their body politic and its imaginings of admissible bodies - bodies attached in a secure manner to a recognizable, or…(presently) unrecognizable, political order” (A. Simpson, 2014: 184-5 emphasis mine). Native societies are deemed bio-culturally distinct and internally organized as such traditionally, and so are not recognized as bodies politic

11 Rifkin discusses the danger in racialized conceptions of Nativeness being deemed an extension of a heteronormative discourse of kinship linked to sexual reproduction rather than peoplehood. A great many scholars (settler and Indigenous) have discussed kinship as an important metaphorical idiom in Indigenous political traditions, especially of treaty making and diplomacy that must be accounted for in the decolonial transformation of Indigenous-Settler relations and do not reduce this to a biopolitical formulation of ‘linking together.’ Marriage is not the sole kinship metaphor for all treaty relations but it is one (for a Cree view of Indigenous nations’ adoption of settlers as kiciwamanawak (cousins) see Johnson, 2007). For example anthropologist Michael Asch discusses treaty and consequent obligations of reciprocity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous national collectivities as a figurative marriage between families “living together on lands that had originally belonged to one of them” (Asch, 2014: 130, see 127-33). Asch’s argument is carefully wrought to offer a perspective on conceptualizing respectful coexistence from Western traditions of thought in dialogue with Indigenous political concepts and is not simplistic or naïve in calling up this metaphor. Nevertheless, I would agree that an anthropological language of kinship systems such as consanguinity and exogamy does suggest a discomforting sense of obligatory and consensual ‘out marriage’ that could be misused to naturalize the necessity of relations with outsiders (ie. settler state and society) in heteronormative and patriarchal biopolitical terms. This can be a roundabout and post-facto way of accepting a settler-colonial founding. Marriage is a metaphor that can be mobilized in harmful ways.
in Euro-Modern terms. This allows the sense that state-delegated biopolitical forms of self-administration like Indian Act governments are in keeping with ‘Native’ customs and can exist without challenge to settler sovereignty.

In regard to the organization or ordering of individual and collective Native bodies, settler-colonial studies emphasizes the *spatiotemporal* dimensions of Indigenous peoples’ subjectification as Native populations, in which the attempted subsumption of their social and political formations to the settler-state, conceived as home of the new nation, makes its sovereignty over dispossessed lands appear self-evident and disavows a colonial founding and present. This process can be sketched as beginning here on the Northwest Coast in the 1840s. As Cole Harris describes of what would become B.C. in 1871, after the Oregon Treaty (1846) drove the border of British North America to the Pacific and the establishment of two colonies (on Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley) from imperial rivalry with the U.S. and an influx of their failed prospectors, the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship based mostly on trade and its accompanying intimate and ‘cultural’ contacts and exchanges “was replaced by one based on land” required for agricultural and industrial extraction economies and their settlements (Harris, 2004: 169; Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010: 12). Dispossession then began in earnest. The colonies brought the British military infrastructure to bear on the prior “equation of violence” in this relationship, while principles like the honour of the crown discussed in the distant Colonial Office was not. The expediency of local administration of land policy by its settlers in their own self-interest was favored and these self-governors, while sometimes troubled by contradictions of this interest with the moral responsibilities of Empire, took for granted that Native difference was one of savagery from civilization, being evident in their use – or rather perceived under or non-use - of land (Harris, 2002: xvi-ii; also Mackey, 2016: 83-93).

12 Settler-colonial studies’ consideration of spatiality has been located in somewhat of a responsive posture to analyses in the discipline of geography that marginalized the perspectives of Indigenous societies (Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010: 1-2, 6). As a settler scholar Harris does not profess to offer such perspectives in great detail, focusing instead on as he says how colonialism dispossessed (Harris, 2004).

13 Harris illustrates this general view and conflicted pragmatism in regard to settler responsibilities with the story of young businessman and later Indian Reserve Commissioner Gilbert Sproat’s 1860 establishment of a logging camp at the head of what is now known as Alberni Inlet on Vancouver Island in Nuu-chah-nulth territory. Sproat forced the relocation of a summer fishing settlement with a display of firepower and the industrial city of Port Alberni with its paper mill now encases this portion of the inlet. Sproat later documented his views of the Nuu-chah-nulth in an ethnography entitled *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* and attempted unsuccessfully to find compromise between settler expansion and Indigenous rights. For a brief overview of Nuu-chah-nulth experiences with colonial-capitalism see Coburn & Atleo, 2016: 187-91.
a racialized Nativeness, whose inevitable destruction through the onslaught of ‘civilization’ and colonial influences was assumed and would validate dispossession, as it continues to do.¹⁴

The processes of dispossession at the founding of the colonies and outposts that would become B.C., as with the rest of what became Canada, produced what has been called settler space, a geopolitical clearance, rearrangement and remaking of colonized lands physically and not only legally or ideologically, a transformation crucial to the settler-colonial imaginary (Veracini, 2010b). I consider space here as the generalizable projection of an area between dimensional points, untethered to a necessary corporal expression (it can be a conceptual sphere or domain) – in distinction from place, which is a location imbued with meaning by peoples and imbues a people with meaning, place carries and gives a people their stories. This distinction is pertinent to the application of the “spatial abstractions of the modern nation-state” (Sparke, 2005: 49) over Indigenous places, and their co-constitutive relation with Indigenous peoplehoods. The displacement of Indigenous nations detaches them from their homelands as ancestral territories they have occupied since time immemorial. This displacement with a state’s abstract space of sovereignty is also the de-placement of Indigenous lands as wilderness, a clean slate that can be inscribed with and then “narrate the stories of colonization” (Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010: 2; Ashcroft, 2005). This allows settlers to re-place and so re-story the land like a palimpsest. Or in other parlance, settler-colonialism deterritorializes Indigenous lands and reterritorializes them as space devoid of pre-existing customary relations that would impede settlement and the capitalist mode of production (Harris, 2004: 172).¹⁵ The settler-colonial drive to both land and territory is not a redundancy of terms – land as territory involves an associated custodial,

¹⁴ Joseph Trutch as Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works for the merged colony of British Columbia in the late 1860s and then first Lieutenant Governor denied Native land title and rejected policy conformity with the Royal Proclamation of 1763, re-surveying the previous reserve allotments made by James Douglas and reducing them by 91% (Fisher, 1971; Harris, 2012; Tennant, 1990). This doctrine still has a hold despite the Supreme Court of Canada’s protestation otherwise (see Borrows, 2015; also Veracini, 2015: 62-7). Following recognition in the Constitution Act, 1982 of “existing” Aboriginal rights the grounds for a rejection of Indigenous land title as sui generis and subsequent extinguishment was laid out in the initial 1991 decision of the Delgamuukw case for the Wet'suwet'en and Gitxsan. For two accounts of the ethnographies commissioned for the plaintiffs as attempts at proving the existence of title see Mills, 1994 and Daly, 2005. Also see note in previous chapter on the ‘distinctive culture test’ for Aboriginal rights in Canada.

¹⁵ De- and Reterritorialization is a concept forwarded in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, for a general discussion see Patton, 2000: 88-108. For a discussion of the application to colonial contexts see Young, 1995: 162-164.
political or governing order and authority, part of the knowing emplacement by and of, a people in relationship with it.¹⁶

Harris outlines several technologies of rule that de- and reterritorialization involved here on the West Coast. Cartography emptied and flattened the land of meaning, detail and people in settler geographic view. This was intentioned exclusion, being aware of the presence of all of these. The land could then be surveyed within the simplifying and narrow “culture of vision, measurement and management” that allowed settlers to orient themselves, apportion and distribute property and organize Native populations within this culture (Harris, 2004: 175). As Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman has commented of Harris’ emphasis on how colonialism dispossesses, mapping was also a “means of discourse,” one that reformulated Indigenous relationships into spatial identities “in ways readable to the state” (Goeman, 2013: 20-1). English common law with respect to property then transplanted complex accumulations of tradition and histories of labor conflict around customary use, enclosure and alienation onto this land that disrupted and disregarded Indigenous legal systems and lifeworlds (Harris, 2002: 266-8; also McCrossan, 2015). This has transposed an overlay of normativity, names and stories from elsewhere whether carried here by officials in grand imperial narratives emblazoned on flags, or in the empty pockets of the more modest figures of settlement fleeing their own alienation in the old country for a promise of independent life in the ‘new,’ that proved a kind of replication of the old. Though as I began this chapter, the classificatory conception of savagery and civilization brought with them did not allow for empathy.

While oriented ultimately to the disappearance of politically meaningful presence, settler-colonialism also demarcates and allocates enclaves and frontiers of Native space within the boundaries of the state. As Fanon famously stated, the “colonial world is a compartmentalized world” (Fanon, 2004: 3) that fixes the colonized within its “lines of force,” and that in this world “the first thing which the native learns is to stay in his place, and not to go beyond certain limits”

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¹⁶ While Harris refers to the displacement and replacement of “human geographies” in this regard, meaning is not only accrued to land by human peoples in many Indigenous conceptions of territory but all beings and non-human nations, and this meaning is also accrued to beings by the land. I do not prescribe to the view that diasporic peoples and settlers innately (or near enough) relate to land as space (even in the ‘search for a homeland’) rather than as place in the way Indigenous peoples do or have, as some imply (see Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015: 53-55) but rather that we are all alienated from our interdependence with land as place to varying degrees. For one articulation of Indigenous “place-thought” see Watts, 2013 and my discussion of relational onto-epistemology and land in the previous chapter and Chapter Six.
This disciplinary designation of the Native’s proper place is material-physical, social-juridical-political, epistemic-conceptual-ideational and discursive-semantic. The particular and most elementary system of compartments drawn with “lines of force” in Canadian settler-colonialism can be demonstrated most clearly in the Indian reserve system. Not designed to be self-sustaining economically or politically, reserves relocated and confined Indigenous presence and life, allowing access to land and the emergence of a settler geography that gradually encroached on and surrounded it, consolidating its own claims as it did so.

Harris like Rifkin suggests Foucault’s concept of governmentality as preoccupied with the spatial organization of power, documentation and surveillance - particularly in the management of diversity and unpredictability through normalization. This speaks to the function of reserves, as well as residential schools, to remake Indigenous societies’ “deviant cultures” (Harris, 2002: 270; also Milloy, 1999). In various ways this has contributed to the restriction and monitoring of Indigenous people’s physical and ‘cultural’ mobility, while allowing that of settlers without diminishing their claims to land and belonging, as John Borrows has pointed to (Borrows, 2016; also Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015: 86-7). For Foucault “discipline fixes; it arrests or regulates movements; it clears up confusion; it dissipates compact groupings of individuals wandering about the country in unpredictable ways; it establishes calculated distributions” (Foucault quoted in Harris, 2002: 269). The metaphoric boundaries for enunciation and intelligibility between civilization and savage wilderness that Ashis Nandy presented and I discussed at the end of the last chapter, have material and juridical correspondences to the

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17 Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds use the term “cadastre” to describe the imposition of a European property regime in a way that implicates how some “lines of force” are drawn in settler-colonial states: ‘Cadastre’, a common technical term in surveying and tax collecting, is defined as ‘of or showing the extent, value and ownership, of land for taxation’. The term, originally from the Greek katastikhon, a list or register, from kata stikhon, means ‘line by line’. In French cadastre referred to a register of property. (Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010: 10).

18 1852 saw the first B.C. Indian reserve laid out in what would become the inner harbor of Victoria on Vancouver Island but most in the last decades of the 19th century and early 20th. While the land question and reserve system was formed and operated differently in B.C. than on the Prairies and Eastern provinces as well as in the U.S. the effect of producing conceptions of Native and settler space is shared, with reserves providing “fixed geographical points of reference, surrounded by clusters of permissions and inhibitions that affected most Native opportunities and movements” (Harris, 2002: xxi also 271-2). Relocations also implied Native land bases could be interchangeable which denied questions of territory and emplacement. In regard to the role of urbanization and race discourse in attempts to erase Indigenous presence in southern B.C., including the 1911 relocation of the Lekwungen (Songhees Nation) reserve from Victoria’s inner harbor, see Barman, 2010 and Edmonds, 2010. Glen Coulthard has taken to describing the idea of urban areas as settler space as urbs nullius, for example in regard to processes of gentrification in Vancouver’s Lower East Side pushing against their reclamation as Indigenous land (Coulthard, 2014: 173-6; see also Safransky on Detroit quoted in Veracini, 2015: 90).
Frontiers of colonial expansion and borders held and trespassed, along and across the internal latticework of settler-colonial states like Canada.

Along with spatial organization of its projects, there is a certain temporality associated with settler-colonialism in its “strategic disavowal of the colonizing act” (Lawson, 2004: 160; Veracini 2010: 108), which reflects the “persistent drive to ultimately supersede the conditions of its operation” (Veracini, 2011: 3). Thus narratives of founding reproduced juridically and in popular fictions, often aim to obscure violence with pretenses to comparatively benign exchanges with, and benevolent intentions toward Indigenous peoples, a tendency Paulette Regan has called the “peacemaker myth” in Canada (Regan, 2010). These narratives can also involve distinctions, such as one between colonialism as the domination of people and colonization as the domination of land, rather than acknowledge their inextricability. This feeds the trope that decolonization occurred in the moment of settler colony independence from their metropoles (Canada’s Confederation, the War of Independence in the U.S.), which truncates decolonial relations with Indigenous peoples (Veracini, 2010: 107-8). I would add that the disavowal of the colonizing act/action also involves a disavowal that this historicizing constitutes a narrative strategy.

Following late Australian anthropologist Patrick Wolfe’s influential assertion in 1999’s Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology that colonial “invasion” is a “structure and not an event” (Wolfe, 1999), an accounting of its contemporaneity and currency against narratives that these states exist in a post-colonial condition, has been emphasized in Settler-Colonial Studies.¹⁹ Thus Veracini has forwarded the concept of the “settler colonial present” to assert that it is “here” and “not finished” (Veracini, 2015) but also that it is not settled. The concerted obfuscation of this present has served to mask the continuity of settler-colonialism.

¹⁹ This has been in part a response to the temporal intimations of the “post” in postcolonial theory developed in Third World states following formal independence (see Simpson & Smith, 2014: 13-4). In this regard Jodi Byrd considers the influence of Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Crow Creek Sioux) on debates regarding the applicability of Third World postcolonial theory in Indigenous politics and literary studies with a vocabulary both expanding and mystifying, potentially obfuscating “the lived realities of Indigenous peoples” (and so politically problematic) (Byrd, 2016: 76). Cook-Lynn has been a vocal and controversial figure in the formation of what has been called Indigenous ‘literary nationalism’ or isolationism and its critique of the “rise of a cosmopolitan Indianness...against the specificity of tribe, treaty, and nation” (75) that I touched on in the previous chapter in my discussion of Vine Deloria Jr. On literary nationalism see Wakeham, 2016 and for a collection naming a project of postcolonial theory for the Canadian context see Sugars, 2004. For a consideration of Indigenous resistance writing in Canada engaging postcolonial discourse theory with post- marking a historical rupture see LaRocque, 2010. Byrd’s sustained treatment of postcolonial theory can be found in Transit of Empire (2011). For consideration of the “post-colonial imagination” from an Indigenous perspective on the Canadian context see Maracle, 2004 and the challenge of Indigeneity see Stam & Shohat, 2012.
colonial imperatives through its shape-shifting techniques of domination (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 601-2; A. Simpson, 2016c), the displacements and de-placements of which can be described as a form of “slow violence” perpetuated against Indigenous nations and lands that is incremental and accrues intergenerationally (Nixon cited by Wakeham, 2014: 126).

In his 2017 monograph *Beyond Settler Time* Rifkin has gone further than a critique of the use of time in settler-colonial narratives, to a critique of the temporal assumptions of its narrativity. This critique is important to giving accounts of contemporary Indigenous movements and decolonial political practices’ non-conformity or unintelligibility to the Euro-Modern political rationality of settler-states. As I discuss further in the next chapter, the notion of a settler-colonial present against the narrative disavowal of both colonialism and Nativeness as anachronistic, hinges on the assertion of a common time frame (Veracini, 2015: 70). Yet Rifkin suggests that declaring Indigenous peoples’ present synchronicity with settlers can be an iteration of their domesticating inclusion into the normalized space of the settler-state. The temporal orientation of this dominant spatiotemporal formation, presents its “own particular ways of apprehending time” as a container for the linear plotting of events (he names these Modernity and History). This renders Indigenous experiences and conceptions of being and becoming or continuity and change, according to its “patterns and priorities” (Rifkin, 2017: 2-3). Rifkin suggests theorizing a pluralization of time that is not contingent on settler norms, as an expression of Indigenous self-determination, which I would suggest is congruent with resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations.

Unsettled State: The Logic of Elimination and Its Haunting

“The state assumes the role of ensuring that the organisation of space, the logic governing temporality, the ordering principles of subjectivity, and the construction of socialities, are all homogenous, inter-linked, and conducive to the accumulation of capital, though resistances and contradictions ensure that these processes proceed unevenly and not in lock-step” (Kulchyski, 2016: 41 emphasis mine).

Nicholas Thomas has suggested that colonial projects are “often projected rather than realized,” with their intentions “frequently deflected, or enacted farcically and incompletely” from internal inconsistencies, competing projects and resistances to “government and its
conceptual categories” (Thomas, 1994: 106 emphasis mine). Indigenous peoples have always disrupted totalizing settler-colonial projects of sovereign displacement and de-placement, not only by engaging in resistances through direct opposition to their “expansive and absorptive exigencies” and subversions of their “structures and signs” as Kulchyski has observed (1992: 193), but also by sustaining alternative lifeworlds or socialities. As Tully put it so well:

“In any relation of power by which techniques of government are mobilised to govern the conduct of indigenous peoples, individually and collectively, there is always a range of possible comportments - ways of thinking and acting - that are open in response, from the minuscule range of freedom of hidden insubordination in total institutions such as residential schools to the larger and more public displays of the repatriation of powers of internal self-government, health care, education and territorial control. Over the centuries, indigenous peoples have developed a vast repertoire of infra-political resistance to survive and revitalise their cultures, nations and federations, to keep indigenous ways of being in the world alive and well for the next generations, to adapt these ways and stories to the present strategic situation, to comply with and participate in the dominant institutions while refusing to surrender, to regain degrees of self-rule and control over their territories when possible, and so to seek to transform internal colonisation obliquely from within” (Tully, 2000: 43).

In this regard, Rifkin gestures to the many transgressions of state and juridical efforts to divide populations, which indicate ongoing struggles with extant and prior Indigenous relational subjectivities, practices and principles of membership and belonging. For example, the overarching shift in B.C. to Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations based on dispossession that Harris points to after the 1850s, is not to suggest that those between people that settler-colonialism attempted to parse into the subject population triad, did not persist and continue to emerge.20 Biocultural documentations of prescribed identity like Indian status have also been reinterpreted as an affirmative signification of Indigenous peoples’ “distinct subject position” by many (Kulchyski, 1992: 181), while resistance to “settler-colonial ways of seeing” is

20 For an account of the state’s failed attempts at disciplining “crossracial” interactions in B.C. see Perry, 2001 and with particular attention on Indigenous dispossession’s links to the exploitation of Chinese migrant labor see Mawani, 2010. For consideration of the complexities of Indigenous and settler co-existence in place (including with the non-human) in Carrier Nation territory in B.C. see Larsen & Johnson, 2017.
demonstrated in the re-visionings of status cards by Indigenous artists (Taschereau Mamers, 2017). Subversions of other technologies of rule like cartography and discursive techniques such as mapping that seek Indigenous containment are also ongoing. Through the sensational visibilities of trauma such as the recent declaration of a state of emergency on youth suicide in Attawapiskat, the Native spaces of reserves are perceived as zones of neglect, abjection and permanent exception or crisis by settler society. However, while their struggles have been shaped by the aim of extinguishing Indigenous polities’ attachment to their lands, reserve communities like Kahnawà:ke have become “places that have deep meaning” to them as Audra Simpson relates (Simpson, 2014: 187). Similarly while Indigenous presence has been marginalized in urban territories, increased Indigenous mobility and reclamations continue to contest perception of the city as exclusively settler space. So, I want to emphasize that Indigenous resilience through resistances, subversions and persistent alternative socialities is not solely due to the contradictions and resulting ambiguities of a settler-colonial imperative for what Veracini calls sovereign replacement, but it does magnify them.

It is then pertinent here to transition to a discussion of settler-colonialism’s “imaginings and practices” that make its production of subject populations, spaces and time anticipatory in the pretension to a capacity for hegemony, rather than actually totalizing (Veracini, 2010b: 180-2). This merits a return to the view of displacement and its staying power as the primary structurally differentiating feature of settler-colonial domination and dispossession. Patrick Wolfe has been credited with making several interventions that helped “kick-start” and continue to be influential to settler-colonial studies (Veracini, 2016), and one of these is his argument that a “logic of elimination” organizes settler-colonial displacement rather than (only) genocide. Wolfe notes that etymologically genocide refers precisely to the intent or attempt to eradicate a specific collectivity of peoples as such, which does not necessarily require physical

22 The declaration was made in April 2016 after 11 people made suicide attempts in a single day in an effort to trigger federal government response and as of April 2018, promised resources are yet to be forthcoming (see Rutherford, 2016 & Barrera, 2018b). Fanon’s depiction of Native “zones” including “the reservation” describes this abjection (Fanon, 1968: 38-9). Rifkin discusses Giorgio Agamben’s concept of ‘deciding the exception’ to law central to the practice of state sovereignty, as speaking to the inside/outside status of Indigenous peoples in settler-states (Rifkin, 2009). I will touch on this again in Chapter Seven as it has been linked to permissive violence against Indigenous women, including Attawapiskat’s former Chief, Theresa Spence.
23 Such urban territories include those of the Lekwungen and WSÁNÉC (Victoria), Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh (Vancouver), Dish With One Spoon Treaty (Toronto) and Omàmiwinini Algonquin (Ottawa). See Barman, 2010; Edmonds, 2010; Lawrence, 2004; Tomiak, 2016.
extermination (Wolfe, 2006: 402). He suggests that “qualified” terms of genocide (cultural, biological etc.) tend to distinctions of abstractness and severity that detract from the concept as an effectual description, though the latter may be important to the “accountants of pain” as Kulchyski suggested in regard to residential schools (2005: 34). Wolfe thus offers elimination as possibly better attuned to the particular drive to land and territory of settler-colonialism that targets Indigeneity (including but not limited to genocide in the U.N. definition). This involves diverse modalities and strategies of elimination toward the diminution, dissolution and replacement of Indigenous societies as distinct polities. This can involve their attempted reconstitution as a homogenous but individuated or atomized Native population, integrated (to an extent) with the new society through various forms of “resocialization” and “biocultural assimilation.” This may involve a politically neutralized and selective redeployment of Nativeness as an archaic ethnocultural identity in settler nation-building narratives (Wolfe, 2006: 388). Rather than elimination as an episode of mass atrocity, elimination can then be seen as ongoing, and settler-colonial “invasion” construable as a structure rather than an event (Wolfe, 1999: 163; 2008).

24 I am here focusing on Wolfe’s presentation of elimination as offering a nuanced and broadening conception of the specific settler-colonial imperative of displacement, while taking seriously how Indigenous scholars have tactically taken up genocide discourse. For example in a review of the 2014 collection Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America, historian J.R. Miller was particularly scathing against attributions of qualified terms of genocide to Indigenous experiences, noting Nêhiyaw scholar Kiera Ladner’s use of the phrase “political genocide” (see Miller, 2016; Ladner, 2014). He suggested she did not offer sufficient explanation of this qualification according to the legalistic definition in the U.N. Convention, on which he bases his understanding of genocide. Miller does not appreciate Ladner’s discursive intervention here to highlight the attempted elimination of Indigenous political formations through slow violence by means of legal exclusion, as the destruction of political communities was not explicitly included in the Convention. This not unintentional ambiguity, allows colonial violences against Indigenous peoples to be assessed as being committed against racialized ethnocultural groups. That is, as separate from their status as nations in the way of colonial expansion. The latter would make them subject to the U.N.’s official position on the decolonization of “non-self-governing territories.” On another settler historian delegimating an Indigenous female scholar’s claiming of “genocide” see Million, 2009: 69-71. For one assessment of debates on genocide discourse in Canada from a settler-colonial studies perspective see Dhamoon, 2016. In regard to the link of genocide and colonialism, the contributors to the Wolfe and Moses edited collection Empire, Colony, Genocide (2008), forward accounts of genocide as colonial at its conceptual origin and also intrinsically (following Raphael Lemkin).

25 Sartre made a similar assertion in Marxist terms with regard to French colonialism in Algeria, while not exactly rejecting the view that the colonized’s ‘ethnocultural’ identities are not archaic (attachment to Nativeness preventing class consciousness) and suggesting totalizing success in colonial subjectification’s production of an alienated ‘Native’ mentality:

“In a word, it fabricates ‘natives’ by a double movement which separates them from their archaic community by giving them or maintaining in them, in the solitude of liberal individualism, a mentality whose archaism can only be perpetuated in relation to the archaism of the society. It creates masses but prevents them from becoming a conscious proletariat by mystifying them with the caricature of their own ideology” (Sartre, 2001).
The diverse modalities and strategies of the settler-colonial logic of elimination can certainly be seen in Canada, which include domination and dispossession by distancing and exclusion but also assimilation and appropriation (Veracini, 2015: 89; Kulchyski, 1997 and Tully, 2005). The record of Canadian Indian Policy and government agents’ practices on the ground reflect this, in the civilizing mission of the residential schools and segregation of populations with reserves and an informal pass system of travel permits (see Tobias, 1991; Pass System, 2015). While inclinations to exclusion and appropriation operate simultaneously, the prevalence of either is localized, and a general shift to the predominance of appropriative internalizations of Native difference that can be regulated is traceable.

Overt state assimilationist policy such as the infamous White Paper on Indian Policy of 1969 is no longer viable following the inclusion of Section 35 on Aboriginal, Métis and Inuit rights in the patriated Constitution of 1982 after fierce resistance and negotiation by Indigenous activists and organizations. Nevertheless, Indigenous peoples remain watchful of strategies of “extinction by accommodation” (Tully, 2008a) in the wake of this inclusion and the classifications of Native identity it enshrined; the ways that in the words of Million (pointing to current reconciliation discourse) “Canada can stall more autonomous self-determination efforts by Indigenous governments by negotiating their adaptive inclusions into its already expansive neoliberal multiculturalism” (Million, 2013: 158). Indeed laying bare such strategies is the basis of Coulthard’s “materialist-oriented evisceration” of recognition politics (Kulchyski, 2016: 36). Yet the White Paper’s rhetoric of equality and a ‘just society’ for Canadian citizens continues to have a hold on the popular settler imagination of a unitary state or “one nation” (albeit ‘multicultural’), that rejects the premises of self-determination in distinct Indigenous nationhoods and denies the racist coloniality of this outlook (see the interviews in Chapter 4 of Mackey, 2016). Settler resentment of the state’s perceived unjustly unequal treatment of Indigenous people as couched in racial and ethnocultural difference, also indicates a view of Indigenous symbols, aesthetic practices, traditional knowledges, spiritualities etc. as apolitical and folkloric and so appropriable (see Battell Lowman & Barker, 39-41).

There is a precarity (Lawson, 2004) and “dis-ease” (Sugars, 2004: xiii) in the position of the settler subject, and it is generally suggested by theorists of settler-colonialism who emphasize structural domination, that efforts to appropriate Nativeness (or rather Native authority) are based primarily on the shaky claim to land and so come down to the imperative of dispossession,
as well as the extraction and profit motive of capitalist economies. Sovereign displacement implicates a nativization that once accomplished can dispense with Indigenous peoples (see Veracini, 2010: 8; Johnston & Lawson: 2000). The need to define Indians, and so affirm and maintain their difference in order to assimilate them, then seems simply an ironic necessity that defeats intention (Kulchyski, 1992: 180), the vanishing race frozen on the ever-receding horizon. Yet this does not entirely account for the colonial desiring of Native difference and its continuity, “for its claims to place, emplotment, and worldings that notions of forgetting, elimination, and absence tend to neglect” (Vimilassery, Pegues & Goldstein, 2016). Anti-colonial theorists offered insights on the function of sustaining ‘inferior’ racialized difference to uphold subjectivities constituted by White supremacy and its privileges, that the central contradiction of any colonial system that is its in-built flaw and undoing, is that it “wills simultaneously the death and the multiplication of its victims” (Sartre, 1992: xxvii).

Such a form of “psychosocial” investment in perpetuating settler-colonialism can be considered a factor in the failure to supercede its power relations, as the elimination of the Native also requires settlers to disappear themselves (see Henderson, 2017).

In an interview with Naomi Klein on Idle No More in 2013, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson suggested a broadened view of colonial and capitalist resource extraction that indicates the ambivalence of elimination:

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26 See also Cabral, 1979: 40; and for examples Memmi, 1992; Sartre, 2001. Kulchyski points to the 1857 ‘gradual civilization act’ and 1869 ‘enfranchisement act’ as precursors to the Indian Act’s assimilatory aim in efforts to define Indians and establish criteria for how Indian status could be lost (Kulchyski, 1992: 178-9; also Milloy, 2008). On what Kulchyski calls the “paradox” of classification establishing rather than removing distinctions, historian John Tobias significantly suggests assimilation policies were intended to produce “imitation Europeans” (Tobias, 1991: 132). Fanon’s depiction of the choice offered to the Black man to “whiten or perish” in Black Skin, White Masks provides a parallel to the vanishing race discourse (Fanon, 2008: 74, 80). Here he discusses the impossible aspiration to Whiteness (coded as ‘equality’) that maintains Blackness in a subordinate position while integrating to a system of exploitation (material and symbolic) insofar as this integration as marginal to Euro-Modernity is required for White supremacy. The Marxist-humanist anti-colonial theorists emphasized the mutual recognition required to exploit colonized populations entails acknowledgement of the Native’s difference, but as abject and inherent inferiority that only makes sense correlated to the colonizer’s superiority (Fanon, 2008: 73; Césaire, 2000: 59; also Memmi, 1992: 88). Racialization allows deferral of equality, with Native efforts to be equal to their colonizers presentable as mimicry, the imperfect imitation of normative (male) Whiteness (coded as Humanity). Yet this necessitates a basic acceptance of similarity - their common humanity to at least a minimal degree. Exploitation and also the colonizer’s subjectionhood requires a Native potential always unfulfilled and rights “forever refused them” (Memmi, 1992: 53), but without utter dehumanization. The concept of colonial tutelage and the civilizing mission, which denies an essentialist racism for a theory of cultural progress that allows postponing recognition of the Native’s self-determining capacity indefinitely, is the innovation of liberal imperialism as articulated in the mid 19th century. I will return to this in the next chapter.
“Colonialism and capitalism are based on extracting and assimilating. My land is seen as a resource. My relatives in the plant and animal worlds are seen as resources. My culture and knowledge is a resource. My body is a resource and my children are a resource because they are the potential to grow, maintain, and uphold the extraction-assimilation system...Colonialism has always extracted the indigenous extraction of indigenous knowledge, indigenous women, indigenous peoples.” (S. Simpson in Klein, 2013 emphasis mine).

In regard to traditional knowledges, Simpson makes the further point that Indigenous ways of knowing-being-doing are increasingly desired as resources for settler or global society’s imagining of alternatives to violent, exploitative and unsustainable relations with the earth. This can also be said of the philosophies and practices of transformation in Indigenous political struggles. The discomfort at shepherding stories of resurgence under the same or similar analytical and discursive banners as non-Indigenous protest and social movements (however much allied) that I felt during Idle No More is part of this more insidious turn in selective extraction. It speaks to the colonial apprehensiveness of Euro-Modernity to capture resistances and dissent that I discussed in the last chapter. The co-optation of Indigenous stories, practices and knowledges by the settler-colonial “desiring machine,” in ways that suppose to affirm their value but not on their own terms, diffuse their challenge and recapitulate appropriation (Young, 1995; Thomas, 1994: 171-2; Harris, 2004: 172, 180). This makes enacting them or disclosing and sharing them in a domain of enunciation structured by power asymmetry - as settler Canadian public space - a deep concern.

Noting a shift to such appropriations of ‘Nativeness,’ whether idealistic or mercenary, is not to suggest that a fear of Indigenous presence and difference when unruly, angry or refusing of compartmentalization and boundaries of intelligibility that make it grasparable (even as resistance) does not prevail. Settler-colonialism’s anticipatory ambitions to encompass or domesticate Indigenous peoples as a predictable and muted Native population, also anticipates ‘Native insurrection’ with trepidation. This makes the settler-colonial state one of apprehensiveness, and Canada an unsettled State. I can return here to Foucault’s description of governmentality as operating through mechanisms and discourses of security – toward the securing of spaces and populations, certainty and normalization (Foucault, 2009: 11-63). He characterized this as an order of pacification against internal enemies, where “the role of political
power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to re-inscribe that relationship of force, and to re-inscribe it in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals” (Foucault, 2003: 15-16). The applicability of this characterization to settler-colonial states’ assertions of sovereign possession over Indigenous peoples and lands is wholly appreciable (see Moreton-Robinson, 2015 and Proulx, 2014).  

Here a Foucaultian analysis of securitization is useful to think about the significance of militarized responses to blockades like the Kanien’kehà:ka of Kanehsatà:ke stand at Oka in 1990 to prevent the extension of a golf course into sacred ceremonial and burial grounds (the Pines), or that of the Mi’kmaq of Elsipogtog against hydro-fracking (shale gas) exploration on their territories in 2013. While the indignation of popular opinion is directed at Indigenous refusals of appropriation to nationalist narratives, the state’s response (Québécois and Canadian), reveals the basis of this indignation is not abstract paranoia over the loss of psychosocial investments (though there is that), the stakes are revealed when the flow of capital is disrupted and land is on the line. Here Foucault’s silent war of governmentality on populations claimed for the state breaks open and erupts into sovereign force. A fear of Native agency and action, of ‘bad Indians’ whose deviancy can cast Indigenous peoples as potential “terrorist populations” that threaten the safety and welfare of the settler nation (Rifkin, 2014: 158), rupture Canadian peacemaking mythologies.

In 2009, the year following his delivery of the Federal Government’s Indian Residential Schools apology, then Prime Minister Stephen Harper suggested at the G20 Summit that Canada has “no history of colonialism” to fully usher in the state-endorsed era of reconciliation (see O’Keefe, 2009). Indigenous land defenders who refute this with their bodies on blockades - on the line - as revisionist, re-conciliatory (Edmonds, 2016) and apologist, are admonished by derisive pundits that it is rather “academically-generated ‘narratives’ of colonialism, racism and genocide” that are an “abuse of reality.” This reality being Canadian “generosity,” according to talking-head Rex Murphy in regard to the blockade at Elsipogtog (see Murphy, 2013). This disjuncture in perception has been spoken to by cultural studies scholar Pauline Wakeham, who has suggested that the logic of a dominant discourse of reconciliation and apology promulgated

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27 Theorist Arthur Kroeker linked Oka to Paul Virilio’s concept of “pure war” and the technocratic “war machine” against which the Mohawk’s way of life stands and so refuses (see Kroeker, 2010).
by the state and mainstream media, has intersected with one of securitization (specifically counterterrorism) to produce strategies for managing, containing and suppressing Indigenous decolonial struggles.\(^{29}\) She points out how the 2008 Apology’s framing of reconciliation seeks to cooperatively enlist Indigenous peoples’ “cultures and tradition” to Canadian nation-building. This requires the performance of forgiveness accordingly and as marking historical resolution with a view to foreclosure on the need for decolonial praxis “moving forward” in its wording (Wakeham, 2012: 5-6). Those like Murphy can then lay blame at the feet of land defenders to delegitimize and dismiss their contention as irrational and disingenuous in the face of Canadian generosity.

The dominant discourse of reconciliation’s “finality orientation” as Tully refers to it, aims to evacuate Indigenous struggles of their specificities and frame objections to the discourse as “obstacles to national healing” and more menacingly criminalize their practices as “threats to national security” (Wakeham, 2012: 2).\(^{30}\) Wakeham suggests that a discourse of terror mobilized against Indigenous peoples in Canada can be traced at least to the so-called Oka Crisis at Kanehsatà:ke, a flashpoint event in what had been 270 preceding years of struggle and exhortation of “Enough” which resulted in a police fatality of ambiguous source (Borrows quoted in Russell, 2010: 29; Maclaine & Baxendale, 1991).\(^{31}\) The 1990 ‘Indian Summer’ of Kanehsatà:ke, along with MP Elijah Harper’s “defiant ‘No’” to the Meech Lake Accord on constitutional reform, eagle feather in hand, precipitated the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples begun in 1991 under the “spectre of political violence” (Ladner, 2014: 236; Coulthard, 2014b: 32-33). RCAP would culminate in a massive Final Report and recommendations in 1996, a Statement of Reconciliation by the federal government in 1998, and a subsequent reticence to use a language of terrorism to describe Indigenous struggles outright in media and government (Wakeham, 2012: 18).

\(^{29}\) Wakeham suggests ‘strategies’ in the Foucaultian sense I utilize as discussed in the introduction to chapter 2 and 3, that does not necessarily indicate willful or deliberate coordination or self-consciousness (see Wakeham, 2016: 9).

\(^{30}\) Dian Million has traced a discourse of trauma and healing in what she calls the Canadian state’s “therapeutic” approach to reconciliation as a way to stifle the negotiation of self-determination with Indigenous peoples (Million, 2013).

\(^{31}\) The 1995 OPP killing of Stony Point Ojibway protester Dudley George at the park occupation of Ipperwash (expropriated land containing burial grounds) would follow this death. Elsipogtog’s most recent precedents in regard to state violence were the Mik’maw interventions at Listuguj and Esgenoopitij (Burnt Church) in 1998-2000, which Pamela Palmater described as ongoing war (Palmater, 2013b). For a detailed account of the unfolding events at Kanehsatà:ke see Maclaine & Baxendale, 1991 and for a 20 year retrospective anthology of writing see Ladner & Simpson, 2010.
Yet since the events of September 11th, 2001 the simultaneous proliferation and emptying of meanings of ‘terror’ have allowed a collapse of diverse practices of dissent and activism under its ambit. Simultaneously, the residual association of terrorism with ‘illegitimate non-state actors’ remains weighted with settler-coloniality, as efforts at legal internalization have long characterized Indigenous resistances as criminal (see Stark, 2016), and sometimes re-presented as foundational to the nation when suited, as discourse around Métis leader Louis Riel attests (Gaudry, 2013; Osborne, 2002). Ironically, a notion of Native fixity in traditional stateless socioeconomic formations (‘savagery’) is here aligned with the conception of terrorist savagism and mobility as “determinitorialized bodies” (Rifkin, 2014: 156-7). This disassociates Indigenous struggles from rights to self-defense, territory and self-determination as recognized but not upheld in international law (Wakeham, 2012: 7-9). The discourse of securitization that casts Indigenous activists and land protection struggles as insurrectionary, terrorist or criminal threats, and has justified the ongoing surveillance and use of force against them in recent years, reveals the “underlying political rationality” of the state to be colonial (Glendhill quoted in Proulx, 2014).

The winter of 2012 when Wakeham’s essay on reconciliation appeared was the winter we danced, and the extent to which the flashpoint of INM was deemed a threat by the Canadian state at the time, has recently been confirmed, as officials considered raising the country’s security alert to the highest level at the time. What Wakeham suggests of the “culture of intolerance” that allows Murphy’s vitriol and Harper’s amnesia, is the underlying paranoia: “Lurking behind this projection of the rhetoric of terror onto Indigenous peoples…is what might be called the “real state of terror” for settler societies - the pervasive fear that settler-invaders’ illegitimate claims to territorial possession and state sovereignty might be held to account in structural, economic terms” (Wakeham, 2016: 8).

32 In 2002 a raid on the family home of a fishing rights activist from Cheam First Nation and member of the Westcoast Warrior Society in Hupacasath Nuu-chah-nulth territory (Port Alberni, Vancouver Island) was undertaken by a specialized anti-terror unit of the RCMP (Kennedy, 2002), “radical Native American organizations, such as the Mohawk Warrior Society” would be listed alongside Hezbollah in the Canadian Armed Forces 2005 draft counterinsurgency manual (manual quoted in Wakeham, 2012: 16); see also Belanger & Lackenbauer, 2014: 5), and the next year a peaceful occupation of Kanonhstaton (“the protected place”) in Caledonia, Ontario by Haudensaunee was broken up by heavily armed police. For background on warrior societies see Alfred & Lowe, 2005.

33 This information obtained through access to information was shared in a CBC interview with Andrew Crosby and Jeffrey Monaghan in March of 2018 on their forthcoming book Policing Indigenous Movements (Barrera, 2018a). They detail the surveillance of INM in a 2017 article (Crosby & Monaghan, 2017).
A number of scholars including Rifkin and Eva Mackey (2016) have spoken to how anxiety becomes panic when the expectations and regularities that the settler-colonial system generates are disrupted. This panic manifests in the reactionary structural responses of the state apparatus and also affectively in settler society, as these expectations produce a kind of common-sense that “saturate[s] quotidian life” and gives people a “sensation of everyday certainty” on the security of their possession (Rifkin, 2013: 322-3; also Stoler, 2008). When Indigenous peoples do not act in conformity with them, the state and its liberal, multiculturalist and democratic citizens must defend the logic and discursive grounds for a “national limit of tolerance,” as Elizabeth Povinelli put it (Povinelli, 2002: 28).

The unsettling effect of expressions of Indigenous survivance and resurgence has also been described as a *haunting*, the “internal Otherness” that settler-colonialism cultivates giving Native presence a *spectral* quality, as it does not accord with the expectation of displacement and so “maintains the refractory imprint of the native counter-claim” (Day & Sadik, 2002: 5; Wolfe, 2006: 389). This is not only a territorial haunting of the settler-state by Indigenous “geopolitical formations absorbed but not entirely eliminated” (Rifkin, 2009: 7), but of the underlying political rationality and its terms of classification, boundaries of intelligibility and knowing. This then has theoretical implications for giving accounts of expressions of this, such as the practices of *INM* as they are also treated as *spectacular* and are then vulnerable to colonial apprehension. Natalie Baloy has recently suggested both the spectral and spectacular pertain to the way Indigenous “performances” in Vancouver’s public and ostensible settler spaces are perceived as apolitical cultural displays that can be passively observed by the settler eye (Baloy, 2016). Within the dominant political rationality, practices such as drum and dance are viewed as folkloric performance for an audience’s enjoyment, while blockades such as those at Kanehsatà:ke and Elsipogtog are coherent as resistances – as *lines of force* - that the settler state and society also knows how to respond to: guns and anger. That is, at least until a water balloon condom is thrown or feather is raised in answer (Maclaine & Baxendale, 1991: 88; Palmater, 2013b).

When *INM* unexpectedly brought drum and dance into spaces like shopping malls as an avowedly political and joyful incursion (McMahon, 2014), it really freaked people out, to use a *wholly* adequate turn of phrase. *INM* “burst into the national consciousness” (Barrera, 2018a), and challenged a political rationality that is ordered on the exclusion of such ‘Native’ practices from the domain of the political (though not from spaces of commodification). To return to
Harris’ suggestion at the outset of this chapter, the division of savagery and civilization engrained in settler common-sense in the mid 19th century, that relegated Indigenous peoples to a racialized and ethnocultural Nativeness persists, and this is reflected in panic when they do not stay in line.34 This is a panic that can then brand “people dancing in a mall,” linking arms, as “terrorists” as much as those on a blockade who are armed (Sinclair, 2014b: 274).

Literary theorist Michael O’Riley has suggested that the use of an “always-quotable” metaphor or aesthetics of haunting by specters has been employed in postcolonial theory as an attempt to reengage the autonomous, local and ‘cultural’ in “situated conflicts and encounters” of oppression and resistance. Yet it has been confronted with the transnational and intangible in neo-imperial or “postcolonial” relations of power (O’Riley, 2007). However the context here is decidedly not postcolonial, though it is intersected by the transnational (globalizing Capital) and haunting is an effect and affect experienced in the settler-colonial state and by its society, an unsettling perception of its own spectral projections of the Native as threatening shadows (which Baloy describes as “holographic” see 2016: 213). That is, this is not to say ancestral Indigenous lifeworlds have died and can now only return (or have endured) ghost-like, but that they are survivant.35

_Idle No More’s_ flash-mob round dances were not the Native surging violently “into the forbidden quarters” and finally taking up a discernable historical subjectivity through “action which is very clear, very easy to understand” following colonialism’s “destruction of native social forms,” as Fanon described in _Wretched of the Earth_ (Fanon, 1968: 40-1). That is, after the colonized have stopped dancing.36 The prior ban and criminalization of dance and song in

34 This is perhaps reflective of a deeper and broader anxiety regarding how the difference of tribal lifeways threatens a desire for order and how the idea of savagery has served to inform a conception of self and civilization in the societies that came to be known as the West and remains a constitutive contrast with Euro-Modernity, as Lumbee legal scholar Robert Williams has suggested (see Williams, 2012).

35 I mean ghost-like in the predominant sense of the Western imaginary. This is not to speak to diverse Indigenous traditions of prophecy and ceremonies of spirit return and reunification, or movements such as the Ghost Dance. As mentioned in Chapter One, my use of the term survivance is as it is employed by Gerald Vizenor and in Indigenous literature to denote a vital presence and continuity beyond bare survival. Vizenor has noted that survivance was used by Jacques Derrida to imply the return of a “relic from the past” (discussing communism), but that in commenting on an interpretive turn in understanding afterlife as used by Freud, he suggested it “no longer means death and the return of the specter, but the surviving of an excess of life which resists annihilation” (Derrida quoted in Vizenor, 21). Vizenor suggests this sense of afterlife is more in keeping with his own sense of survivance, which he has described as marked in “shadows” (Vizenor, 1999: Chapter 3).

36 Another sense of the spectral can be noted here in regard to Indigenous peoples’ experiences and storying of colonial violence. Fanon suggested the “magical superstructure that permeates the indigenous society,” in which “malevolent spirits…emerge every time you put one foot wrong,” provides a coping mechanism that prevents anti-colonial confrontation. In what he calls “so-called prehistorical” and “underdeveloped societies” this “secret sphere”
ceremony such as Potlach and Sundance in the Indian Act (not lifted until 1951), demonstrate an awareness of their role in sustaining and marking these alternative socialities, and so some recognition of how they threaten capitalist and colonial totalization (see Kulchyski, 1992: 181-4, 192). Prohibition suppressed these practices while allowing ‘folkloric performance’ deemed commodifiable and unthreatening, but did not destroy them.

O’Riley applies the concept of recovering lost worlds to projects of subaltern histories or accounts of subjugated knowledges in postcolonial theory that do not in my view entirely apply to understandings of regeneration without extinguishment, dominance without hegemony here. But he does describe a problem these projects have grappled with that speaks to the conflict on giving accounts of resurgence and their challenge to the dominant political rationality I introduced at the close of the last chapter (albeit in a past-tense):

“Although contextual and ideological placement of formerly suppressed historical figures and their narratives incurs the risk of strategic appropriation by conflicting claims to their memory, avoidance of the commemorative act obscures the myriad positions of the past and its oppressed subjects” (O’Riley, 2007: 3).

The form of scholarly storytelling at issue here is the recounting of still unfolding and living practices in over 500 years of struggle and survivance, though its ‘flashpoint events’ may be seen by settler-colonial state and society as spectacular, deemed a break from historical idleness and judged for their immediate outcomes. These practices as “ghosts of Indigenous activism past, present and future” (King, 2014), can be considered to operate in different temporalities that do not conform to history as diachronic and ordinal (a linear and developmental narrative), yet face demands to be apprehensible in settler time. That is, to put these practices “in historical

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incorporates the colonized “into the traditions and history of my land and ethnic group” but also perpetuates a sense of separate worlds he associates with an unreality (Fanon, 2004: 18-9). Fanon saw this as functioning to inhibit aggression focused on the source of abjection in the colonizer. Practices that story experience within and sustain alternative lifeworlds imbued with spirit are not deemed an appropriate response or perception of reality. Movements such as the Ghost Dance can then be seen as naively messianic rather than resistive and transformative. I saw this evoked in a recent piece on youth suicide in Attawapiskat by journalist Jorge Barrera who evocatively describes an encounter with a child who tells him about a “skeleton-like wraith that scoops up children caught walking alone after dark. “There's a thing that kills you,” said the boy. “It flies and it's big.”” Barrera goes on to say “That is one story. But there is another kind of wraith in Attawapiskat, born not of shadow but boredom, that seems to scoop up the young and plunge them into darkness” (Barrera, 2018b). Holding Ottawa accountable for promises unfulfilled and indeed to the colonial violence the community has dealt with for generations appears in this telling deferred by Fanon’s malevolent spirits.
context.” Resurgence’s subversions of and non-conformity to the boundaries of settler-colonialism’s dominant and underlying political rationality in this way has spatiotemporal dimensions.

In giving accounts of this non-conformity and haunting of classifications, the “nominally radical, or oppositional” scholar must then be vigilant against “perpetuating the structures and presuppositions of the very systems which they oppose” (on Spivak in Young, 2004: 204). This includes the racialized ethnoculturalism that has been deployed to dispossess and dominate Indigenous societies as archaic and apolitical. In Red Skin, White Masks Coulthard makes a similar injunction to Marxian critical theory on the risk of complicity if it ignores colonial dispossession (as the ‘primitive accumulation’ of land), and that this may overlook “ethical practices and preconditions required for the construction of a more just and sustainable world order” (Coulthard, 2014: 12). Historical materialist political economy, which remains so useful to diagnoses of structural colonial-capitalist imperatives, did not escape a culturalism that divided savagery from civilization and spiritual praxis from political transformation (see notes on his view of the colonized’s “magical superstructure”). Coulthard made an important intervention in amending and focusing a Marxist analysis of these imperatives, and Indigenous politics as centered in land and life-ways rather than recognition. However even its humanist and non-orthodox iterations’ more nuanced views of consciousness and ‘cultural expression,’ cannot fully account for practices of resurgence within categories of liberatory anti-colonial resistance and demands for redistribution alone.38

37 Coulthard wrote a widely read piece called “#IdleNoMore in Historical Context” during the winter we danced as a discursive intervention in this regard (Coulthard, 2014b). As a fellow Marxist materialist, Kulchyski suggests that both totalization and subversion or resistance to it “must be understood simultaneously in their synchronic, or structural, and diachronic, or historical, dimensions” (Kulchyski, 1992: 179). The need for diachronic accounting of Indigenous stories of resistance and alternatives (also suggested by Chakrabarty as discussed in the last chapter) is problematized by Rifkin, although Kulchyski does not prescribe to a view of this historical accounting in terms of a chronology of events or social formations (to classify societies chronologically). Rather he presents the conflict as between coeval social formations or in Marxist parlance that emphasizes the materiality of ‘culture,’ modes of production, which Coulthard has defined as “modes of life” (see Kulchyski, 2016; 2005: 37-42).
38 Kulchyski points out how Coulthard critiques Marx’s conception of primitive accumulation applied to Indigenous dispossession on three grounds, its “temporal framing” and “normative developmentalism” and also that colonial power relations have mostly shifted from outright coercion to mediated forms of recognition and accommodation (Kulchyski, 2016: 34). He goes on to suggest aptly that Coulthard alludes to but does not unpack a view that decolonization cannot then only be addressed to structural power relations. Kulchyski locates the problem in Coulthard’s limited engagement with a concept of totalization (both in domination and theorization) in which primitive accumulation is but “one facet and element” in its “arsenal” (2016: 40-1). Nevertheless, he suggests that “the capitalist state is structurally incapable of finding a way to operationalise or ‘recognise’ any form of difference that contradicts the core logic of capitalist totalisation” (42). I see Kulchyski’s engagement with this concept in his
It is pertinent to remind here that the phrase “specters of Marx” has been used to refer to communism, which is described as “a specter haunting Europe” in the opening lines of the Communist Manifesto. Egalitarian Indigenous social formations were also later described by Marx and Engels admiringly as “primitive communism,” a characterization of hunter-gatherer and subsistence agriculture communities inspired by Lewis Henry Morgan’s ethnography of the Haudenosaunee. The persistence of these modes of production haunted the developmental dialectical account of universal history Marx laid out, and yet prompted some to resolve this incongruity with a suggestion that “naïve ‘Indians should join the class struggle as workers’” (Kulchyski, 2016: 31-2). The phrase has also been used to refer to the ways materialist political economy haunts postmodernism and poststructuralism (with Derrida’s book of this title, see Koch, 2006; Derrida, 1993). It has been suggested Edward Said’s discourse analysis addressed the latter’s “otherworldliness” by collapsing the “traditional Marxist disciplinary base and superstructure model” (Spanos, 2009: 16), modifying the concept of cultural hegemony and disputing ‘false consciousness’ accordingly (Spanos, 2009: 23-24). While colonial subjectification through discourse is helpful to analyses of domination by consent rather than coercion, Said offered a weak account of resistance to totalization and what escapes it entirely.

Here I am most interested in Enrique Dussel’s inverse reading of the specter in Marx’s early writings, as those subjects who cannot entirely be assimilated by capital, and so neither be (entirely) accounted for by Marxism. Dussel quotes Marx’s 1844 manuscripts on how the worker is the “subjective manifestation” of capitalist alienation, and themselves a commodity whose value and physical existence is tied to the cycle of capitalism (Marx, 1959), and so:

“Political economy…does not recognize the unoccupied worker, the working man insofar as he is outside [the] work relationship. The swindler, the cheat, the beggar, the unemployed, the starving, the destitute and the criminal working man are figures which exist for it but only for other eyes - for the eyes of doctors, judges, grave-diggers, beadles, etc. Nebulous figures [specters] which do not belong within the province of political economy” (Marx quoted in Dussel, 1996: 24).

Marx’s “nebulous figures” are those not fully intelligible as disciplined or even dissenting subjects within materialist political economy’s frames of visibility, audibility and understanding,
which as per Foucault, is integral to the dominant Euro-Modern political rationality and its
governmentality. The ‘Native’ is to colonialism like the worker is to capitalism. Asserting
resurgent practices and knowledges’ spectral quality as they may appear to this rationality, and
their unintelligibility within a totalizing view of the colonial relationship and its subject
categories, is not to suggest their incoherence, especially internally to Indigenous peoples or as a
mark of inherent ‘ethnocultural’ incommensurability. Rather, it is to assert a limit that makes
their resistances, subversions and alternatives vulnerable to assimilation when disclosed in a
settler-colonial public, as a space of enunciation still characterized by asymmetrical power.

So, Indigenous peoples’ survivance and alternatives unsettle Canada, yet can and should
political theory scholars set themselves the task of thoroughly unpacking and describing how? In
the next section I consider the concept of refusal forwarded by Audra Simpson and others as an
aspect of Indigenous resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations against apprehension,
and the methodological and ethical challenge this presents to the tactical imperative of giving
accounts of its practices in scholarship. The Native Women’s Association of Canada’s response
to Stephen Harper’s 2009 Apology and its attempt at closure on an expression of contrition, was
a demand for respect, “shifting the disproportionate burden of responsibility back to the
apologizer” (Hargreaves, 2009: 107). We might consider similarly how refusal shifts the burden
of demands for disclosure and intelligibility from Indigenous peoples, to see the problem of
colonial apprehension as one for Euro-Modern ways of knowing and discoursing, and so
suggests responsibilities for changing our analytical and telling practices in the academy beyond
an apology, to a modeling of actively decolonial relations of non-domination.
PART TWO - The Challenge of Refusal

‘Reading’ Resistance in the Theatre of Apprehension

“...the question of adequate representation of subjects in the attempt to understand resistance is not purely a matter of providing better portraits of subjects in and of themselves. The importance of subjects (whether individual actors or social entities) lies not so much in who they are and how they are put together as in the projects that they construct and enact. For it is in the formulation and enactment of those projects that they both become and transform who they are, and that they sustain or transform their social and cultural universe” (Ortner, 1995: 187).

As discussed in Chapter One, I first came across the concept of refusal in the work of Audra Simpson as “ethnographic refusal” (A. Simpson, 2007). However “ethnographic refusal” is a phrase that to my awareness, was first taken up by anthropologist Sherry Ortner in her 1995 essay “Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal.” Ortner employs it to argue that many studies of resistance by oppressed peoples are limited by the lack of an ethnographic perspective, which she suggests at minimal involves attempting to “understand another life world using the self - as much of it as possible - as the instrument of knowing.” While associated with the methodology of anthropological fieldwork, she suggests that it is “as much an intellectual (and moral) positionality, a constructive and interpretive mode, as it is a bodily process in space and time,” at the core of which is a commitment to a “thickness” of cultural contextualization in interpretation (Ortner, 1995: 173). The advocacy of such an ethnographic perspective and positionality from which the outsider scholar in particular can “interpret” and “understand” resistors’ cultural difference, is critiqued by Simpson from the perspectival position of the (objectified) subjects of ethnographic survey and representation as well as Empire – the Kanien’kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke, members of the Haudensaunee Confederacy.

Simpson’s generative and positive conception of refusal, as itself a mode of Indigenous resistance to external survey and representation, including “thick” description (A. Simpson, 2016: 328), challenges even the tactical imperative to the scholarly disclosure of resurgence. Yet a kind of cultural (re) turn in giving account of their alterity in terms of Indigeneity, seems to be
advocated for by thinkers on resurgence like Coulthard and Leanne Simpson, albeit in a non-essentializing way as Kulchyski has observed (2016). Ortner’s suggestion of attention to modes of enactment and projects of transformation and sustenance rather than a reifying definition of subjects in the opening quotation seems aligned to resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientation. However what Simpson maintains and I will discuss here, is the need for attending to the relational who (not approached as treating subjects as objects or whats) and also the why of ethnographic accounts themselves. This raises the importance of a principle of self-determination in any enunciative context of asymmetrical power, and so the risk of appropriation that comes with demands for Indigenous disclosures, intelligibility and understanding – of their resistances and transformative movement as much as anything. Refusal then poses a challenge on several levels at once, ethical-political and methodological-analytical.

In some ways, this dissertation’s story is responsive to what Ortner describes as the postmodern critique of the domination/resistance binary and also the “crisis of representation in the human sciences” following the so-called postmodern and poststructuralist turn I introduced in Chapter Two, to which she at least in part attributes her conception of ethnographic refusal (citing Said, Spivak and Guha as examples, Ortner, 1995: 188). Like domination, resistance has increasingly been theorized away from the sense of organized opposition to institutionalized power such as that of the state, toward consideration of its “ambivalence,” especially around the resistive intentions and coherence of subordinated groups as the subjects of resistance. One of the thinkers Ortner associated with this decentering of resistance and its subjects is political scientist and anthropologist James Scott, whose monographs include Weapons of the Weak (1985), Domination and the Arts of Resistance (1990) and Seeing Like a State (after Ortner’s essay in 1998).

Scott’s work has a number of alignments with my and Simpson’s concerns on the colonial apprehension of Indigenous resistances and resurgence within an ethnographic discourse of Nativeness. Like one of his influences Ranajit Guha discussed in Chapter Two, his work addresses the failures of hegemonic totalization, focusing on peasant movements in Southeast Asia. He considers how strategies of subjectification by governing powers (such as the state) attempt to enforce the legibility of those governed within their sight by various techniques and technologies of rule, as domination is only possible if the dominated can be made known to them (1998). Yet, hegemony and the consent of the governed is never entirely achieved, which he sees
evidenced in the forms of what he termed “everyday resistance” by subalternized peoples (1985).\(^1\) The legibility of these resistances and their strategies’ within a public sphere of interaction between dominant and oppressed peoples, and so the enunciative domain and governing discourses of political rationality that define it, is limited. This suggests to Scott - who favors a metaphoric language of performativity - that contrary to the “official transcript” of dissent and power relations – for instance that Indigenous peoples in Canada have been idle - there are “hidden transcripts” of resistance that might be read in the wings of the theatre of apprehension as it were. These consist of “those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript” (Scott, 1990: 4-5).

In outlining what she deems three problems in the commentator refusing to take an ethnographic positionality for studies of resistance, Ortner makes some apt observations in regard to emphasizing indirect and hidden forms of resistance. These speak to the tactical imperative of disclosing and ‘explaining’ the coherence of a movement as such and its decolonial and transformative program with a rhetoric of unity. She describes these problems as “sanitizing politics,” “thinning culture” and “dissolving actors.” Sanitizing politics involves an avoidance of analyzing internal conflicts or asymmetries, and crucially any “prior and ongoing politics” among resistors - despite acknowledgement that they are “doing more than simply opposing domination, more than simply producing a virtually mechanical re-action” (Ortner, 1995: 179, 177). Gendered power dynamics among colonized peoples is a frequent and major ‘sanitization’ Ortner points to, and is indeed a preponderant issue that Indigenous feminisms confront in debates on nationhood and traditionalism. The second problem refers to a similar glossing of substantive engagement with the complex (and unsanitized) “cultural universe” of resistors, citing the materialist strains in the work of Scott and Eric Wolf among others. Yet as already mentioned, she does so mindful of critiques of a reifying culture concept and issues of reproducing notions of mystification when cultural difference is emphasized as being necessary to analyses of domination and resistance.

Ortner suggests that everyday resistance presented as a “weapon of the weak” or recourse for those with “compounded powerlessness” as a result of the “mechanical interaction of a

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\(^1\) Similarly to Foucault’s association of governmentality with normalization and predictability, Scott associates what he calls “high modernity” with an aspiration to social engineering and the valuation of technical knowledge - systematically reordering nature and human societies as uniform and so scientifically measurable through processes of simplification, manifesting in spatial and population management projects (see Chapters 1-2 in Scott, 1998). Also see notes in the Introduction to Chapters Two and Three on de Certeau and the everyday.
variety of disembodied forces,” diminishes the creative agency and coherence of resisters and can present their own “understandings and intentions” as irrelevant (Ortner, 1995: 185-6). I agree with Ortner that we must be able to refer to the internally coherent, self-referent and independent actuality or “endogenous historicity” of Indigenous lifeworlds (Comaroff quoted in Ortner, 1995: 176). This is not least against narratives of irreparable colonial damage or forms of cultural hybridity that are aimed to dispossess Indigenous nations and their powers of self-definition. In regard to resistor intentions, Indigenous resurgence centers cultural regeneration among diverse peoples, and so is not a homogenous and unitary anti-colonial resistance movement of structural liberation, against an equally homogenous and unitary mode of settler-colonial domination. However, as amorphous and sometimes ambiguous as settler-colonial power is in its sources and effects, its intentions of domination and dispossession are not ambivalent, and so neither are those of resurgence practices. And so, the language of resistance to settler-colonial state violences and Indigenous nationhoods’ haunting of the logic of elimination, is still important in effecting solidarity through storytelling that can be considered counter-hegemonic. Like Ortner, I also stand with Ann Stoler that the category of resistance itself may not be ultimately apt as an encompassing interpretive framing - especially as it makes colonialism Indigenous people’s main referent as I discuss in Chapter Six - but it is still “helpful to highlight the presence and play of power” (Ornter, 1995: 175).

The third and linked problem of “dissolving actors” Ortner identifies, relates most closely to the sense of refusal as Simpson takes it up. This is a perceived rejection by commentators of any “discursive subjectification” of resisters, when the subjecthood foisted on them by dominant powers is objectifying. Yet highlighting how as intersubjective, intersectional, sometimes contradictory social beings, resisters do not neatly occupy the normative categories expected of them according to the dominant political rationality, and so refuse a classificatory form of externally imposed subjectification, is not to suggest that in the process there is not a simultaneous deferral to alternative understandings of subjectivity, sociality, transformative

Ortner calls this their “authenticity” in full awareness of the critique of this term as referencing purity and consistency, so problematic in many ethnographic depictions of cultural Nativeness. In questioning the presentation of “incoherencies” as forms of damage she suggests they might rather be seen as forms of coherence: “Of course oppression is damaging, yet the ability of social beings to weave alternative, and sometimes brilliantly creative, forms of coherence across the damages is one of the heartening aspects of human subjectivity” (Ortner, 1995: 186). Kulchyski discusses how an anti-essentialist intervention on cultures and identities as “conjunctural” or relational against authenticity (citing James Clifford) has been taken to valorize hybridity against any bounded form of identity (citing Homi Bhabha), which loses critical and political purchase on the ground (2005: 53-4).
agency etc. in the “cultural universe” Ortner refers to. As Simpson and others have recently asserted refusal can be generative in this deferral (McGranahan, 2016). What they highlight is an ethical question of the outsider analyst’s desire for access to that universe of meaning. Herein is my fissure with Ortner’s sense of refusal, which lies in a consideration of who is refusing – scholar or resistor - how much transformative power we attribute to the former’s interpretations of practices they are studying and what is complexified when the scholar is an ‘insider’ and co-resistor.

The both indirect and direct refusals of ethnographic subjects Simpson is concerned with, are not merely what Ortner calls an “analytic byproduct” attributed to a resistor by commentators “rather than the form, of her agency” (Ornter, 1995: 185), though it is certainly not her agency’s only form. Instead, these refusals are a tactic of limiting transliteration and disclosure in an incorporative settler-colonial theatre of apprehension, in which the academy is included as a stage. When I suggest a refusal of apprehension (both direct and indirect) in Indigenous practices of resurgence, this does not equate to a postmodern “dissipating,” purely negative or anti-foundationalist posture toward collective subjecthood or knowledge production. Rather it is to consider refusal as holding a line of intelligibility against external analytical definition and classification where this may be appropriative or deformative, and also protecting space for the refiguration of still existing Indigenous life worlds and forms of self-subjectification.

What is not so clear in Ortner’s essay is the “play of power” in taking the ethnographic positionality she defends, and not just in scholars’ choice to refuse subjectification ‘on behalf of’ their interlocutors against their “textual domination” (Ortner, 1995: 188). I would say an ethnographic positionality of the minimal form of “using the self” to understand another, is present in all the studies she cites by virtue of being undertaken by cultural ‘outsiders.’ What must be reckoned with is the apprehensive desire for disclosure and knowing. Scott also does not seem to undertake this exercise in self-awareness, despite asserting the creation and defence by the dominated of “a social space in which offstage dissent…may be voiced” that is “beyond direct observation by powerholders” (Scott, 1990: xi, 4) – which includes scholars. In terms of judging resistance in a “power-laden” public, he concedes that “hidden transcripts” are produced for a “different audience” and “[w]ithout a privileged peek backstage or a rupture in the performance we have no way of calling into question the status of what might be a convincing but feigned performance” (4-5). Any scholar (insider or outsider) seeking or claiming privileged
access to *read* then also parse, judge and *make legible* hidden transcripts of resistance against the official record is at issue here as I first outline in Chapter One. Why is this disclosure necessary, who should undertake it and *for* whom?

**A Matter of Sovereignty: Audra Simpson on a Right to Refusal**

“…the people of Kahnawà:ke wed their desires for control over membership with a desire for sovereignty and a notion of nationhood. Much of that nationhood is driven by their awareness of their history as Mohawk people, their sovereignty, and their struggles for recognition of that sovereignty in the Northeast. At times, though, their notion of nationhood is driven by their refusal of recognition, their refusal to be enfolded into state logics, and their refusal, simply, to disappear” (A. Simpson, 2014: 185).

As I have already indicated, Simpson takes up the concept of ethnographic refusal differently than Ortner, not as a pejorative for the outsider scholar studying resistance movements *without* an ethnographic perspective, but rather as a posture of the Indigenous resistor preventing ethnographic capture by such external scrutiny. Simpson speaks to the coloniality of the ethnographic stance itself as it has been employed, from the perspective of Indigenous peoples made object to it. On reading her 2007 essay “On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, ‘Voice’ and Colonial Citizenship” during my undergraduate years, *refusal* had a substantial if mostly intuitive affect on me at that time. I felt the word as a political provocation on doing research about/with/for (and indeed *as*) Indigenous people in terms of consent – or rather as Simpson has put it recently, “consent’s revenge” and a *right of refusal*. My perception of this provocation has since become both honed and expanded to consider refusal as a posture that can be assumed by all subjects of scholarly knowledge (re)production - whether directly or indirectly in non-conformity to their classification - *and* as an ethical and methodological challenge with which I have grappled in writing this dissertation.

I will unpack what I suggest the premise for Indigenous refusal is, as a critique of a culturalist *ethnological reason* congealed not only in the disciplines of anthropology but also political theory in the following chapter. Here I want to focus on how her intervention triggered a gradual but inexorable landslide in my thinking on scholarly positionality and disclosures. This
moved my present project from seeking to document and define the meaning of Indigenous decolonial practices’ refigrative transformations, to considering how coloniality can be reinscribed in such an endeavor. Accounts of the flashpoint event(s) of *Idle No More* - whether to classify them as a movement of ‘recognition, resistance or resurgence?’ - precipitating my sense of refusal as an aspect of resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientation. Ortner suggests “good ethnography” provides “an understanding both of the meaning and the politics of the meaning of an event” (Ortner, 1995: 189 emphasis mine). I believe in the importance of scholarship that unpicks the latter, but have struggled with questions of how to do this without sliding into the former, where refusal suggests an academic projection of meaning onto events may be problematic.

In both her 2007 essay and 2014 monograph *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*, Simpson asks whether and how the avowal that sovereignty matters might be made manifest in the “normative work of representing and analyzing” living forms of Indigenous nationhood within (and across) settler spaces (A. Simpson, 2007: 71-2; 2014: 104). This question is motivated by the disjuncture between longstanding ethnographic representations and analyses of her community of Kahnawâ:ke and the Kanien’kehá:ka nation (citing Lewis Henry Morgan), and their own voices in the “everyday encounters” that refuse adjudication by these impositions to “enunciate repeatedly to ourselves and to outsiders that ‘this is who we are, this who you are, these are my rights’” (A. Simpson, 2007: 73). Having seemingly contradictory or fluctuating elements that do not align with established characterizations as traditional, colonial or decolonial, these enunciations – particularly around questions of membership - are deemed “improperly Iroquois or impossibly nationalist” and thus flout external recognition as either (A. Simpson, 2014: 35). For Simpson ethnographic refusal may also come implicitly or explicitly in a lack of clarification or non-disclosure, an unwillingness to speak a shared understanding or internal knowledge, or simply an unwillingness to say anything – it may come in silences. Such silence may not be an utterance but is still as at Kanehsatâ:ke, an exhortation of “Enough.”

These refusals, vocalized or not, strategized consciously or not, are assertions of authority, of rights to speak or not speak, always and unapologetically in the interest of protecting collective life as peoples in their homelands. The language of sovereignty here matters for Simpson because it can “signal different processes and intents to others in ways that are understandable” only insofar as external understanding is required – which is an awareness of
limits (A. Simpson, 2014: 105). That is, it signals a decisional authority tied to nationhood and territorial jurisdiction in a context of ongoing dispossession by settler-colonial iterations of the same - despite the consequent complexities of this language’s usage for Indigenous peoples, as I discussed in Chapter Two. It matters in short, because it is an effectual and chosen political language in/for Kahnawa’kehrö:non – regardless if it coheres with expressions of pure ‘Iroquoian culture’ as it has been defined in anthropological orthodoxy. Ethnography is refused in this sense of disregarding the categories of authoritative accounts, and also in the sense of preventing external categorization full stop. What all ethnographic refusals demonstrate according to Simpson, is enactment of sovereignty at the “very limit of discourse,” reached when representation would “bite” and compromise territory regained (A. Simpson, 2007: 74; 111). Given this, sovereignty absolutely matters methodologically in representation and analysis. It tests the probity and very possibility of representation and analysis.

The concrete instances of refusal by Kahnawa’kehrö:non that Simpson describes as “willful distancing from state-driven forms of recognition and sociability in favor of others” (2014: 16), also cue a less palpable defiance of the underlying pretensions of this settler-state monopoly. Refusal’s disregard operates in the calculated moves Simpson describes, of shunning outright those bureaucratic and homogenizing “gifts” of state recognition - such as Canadian passports or Indian status cards - while also suggesting a basic non-conformity of Kanien’kehâ:ka ways of knowing-doing-being to their assigned classifications in the dominant Euro-Modern epistemic and discursive order. And it is this order on which the effectuality of settler-colonial authority rests. Colonialism’s gifts and its givenness are, as Simpson says, shown in these acts of refusal as window dressing for an ultimately unsuccessful, if still forcefully 3

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3 Simpson (as with Turner, 2006) argues for the importance of sovereignty as a “critical language game” in the context of ongoing dispossession despite being sympathetic to fellow Kahnawá:ke scholar Taiaiake Alfred’s suggestion that sovereignty’s origins make it problematic for Indigenous peoples (Simpson, 2014: 105; see Alfred, 2001). The phrase “sovereignty matters” as been in common use at least since the influential 2005 collection of essays edited by Lenape scholar Joanne Barker - Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination. The collection transects diverse standpoints on the transliterative function of sovereignty in Indigenous intellectual and political work, perhaps the most contested and at the same time normalized of concepts, indelibly linked to that of nationhood (see also Moreton-Robinson, 2015). A few more words are merited here situating my own preference for self-determination rather than sovereignty. For my purposes here, self-determination is not interchangeable with sovereignty but I think equates more fully to the multi-dimensional decoloniality in resurgence’s epistemic reorientation in regard to Indigeneity and freedom. That is, enactment away from intelligibility within Euro-Modernity’s colonial discourses of politics and culture and its dominant approach to knowledge that forms and reinforces their boundaries. This does not diminish the force which demands Indigeneity’s connection to land and freedom be transliterated into sovereignty within a global system which still functions according to its assumptions. I do not however argue that the language of sovereignty is inherently ‘culturally’ inappropriate as I have discussed and will touch on again in the next chapter.
present, hegemonic enterprise. There is a failure of the drive to eliminate and absorb diverse and adaptable Indigenous subjectivities and socialities and their own “authorizing contexts” and “intracommunity forms of recognition,” which remain “vibrant and insistent” (A. Simpson, 2014: 11-12, 23; 189; 183).

As Coulthard and Leanne Simpson also argue, the rejection of state-based liberal recognition involves a turn away from the imbalanced exchange of gazes and address with the settler-colonial state toward forms of “collective self-recognition.” Simpson questions whether looking inward to enclaves of sovereign nationhood existing or potentially so within the bounds of the settler-state, implies an acceptance of internalization. Rather she considers a “greater principle” to instead be at work in this inward gaze that contradicts powerlessness: “to assert and be free whether this is apprehended as such or not. So in the Haudenosaunee political context it can mean recognition by another authoritative nexus (one’s own?) and thereby call the other’s into question” (A. Simpson, 2014: 24 emphasis mine). For Simpson, refusal “is simultaneously a negation of access to information and resources, as well as an affirmation of sovereignties” (Flowers, 2015: 33).

While Simpson and many Kahnawa’kehró:non favor “sovereignty” for their particular context, I offer that this greater principle can also be named self-determination and it is operationalized through refusal on several levels at once: advancing its structural sense of a people’s prerogative to choose their form of political organization and futures,⁴ and also to define themselves in relation to others – to determine their collective self. The turn from recognition politics involves rejecting (in the long run) the delegated bestowal of structures of governance (like the Indian Act system or documents of ‘citizenship plus status’) through refusal, while also asserting the operation and vitality of alternative “authoritative nexuses” concerned with self-definition and self-knowledge. In emphasizing a principle of sovereignty or self-determination, Simpson keeps the context of settler-colonial power relations squarely in the frame in terms of her presentation of refusal. It is not a vacuous celebration of unintelligibility and unaccountability that has been associated with reactionary and even fascist projects, and so aligned with those presently rearing up into focus across the West. It is a calling into question the authority of specific classificatory modes of colonial apprehension, externally imposed ways of

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⁴ That it “is a nation’s right to determine its own future as free as possible from external interference or domination by an external power...nations claim the right to choose how and by whom they will be governed, regardless of their cultural distinctiveness” (Murphy, 2001: 367).
rendering Indigenous peoples into Natives, that they be legible to state techniques and
technologies of domination and dispossession, while also marking the persistence of alternative
terms of intelligibility and accountability as nations. Simpson does acknowledge that the (re)
generative and resistive aspects of refusal are not necessarily clearly extricable and whether
some refusals are legitimate and decolonial is definitely not uncontested. Yet she maintains that
it is the “vibrancy and insistence” of Mohawk claims to authority not cultural authenticity that
must be emphasized, including in keeping such debate internal.5

So, refusal as Simpson presents it, does not exclude but centers consideration of what
Coulthard refers to as “ethical practices and preconditions” for just external relations. However
this involves an ongoing need to hold protected spaces for refiguring Indigenous lifeworlds and
enacting practices of freedom during and after liberatory processes of decolonization. This
includes epistemic and discursive space and so as I will consider further below, refusal prompts
consideration of ethical practices and preconditions for the public disclosure of both resurgent
and resistive practices in scholarship. Here Kanien’kehá:ka scholar Kahente Horn-Miller’s recent
discussion of refusal to prove complex conceptions of belonging such as those in play in
Kahnawá:ke against settler-colonial “models of Indigeneity” can be referenced as example. She
draws on Métis artist David Garneau’s concept of “irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality” to
discuss what refusal generatively gestures toward:

“Indigenous intellectual spaces that exist apart from a non-Indigenous gaze and
interlocution …They are gatherings and conversations where Indigeneity is
performed apart from a settler audience. They are not a show, but an expression and

5 While my discussion of refusal here is not aimed to outline or debate the contours of Simpson’s nationalism vis-à-
vis others, an example of this is merited. Simpson addresses at length the gendered dynamics of this debate in regard
to the “marry out, get out” rule of the Mohawk Council in Kahnawá:ke (MCK), denying residency to those who
have intermarried, with Mohawk women bearing much of the dislocations and disenfranchisements of the Indian
Act’s sexist provisions on status and reserve residency, as well as the responses to the reinstatement of both with
Bill C-31 (2014, chapter 6). Nevertheless her nationalist conception of refusal still might be contested for the
potential to what Ortner called “sanitizing politics.” In determining what must be refused as a colonial imposition,
appeals to nationalism in defense of racialized or gendered policy have long been debated by Indigenous feminist
scholars, for example in regard to rejecting human rights discourse and legal mechanisms as a screen for lateral
violence and misogyny (see Fiske, 1996 and Green, 2017). In regard to the MCK policy, the Quebec Superior Court
recently found it in contravention of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in a case brought by 16 plaintifís. MCK
spokesperson Joe Delaronde responded, “No one says you can't marry who you want. All it says is if you do that,
you can't live on this territory...For this community, they look at it as a matter of survival, the only place where we
can be us.” In his decision Justice Thomas Davis determined that the rule’s basis is in a “stereotypical belief” that
“non-native spouses will use the resources and land of the band in a way that is detrimental to it and that will have a
negative impact on the ability of the band to protect its culture and its land” (quoted in CBC News, 2018; for historic
context on this view see A. Simpson, 2014: 60-63 and 2000).
celebration of continuity without witnessing by people who are not equal performers” (Horn-Miller, 2018: 355).

The ethic suggested by refusal, as conscientiousness or conscientious behavior according to commitment to a principle, is centered on one of self-determination. It is also, as I will consider in Chapter Five, appreciation for what cannot be discounted in acting - its uncertainties and risks, which include colonial apprehension in a context in which the full actualization of self-determination as a relational principle that must be honoured by all for respectful coexistence, is not. Before moving on to the ethical and methodological challenge of refusal for scholarship, I would like to briefly address another possible objection to the concept of refusal as Simpson takes it up, which is whether it is appropriate to project it beyond the context of her work and Mohawk community.

Simpson’s work reflects on her own positionality as an insider, or in her term “familiar” scholar, whose work is enfolded in the specific questions and practices of belonging in Kahnawá:ke, the Kanien’kehá:ka nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy as they interface, intersect or interrupt representational, physical and juridical border containments by anthropology and the Canadian and U.S. settler-states. However Indigenous refusal and its animating ethical principle of self-determination that she describes, resonates more widely than the stated purview of her work. That is, more widely than acts of a specifically Kahnawa’kehró:non “strident” sovereignty from their community’s unique positioning might superficially imply. This is not to say the specifically Mohawk refusals Simpson discusses should be taken as an argument they should be transposed to other contexts in which for example, rejecting ‘gifts’ of settler-state recognition outright is not a viable prospect for reasons of resources and safety etc. Rather, that diverse forms of refusal can be engaged and perceived as extant as well as a reorientation advocated in resurgence discourse.

Here I would point to my contention that there is a double move in refusal as Simpson describes it. There are direct and what some might term conscious and overt tactical rejections of recognition’s demands for intelligibility, which are responsive to direct assertions of structural power by the settler-state. There are also indirect refusals of colonial totalization and innate nonconformity of Indigenous practices and self-conceptions to the dominant political rationality and Euro-Modern categories of the political and ethno-cultural. That is, refusals responding to
equally indirect discursive and epistemic colonial containment strategies. The first form of refusal as explicit rejection of subjecting ‘gifts’ from the state like passports can also involve the second, and perhaps pertains most clearly to a confrontational anti-colonial stance often attributed to Kahnawá:ke and Mohawk politics. Yet everyday resistances or what Tully calls “infra-political” subversions and actions less direct, visible or audible, including those which reflect categorical non-conformity, may be the form of refusal already most prevalent and arguable across contexts.

The question of locations of and for Indigenous refusal and so also the principle of self-determination, prompts appraisal of how apprehension is actuated and perpetuated in academia. Non-disclosure as a mode of ethnographic refusal that Simpson points to, challenges scholarly accounts of resistance and resurgence practices and suggests disruption of the aims and authority of the Academy and its supposed knowledge acquisition for its own sake. That is, beyond the strategic acquisitiveness of the settler-state for and by techniques and technologies of governmentality, such as official biocultural documentations of Indigenous people. Before considering issues of non-disclosure further, the coloniality of a presumed ‘right to know’ in scholarship should be addressed.

Bad Indians: Refusing the Settler’s ‘Right to Know’

“Settler codes express the putative right of the settler to know and thus to govern all the people, land, flora, fauna, customs, cultures, sexualities in his seized territory. To refuse settler sovereignty is to refuse the settler’s unquestioned right to know, and to resist the agenda to expand the knowledge territory of the settler colonial nation” (Tuck and Yang, 2014a: 812).

While influencing my sense of apprehension as a strategy of colonial domination and dispossession, Simpson’s greatest intercession in my project came with the contention that we must then think of “forms of analysis after such an accounting…in terms of scenes of apprehension – materially and symbolically shaped spaces of discernment that distill into ‘representations’ or renderings of difference that govern the way that we know things” (A. Simpson, 2014: 102). These scenes include the settler-colonial state and the Academy writ large, calling the representational and analytic practices of scholars who trade in the discourses of
culture and politics to account. This is an accounting of how the asymmetrical play of power is caught up in ways of knowing Indigenous life, and how knowledge (re)produced in scholarship may perpetuate an extractive colonial gaze oriented to affirming settler-colonial normativity. A clear example is how Canadian law adjudicates Indigenous political rights and title as claims requiring proof through formalist measures of adherence to ‘traditionally Native’ cultural practices, employing, in very literal terms, the ethnographic work of scholars.

Yet political theory and political science as much as anthropology can be just as Eurocentrically ethno-logical, as I unpack in Chapter Four. This may be easiest to perceive with political science research’s accounts of Indigenous communities’ decolonial struggles, but political theory can also project a dominant imaginary and grammar of political rationality (including of dissent) onto Indigenous peoples in an effort to analyze and understand these struggles. As Maori methodologist Linda Tuhiwai-Smith relates, in the Euro-Modern vein “research is about satisfying a need to know, and a need to extend the boundaries of existing knowledge through a process of systematic inquiry” (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012: 172). When the (objectifying) subjection of ‘the Native’ is imperative to rule, dispossession and domination, the apprehensive desire for knowledge used to this end is expressed as a putative right of those undertaking inquiry. Refusal as an ethical injunction against satisfying this desire and accepting this right, then poses the challenge of considering “forms of analysis after such an accounting.”

Some methodological considerations on analytically modeling a posture of refusal in scholarship can be found in the work of Eve Tuck (Unangax Aleut) and K. Wayne Yang, who have also been provoked by Simpson. They interpret scholarly refusal as an “analytic practice that addresses forms of inquiry as invasion” of the “knowledge territories” of academia’s Others - Indigenous peoples being social science’s prime Others in many respects (Tuck & Yang, 2014a: 811; Tuck & Yang, 2014b). This practice is described as a resolute “ethic of studying to object.” It involves taking an explicitly ethical standpoint objecting to treating people(s) as research objects but also (and here is the rub) incorporative or “domesticating” maneuvers of subjectification in analytical accounts of them that may achieve the same. As Tuck and Yang describe

“The refusal stance is an attribute of objecting objects, and it is a choice, a code of ethics, a stance to be assumed, for refusing researchers. Refusal is a stance in that it is resolute. It is the posture of an object that will not be removed nor possessed…”
goal of refusal is not for objects to become subjects in the academy, but contrarily, to object to the very processes of objectification/subjection” (Tuck & Yang, 2014a: 814). They suggest that the ways in which research object/subjects attempt to block these processes through various forms of withholding, prompt scholars to consider how they may conscientiously assume a mirror posture to actively prevent this in their work.

Tuck and Yang focus their ‘objection’ on what Tuck elsewhere calls “damage-centered” social science research that trades in the commodified and fetishized “pain of others” (see Tuck, 2009). Extractive appropriation of the voices and stories of marginalized and oppressed communities is frequently undertaken by outsider scholars in the name of advocacy, legitimizing them and thereby gathering “needed material or political resources” for those communities in pain (Tuck & Yang, 2014a: 812; 2014b: 226-7). Carole McGranahan situates iterations of reflection on such a well-trodden problem as damage-centered research in the “current moment” of work on refusal, with predecessors “earlier ethnographic writings on violence, including refusals to write, narrate, or interpret pain” (McGranahan, 2016: 321). Here I contend that there is a further depth to the challenge of Indigenous refusal in and for scholarship in terms of methodological/analytical ethics that relates to Indigenous peoples becoming “subjects in the academy.” This depth of challenge is brought to bear in research that is not overtly damage-centered, and even more complexly and insidiously, in the work of ‘allied’ or Indigenous/“familiar” intellectuals and activists when deemed ‘representative’ of their Othered communities. “Inquiry as invasion” is more straightforwardly identified when undertaken by overtly unethical or naïvely well-intended outsiders concentrating on drawing out narratives of pain that emphasize colonial damage. However refusal more radically (and difficultly for Indigenous and allied scholars), brings into focus the desire for ‘Native’ stories of and knowledges for resistances, subversions and alternatives, especially when told of to align with a dominant language of dissent, liberation and change. This indicates how avoiding appropriation

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6 Tuck and Yang point to three “axioms” establishing the concrete need for scholarly refusal and these follow upon each other: answering Spivak’s question via bell hooks, that “the subaltern can speak, but is only invited to speak her/our pain”; that this indicates “there are some forms of knowledge that the academy doesn’t deserve” and with this acknowledgement that “research may not be the intervention that is needed” (Tuck & Yang, 2014b).  
7 Though it has become a prevalent term for self-situating in the past decade, not all settler and non-Indigenous scholars take up allyship as unproblematic, as this has been associated with a “declarative or wholesale” label that can evacuate agency and the relational implications and responsibilities of being a settler (Hargreaves, 2017: ix; also Flowers, 2015: 32-33; for a collection of work considering this concept see Alliances edited Davis, 2010).
and judging the who’s and why’s of scholarly imperatives of disengagement, non-disclosure and disclosure is far from straightforward.

This can be unpacked further by considering what the problem Tuck and Yang deem scholarly refusal is at base responsive to, academia’s complicity (along with the state) in settler-colonial forms of “codification,” which they acknowledge is a concept not generally considered in regard to qualitative forms of inquiry, though prevalent in media studies following Stuart Hall (Hall, 2006). In its standard sense, to code/encode involves converting information from one form into another by designating signs or symbols to represent and convey (or signify) that information, producing a code OR substituting/replacing existing code with another. Codification involves systematizing a particular code and its rules to formalize and standardize the organization and communication of information. Colonial codification as Tuck and Yang present it can be described as an invasive practice and process of signification that orders people and their worlds according to a set of classificatory rules that establish colonizer claims to dominion over and ownership of territory, of land and knowledge.8 Observations of Indigenous people(s) are in this mode, made and processed not dialogically or in their own self-determined terms as living beings, but are seen, read and described to conform to the requirements of extractive appropriation for the benefit of others. Indigenous peoples are in this way codified as objects or resources of knowledge, though attached to a range of possible meanings for the difference of their ways of being, doing and knowing according to the needs of territorial expansion. Conformity to this codification (as Native objects of inquiry), establishes the enunciative domain

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8 I should unpack the concepts of signification and codification here in relation to my discussion of the discursive production of knowledge and coloniality in Chapter Two. In linguistics parlance following Saussure, signification is the conveyance of meaning using signs. Signs are made up of the observable/sense-able or material representation of something, the signifier (a word, mark, gesture, sound) and the conceptual meaning that is being signified by it. Tuck and Yang define codification this way: “A code is a cipher, a system of signifiers that make words meaningful. To codify is to manage, to arrange in an order that is meaningful to the coder...Codes stand in for objectified living things...Observations, when encoded, are governed by the concealed language of the code - what is meaningful derives from the code, not from what is observed.” (Tuck & Yang, 2014a: 812). This presentation of codification refutes Western logocentrism, suggesting meaning is not inherent in the objects of representation, as Hall suggests: “Reality exists outside language, but it is constantly mediated by and through language: and what we can know and say has to be produced in and through discourse. Discursive “knowledge” is the product not of the transparent representation of the “real” in language but of the articulation of language on real relations and conditions. Thus there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code” (Hall, 2006: 166-7).

Logocentrism coupled with colonial desire, produced a Eurocentric domain of enunciation, an order of communication, knowledge and intelligibility violent to Indigenous peoples. I thus take Tuck and Yang’s terminology of “codification” as corresponding to the ethnological reason of practices and processes of signification I describe in the next chapter.
Indigenous peoples can be legible, visible and audible within, how they can be known and then make claims that can be read, seen, heard. The problem is not just misrepresentation, but discursive subjectification as subjection, to render Indigenous peoples intelligible in the service of colonial domination and dispossession.

Tuck and Yang concentrate on the reproduction and entrenchment of narratives made possible through codifications judged detrimental to Indigenous life (‘victimization’ for example), yet as Simpson’s account of Mohawk refusals suggest, these too involve Indigenous encoding of resistances to protect spaces for enacting alternative socialities and practices of freedom, and so also internal practices of decoding. Yet if as Ashis Nandy posits, “an ethically sensitive and culturally rooted alternative social knowledge is already partly available outside the modern social sciences,” particularly in those who have been their “‘subjects’” and “experimentees” (Nandy, 2009: xvii), should theory attempt to decode “deeply coded strategies of resistance” (Kulchyski, 1992: 173-4), thereby allowing access to such shielded knowledges?

A need for research on/with Indigenous peoples is often presented in terms of respect, to forward their ‘wisdom’ (a distillation of specific and situated Indigenous voices and stories into a kind of essence) as for the benefit of all, with the assertion of a right to know frequently glossed with reference to concepts of generosity and reciprocity in Indigenous ethics of sharing. Indigenous decolonial struggles for self-determination are then made struggles for the earth, for a unifying global future etc.  

Leanne Simpson’s concern on the commodification of Indigenous alternatives raised to Naomi Klein, who framed her questions in the terms of her anti-capitalist activism in their Idle No More interviews, might be considered as example. Tuck and Yang suggest critical Indigenous scholars in particular, must still work to argue there is apprehensive colonial desire in (ethnographic) research and that transposing stories into public data must be objected to, against accusations that refusal is contrary to an ideal of academic freedom, is anti-humanist and so non-humanitarian, a “violation of the universal benefits of knowledge production, and perhaps of humanity itself” (Tuck & Yang, 2014b: 238; see also Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012: 226). And this desire is not confined to ‘outsider theft,’ whether brazenly in full colonial colours or the soft guise of naïve or canny humanism that is assimilatory.

9 A headline of Yes! Magazine that made me cringe on reading it at the time here comes to mind: “For a Future that Won’t Destroy Life on Earth, Look to the Global Indigenous Uprising” (see Moe, 2013).
I can here refer briefly to one site of critique on ‘decoding’ and extractive appropriation in regard to the ‘need’ to represent, narrativize and publicize Indigenous stories, experiences and knowledge practices either damage/trauma or resistance/resilience centered, which is violence against Indigenous women, girls, transgender and two-spirit people (IWGT2S) in Canada. This is an area of consideration with visceral impacts ‘on the ground’ to which I am very close as a community organizer for the Stolen Sisters Memorial March in Lekwungen and W’SÁNEĆ territories (Victoria, B.C.), though I will here refer to articulations of the critique in scholarship.

There have been many recent contributions to the literature on gendered and racist violence focused on missing and murdered IWGT2S people, the role of anti-violence research and the politics of redress and memorial, including several monographs that consider testimonials (in various forms) in an era of official reconciliation discourse and its healing rhetoric. Giving accounts considered as a form of truth telling, suggests a calling to account of this systemic and systematic violence in Canada (its institutional collusions and societal indifferences). State initiatives to solicit, collect and publicize testimonials, such as the community hearings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls launched in 2017 reflect such a view, which is not uncontested in its appropriative terms of reference. For example, in Violence Against Indigenous Women (2017) Allison Hargreaves posits her project as troubling “the now commonplace activist tenet” that representation in the ‘public record,’ according increased visibility and ‘voice’ to marginalized issues and people, can lead to positive social-structural transformations (Hargreaves, 2017: 3). This troubling is informed by several shifts: concerns with anti-violence advocacy decentering IWGT2S community voices and needs and individualizing and pathologizing them as having a “high risk lifestyle” (Eberts, 2017), away from addressing the normalization of violence due to the gendered eliminatory logic of settler-colonialism; critical Indigenous scholarship critiquing the assimilative operation of liberal recognition politics (out of which refusal has become conceptually prominent); and work on redress disputing that truth and justice will always prevail against the ‘facts’ of persistent power relations (which I will consider in chapters Five and Six).

In regard to appropriation, Hargreaves cites Tuck and Yang’s call to consider what may be incommensurable between Indigenous decolonial and human or civil rights projects and so

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10 See for example, Hargreaves, 2017, Dean, 2015; also Million, 2013 and Emberley, 2015.
11 See Hunt, 2014a & b; Hunt & Sayers, 2013; Flowers, 2015: 37. Kwakwaka’wakw geographer and activist Sarah Hunt has also been a local Memorial March organizer and is a resonant and critical voice on gendered violence here.
distinguish between the ways “Indigenous stories of violence are told and received in settler-colonial contexts” in order to theorize “decolonizing approaches to anti-violence resistance” (Hargreaves, 2017: 16-18, 4). In a 2015 essay Leey’qsun scholar Rachel Flowers (and previous fellow organizer of the Memorial March in Lekwungen and W’SÁNEĆ), links an account of this incommensurability and the enunciative limits for stories of resistance in these contexts. She points to the discursive collapse and parsing of Indigenous decolonial struggles into those around anti-violence, anti-capitalism, environmentalism etc., and a discursive separation of Indigenous anger, especially women’s, from love, prevalent in reconciliation talk emphasizing forgiveness and sharing. However Flowers more damningly points to this prevalence in discourse on radical solidarity or “co-resistance,” as dictating the terms of engagement for an obliged future of co-existence and disassociating settler subjecthood from settler-colonial structures, in ways that “position the settler at the heart of decolonization movements” (Flowers, 2015: 35-8). She includes commentaries on INM (citing Irlbacher-Fox, 2014a & 2014b), and here speaks directly to my own consternation that shifted this dissertation project. This also echoes earlier concerns in regard to Occupy Wall Street and designations of Indigenous struggles in the terms of other protest or ‘new social movements’: “in the case of Idle No More, struggles that began in our communities were co-opted by settler allies, our messages were distorted, and the original voices, such as those of Indigenous women, were silenced in our own sites of resistance” (Flowers, 2015: 38).

Flowers’ observations and unapologetic stance also indicate how refusal is associated with a renewed interest in the affective such as feelings of love, but in particular the both destructive and generative transformative power of anger and resentment, as a mode of expression and action denied Indigenous peoples.\footnote{These observations are not new, see Million, 2009: 62-4. Flowers’ title mirrors that of a text by Thomas Brudholm (see Coulthard, 2014: 107), Coulthard is interested in theoretically recuperating the concept of 	extit{ressentiment} as productive (see Coulthard, 2013a, 20013b, 2014: chapter 4; also L. Simpson, 2015; Burman, 2016). Fanon presented resentment as a state of inaction for the colonized, which can be emerged from with a shift to anger and then violent negation of the colonizer as an enemy rather than subject of envy. While acknowledging Fanon’s view of some Native expressions of resentment as “retrograde,” Coulthard refers to both resentment and anger as coequal elements of 	extit{ressentiment}. However, in my reading of Fanon I see resentment portrayed as always a defensive and degenerative condition distinguished from the opening to revolutionary creativity that comes with an eruption of anger. Anger understood as a form of antagonism which has the potential of re-engaging an agency distinct from the reactive and stultifying deferral of resentment, which can be slid back into if the productive opportunity fomented by anger is not grasped ‘while the iron is hot’ to use Sartre’s phrase. But certainly the conciliatory settler-colonial discourse regarding Indigenous anger considers it also a reactionary and “frustrated” state, exceeded only with an empowering transcendence to love (Flowers, 2015: 41).} As previously discussed, settler-colonial
studies addresses this denial in regard to the settler’s unsettled state and the settler-state’s perception of threat. Settler anger and resentment is righteous when Indigenous people express anger that is ‘not sensible’ or ‘against type,’ and so refuse to be ‘good Indians’ (see Day, 2010). This can here be aligned with how Audra Simpson describes the good ethnographic informant: “a “good Indian” is an Indian that does not threaten white people, is knowledgeable about his/her culture and history, and is forthcoming about that knowledge with white people” (A. Simpson, 2014: 81; also Coulthard, 2013a, 2013b). The apprehensive colonial desire to know in order to control is, to reference Flowers on the Hul’qumi’num’ language word for settlers as hwulunitum, a hunger that wants absolution and affirmation of being “good settlers” (Flowers, 2015: 38) and labels Indigenous people ‘bad Indians’ when they deny its satiation.

Along with an ethical and political reckoning of ‘allyship’ on the ground as a matter of self-determination and so a right of refusal, this is a concern that demands a deep calling to account of the academy in feeding settler knowledge desires, and analytical and disclosing practices that filter and distort Indigenous stories into classifications amenable to colonial subjectification, whether as good Indians or bad. Ethnographic refusals are blockades to knowledge territory. As the disruption of the flow of resources at Kanéhsatà:ké provoked settler anger, so too will its practice in scholarship. This cues another important consideration of attending to affect that is centered on disclosure and a consideration of the need to create and protect spaces of “everyday” resistance and refiguration and indeed, practices of solidarity as ‘intimate’ spaces (a contribution of queer decolonial theory, see Hunt & Holmes, 2015). Flowers suggests this protection is certainly motivated by a fierce love, but one which is often necessarily inward-turning in settler-colonial contexts (40). I will consider an Indigenous feminist perspective on the delegitimizing ‘feminization’ of affect (Million, 2009), the public/private distinction and the disclosure of stories in chapters Five to Eight. Here I want to focus on withholding, inward-looking or exclusionary elements of refusal - what is not said - and its challenge to the also self-affirmative tactical imperative of disclosure.

13 Alfred has spoken to the Settler reaction to the epistemic and discursive reorientation inward as likely to be “personal, emotional, visceral.” He also cites Albert Memmi on “the “colonizers who refuse” to accept their position and role in the unjust state, usually left-wing intellectuals” whose “theoretical indignation” and “intellectual deconstructions of power” do not match their willingness to act against their privilege (Alfred, 2005a: 104-5).
“Rather than stops, or impediments to knowing, those limits may be expansive in what they do not tell us.” (A. Simpson, 2007: 78).

What Rachel Flowers highlights very well, is the disjuncture in attempts at narrativizing Indigenous decolonial resistance and resurgence in inappropriate discursive terms and a concern of the appropriative pull of a domain of enunciation that is deemed ‘the public.’ Refusal is as Tuck and Yang present and, in the Foucaultian parlance Flowers also uses, a process of desubjectification (Flowers, 2015: 42). Simpson clarifies the stakes of telling in this settler-colonial theatre of apprehension succinctly, and articulates the challenge of refusal for scholarship:

“This is not because of the centrality of esoteric and sacred knowledge. Rather, the deep context of dispossession, of containment, of a skewed authoritative axis and the ongoing structure of both settler colonialism and its disavowal make writing and analysis a careful, complex instantiation of jurisdiction and authority...My notion of refusal articulates a mode of sovereign authority over the presentation of ethnographic data, and so does not present “everything.” This is for the express purpose of protecting the concerns of the community. It acknowledges the asymmetrical power relations that inform the research and writing about native lives and politics, and it does not presume that they are on equal footing with anyone. This presumption of equal footing is false.” (Simpson, 2014: 105)

Giving accounts of Indigenous experiences and practices, while perhaps not objectifying Indigenous people/s outright through trauma-centered research and the extraction of pain narratives, may still perform colonial apprehension in the attempt to ‘read’ and retell stories of resistance and resurgence. The issue of incommensurability that refusal indicates is not “cross-cultural” communication, although there is epistemic and discursive difference and this is important to consider for ‘outsider’ scholars engaging Indigenous peoples around traditional knowledges (Latulippe, 2015). My concern here is Tuck and Yang’s conception of the outsider scholar, Simpson’s injunctions on forms of analysis after refusal and the question of non-disclosure in a settler-colonial context.
Tuck and Yang suggest that refusal upends the valorization of voice in scholarship when the inclusion and foregrounding of the subject of research’s ‘authentic’ perspective is presented as a means of legitimation, without accounting for how these voices become absorbed into certain subject typologies and processed as data amenable to research. They also extend this critique to a centering of the Indigenous or marginalized scholar’s voice, that the practice of autoethnography (in its broadest usage) can involve an expectation to perform desired subjugated knowledges in a way that re-codes them for academic consumption (Tuck & Yang 2014b: 230). Most Indigenous scholars emphasize self-location in one’s work as a crucial form of self-reflexivity, contextualizing our relations and affirming accountability (Absolon & Willett, 2005; Absolon, 2011: 13-18; Kovach et al, 2013). However this is not the same as ethnography, which in regard to Indigenous peoples is arguably bound up with settler-colonial processes of subjectification that operate an “epistemological surveillance” - the internalization of which is not limited to those scholars, discourses and methodologies “blind” to the colonial difference (Calderon, 2016).  

I will consider the ethnological capture of Indigeneity as Nativeness and political theory further in the next chapter. It will suffice here to indicate that for Tuck and Yang, the stance of refusal for all scholars is not to reject any assertion of critical understanding or speech but involves an ethics of choosing how to pursue such understanding and how to speak it. Rather than just making what they view as a “passive” choice not to tell anything, they endorse the critical maneuver of refofusing “the unit of analysis, away from people, and toward the relationships between people and institutions of power” (Tuck & Yang, 2014c: 815). It is in this reorientation, advocated for in many critical methodologies, that they see refusal as generative and not merely prohibitive. Yet, in expounding on the role of refusing scholars in their exchanges with research interlocutors as primarily one of dialogical or discursive limitation and non-disclosures, Tuck and Yang seem to present ‘the scholar’ as foremost an outsider position, detached from their contexts of study, albeit not claiming objectivity. The somewhat nebulous sense of how insider/outsider is conceptualized in Tuck and Yang’s work, prompts a more

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14 My efforts here to describe how the problem of apprehension is woven into my own story as a scholar, may be construed by some as ‘autoethnographic.’ However in keeping with the nuances of terminology required to keep the origins of ethnological thinking in focus for my purposes in this project, I will suggest that the reflexivity of self-situating with autobiographical detail is not necessarily ‘ethnographic,’ which evokes the authoritative survey impelled by a classificatory and definitional imperative around the ethnological subject as I discuss in the following chapter.
expansive consideration of what refusal *does* and *involves* relationally in research exchanges, aside from motivating an analytical shift from ethnography to the examination of power dynamics in scholarship. Refusal intercepts colonial forms of Indigenous peoples’ (re)codification into legible object/subjects at the borders of the settler-dominated enunciative domain, denying expansion of its reach. But where are these borders and who holds them?

In this I would return to what is generative and substantive in Indigenous refusing subjects’ own simultaneous practices of encoding and decoding that Simpson gestures to. A consideration of what refusal does and involves expands from a straightforward inside/outside relation when we *defocus* from an inside/outside binary - to perceive the multiple discursive relations in a research exchange that may be concurrent with, overlapping or parallel to those between *any* scholar implicated in institutions of power and their interlocutors. This defocusing is significant when considering the intricate reciprocities of ‘insider’ or as Simpson significantly puts it, *familiar* Indigenous scholarship. Consider Tuck and Yang’s depiction of how borders of enunciation are collaboratively drawn in Audra Simpson’s exchanges with interlocutors, who are also fellow community members in Kahnawá:ke:

“The interviewee performs refusal by speaking in pointedly chosen phrases to indicate a shared/common knowledge, but also an unwillingness to say more, to demarcate the limits of what might be made public, or explicit. The second dimension of refusal is in the researcher’s (Simpson’s) accounting of the exchange, in which she installs limits on the intelligibility of what was at work, what was said and not said, for her readers…In short, researcher and researched refuse to fulfill the ethnographic want for a speaking subaltern” (Tuck & Yang, 2014b: 239).

Tuck and Yang suggest the seeming absence, the unutterable/unuttered space of knowing around which these limits to intelligibility are drawn, redirects attention to the operation of those mechanisms of power that desire scrutiny and objectification of the subjugated Other. Thus refusal is not analytically “subtractive” but generative – just not around the desired object.\(^{15}\)

\(^{15}\) This aligns with what Veracini considers the shift of settler and non-Indigenous scholars in settler-colonial studies to what settlers do and think rather than Indigenous peoples to visibilize or mark them and so keep power in the analytic frame in order to address “the possibility that, despite attempts to decolonize our gaze, we continue understanding the settler as normative” (Veracini, 2010: 15 also 121 note 48). The shift of analytical gaze has long been prevalent in the work of critics of colour such as Toni Morrison who described her project as to “avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served” (quoted in Moreton-Robinson, 2002: 33).
The rejection of representation and representability through the deflection of the reader’s gaze and silence of the Other/Native does not fixate on the non-visible and inaudible substance (of which there may be much). Nor does it ‘invisibilize’ and ‘mute’ Indigenous presence and voice, but rather denies their extraction and coding within the parameters of settler-colonial intelligibility. This much Tuck and Yang emphasize, however in Simpson’s exchanges, refusal is not solely the installation of limits that re-direct external scrutiny and shift analyses to clearly distinguishable and asymmetrical inside/outside or dominant/subjugated power/knowledge relations. In a function that only operates between ‘familiars,’ refusal is also the only externally obfuscated communication of shared knowledge. With their “pointedly chosen phrases,” the interlocutor and Simpson are not just preventing coding of one kind, but themselves encoding and decoding some of the substance in the unutterable/unuttered space of knowing to which their exchange refers. We need not speak something to say it. Performing the “calculus” of refusal is to consider “what you need to know and what I refuse to write” (Simpson, 2014: 105). The meaning of code as cipher here comes into play as a form of encrypted language that distracts, decoys and diverts, while also relaying targeted and purposeful messages between those in the know. This signals refusal’s (re) generative dimension of importance to ‘internal’ Indigenous processes of signification and meaning making that can evade colonial apprehension in public contexts of asymmetrical power, including the venue and stages of written scholarship.¹⁶

The question remains if and how a sense of these familiar processes of encoding and decoding themselves may be disclosed, and what may be tactically required for decolonial politics in accounts of Indigenous resistances, subversions and resurgent alternatives. Here I am thinking in particular of the position of Indigenous re-searchers (Absolon, 2011), inside/outside by virtue of their roles as academics, whose inquiry aims to be in the service of decolonization. This is assuming that Indigenous public, scholarly storytelling other than critique is still deemed possible in a settler-colonial context when ethnographic refusal is accounted for. Aside from only generating further and potentially endless analyses on the coloniality of power, that only address resistance and subversions to it as counter-hegemonic oppositions, what about

¹⁶ Stuart Hall considers such questions in regard to asymmetrical communicative contexts and a “lack of equivalence” between those in an exchange (2006: 166).
¹⁷ Absolon (Anishnaabe) prefers the term ‘re-searcher’ to ‘researcher’ in her discussion of Indigenous methodologies or “ways of coming to know.” I appreciate how this indicates a regenerative orientation to knowledge production and disrupts the stigma of research as a “dirty word” to many Indigenous people and communities (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012).
theorizing toward affirming self-determining Indigenous alternatives? While shifting analyses to disclose asymmetrical power dynamics does not victimize Indigenous peoples, it still fixates on a relationship of domination. What of articulating the scale, scope and effect of refigurative practices that are happening ‘on the ground’ as a contribution (however limited) toward emboldening them and energizing their affinities? Yet in avoiding *ethnography*, how can we account for colonial apprehension in the academy not only in modes of processing Indigenous stories into settler-consumable information, but in the ‘coding languages’ of its disciplinary fields of knowledge such as political theory, themselves deeply implicated in ethnological typologies that have served Indigenous dispossession and domination?

Though readily perceptible colonial coding languages of politics have been employed subversively and strategically by Indigenous scholars and communities, as Simpson indicates of *sovereignty* by the Kanien'kehá:ka, we are also faced with more insidious assimilations in ostensibly ‘new’ and ‘allied’ languages of liberation and change that still make old moves to ethnological classification problematic to Indigenous politics. These may even offer an appeal to the evasion of apprehension, but do not account for how Indigenous refusals of colonizing demands for intelligibility also appeal to refigurations of other rationalities and accountabilities. To return to the issues of activist discourses of co-resistance, as a number of theorists such as Mark Rifkin have observed, new social movement literature has drawn on poststructuralist theory (particularly Deleuze and Guttari’s “nomad” and “assemblage”), as allowing “for a scrambling of sides that is illegible to state practices of surveillance, control, banishment, and extermination” (Puar quoted in Rifkin, 2014: 157). Yet while critiquing Euro-Modern eliminatory logics, they accept and instantiate a universal subjecthood that is “lacking a determinate community and spatiality,” a differential identity and emplacement (157; also Wuthnow, 2002). While the uncertainties and ambivalences of empire are brought forward, so too are those of its resisters in ways that open their discourses to critical attack.

Refusal takes a stand that Indigenous peoples know who they are, where they are, what they are doing and why. What is at issue is the who, where, what and why of disclosing this critical understanding and subjugated knowledges, and so the role of Indigenous scholars as

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18 For an indication of the apprehensiveness of how this type of theory has been taken up without enough account of politics and the desire and right to know, one can consider the title of the following article: “I Got to Know Them in a New Way”: Rela(y/t)ing Rhizomes and Community-Based Knowledge (Brokers’) Transformation of Western and Indigenous Knowledge” (Fornssler et al, 2014).
inside/outside, whose relative privileges and informant status as either are not clear-cut or guaranteed by identification or intentions. Any public disclosures accessible to all, whether on the ground at a rally, a hearing or in the academy, require judgments on the limits of enunciation and what in a settler-colonial context should be “for Indigenous eyes only” (Waziyatawin & Yellowbird, 2005). As discussed in the previous chapter, in regard to critical theory Dale Turner has laid out an argument for the need to engage in the language of the dominant political rationality (such as sovereignty) as a defensive posture. In this he also suggests a model for the role of Euro-Western trained Indigenous scholars in assessing and holding the borders of enunciation against ethnographic capture. Focusing on traditional knowledges and philosophy (particularly what Simpson might call the “esoteric and sacred”), he advocates an “intellectual division of labor” in which scholars might help to guard space for the regeneration of Indigenous knowledge systems as “word warriors” by “protecting Indigenous philosophy from unjust European philosophical inquiry” (Turner, 2006: 109). In regard to what this involves, Turner considers Cherokee thinker Eva Marie Garroute’s conception of “radical Indigenism,” as a project of legitimating Indigenous philosophies on their own terms in the Academy as intellectual orientations expressing “rational, articulable, coherent logics for ordering and knowing the world” rather than objects of study (Garoutte quoted in Turner, 2006: 115-6; see Garoutte, 2003). Yet like Audra Simpson, he is pessimistic that this can do adequate “political work” against the facts of a structurally asymmetrical settler-colonial context.

However leaving the aim of their legitimation by comparison to Euro-Modern conceptions of rationality, articulateness and coherence behind for the present, traditional Indigenous philosophies as intellectual orientations offer methodological and ethical guidance

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19 This is where the challenge of refusal somewhat connects to the so called “insider/outside debate” on research which involves questions on the relative perspectival values and ethics of doing research in one’s “home community,” with much contention around the validity of “insiderism” if this forwards that only insiders can understand their communities. This has been cast as unappreciative of how an over-familiarity leads to uncritical, solipsistic and biased work to which a retort that ‘outsiders’ certainly are themselves self-centered and interested observers (see Innes, 2009). The conception of refusal as Simpson and Tuck and Yang describe it, centers a critique of ethnographic voice which disrupts the terms of this debate as assessing who produces ‘better’ questions and gathers ‘better’ knowledge, considering ‘insider researchers does not appreciate the depth of concern on being informants. For one settler/non-Indigenous scholar’s decision not to research in Indigenous contexts see Aveling, 2013. For Elizabeth Cook-Lynn’s intervention for ‘insiderism’ in American Indian studies, see Cook-Lynn, 1997 and for one contrary perspective see Champagne, 1998. For some overview of this debate see Howe, 2013.

20 For a discussion of debates on traditional knowledge in the academy and Indigenous activist-scholars’ roles vis-à-vis community researchers and activists see Tuhiiwai-Smith, 2012: 221-25.

21 She states directly that her conception of refusal should not to be taken to “operationalize or genuflect to recent formulations of alternative methodology,” giving the example of “radical Indigenism,” which she considers as seeking adherence to a rigid formulation of authenticity (Simpson, 2014: 105).
for a generative refusal of apprehension as I discuss in Chapter Six. That is, guidance on conveying meaningfulness in layers according to a tactical imperative of disclosure without ethnological definition and guidance on conduct in inquiry. Resurgence discourse also highlights the transformative power of language use in scholarship as normatively influential and somewhat disrupts arguments as to the absolute necessity of using a dominant language to encode stories in public that can then be deciphered by settler state and society on one level/in one way and Indigenous peoples on/in others. We can shift our lexicon to better reflect our meaning affirmed through practices as with resurgence rather than resistance alone, though we must take the potential of discursive appropriation and assimilation seriously by never assuming our words will be decoded as we intend by anyone. Applying a language of resurgence to describe a linking or shared agenda of decoloniality across diverse practices, experiences and communities may itself be considered a kind of re-coding away from recognition politics (and strictly oppositional anti-colonial resistance). As such it is not immune to critical debate on how it has or might be taken up, for example in regard to conceptions of nationhood around feminism, gender, LGBTQ2S issues and patriarchy (see Starblanket, 2017; Morgensen, 2016; Simpson, 2017: Ch. 8). Perhaps it might also be equated to an attempt to ‘read’ and describe a “hidden transcript” that reinstates a narcissistic idea of false consciousness and vanguard intellectuals’ capacity to discern, represent and publicize the intentions of ‘the oppressed,’ regardless of familiarity or insider status. These uncertainties are ones I acknowledge and choose to reflexively move forward with and will address further in later chapters.

Tracing Perimeters to Give Accounts

The concept of Indigenous refusal, both direct and in terms of classificatory non-conformity, reoriented my project from describing and so explaining resurgence and turned my sense of the problem of apprehension on its head. Rather than a problem of Indigenous epistemic...
and discursive dependency, it is an ethical and methodological challenge for scholarly disclosures. Not only to reject translating Indigenous stories into narratives of pain, trauma or failure in confronting totalizing colonial power, but in conceiving ways to articulate resistance, subversion and resurgent alternatives. And so this challenges even giving accounts of refusal, because as Tuck and Yang themselves articulated, “it can feel like explaining refusal requires exposing that which ought not to be exposed” (Tuck & Yang, 2014a: 813). But can we tell of the form of refusals and so in indicating what it evades, gesture to what it may also be protecting without exposing and capturing this substance ethnographically? This is a difficult proposition, as we must consider limitations in the dominant languages of liberation and change already available to us, how even ‘dissenting’ languages may be no allies, and the dangers of our own lexical interventions such as resurgence being appropriated. Tuck and Yang might call this a risk of coding/recoding, I prefer the language of story – the risks of storying/restorying as I will draw out.

A political rationality can be ascribed to Indigenous people’s “formulation and enactment of projects” in Ortner’s terms, in ways that align with the dominant normative rationality (even in comparative illogic or irrationality). Here I am thinking on how we story-theorize the events and practices of Idle No More as resurgence. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Euro-Modern political discourse has an acquisitive drive that seeks to colonize the imaginary of alternatives and capture its own dissent. As to political theory scholarship, resurgence’s decolonial transformations may be greater than our compass of authority and capacity to communicate. To return once again to Ashis Nandy:

“[T]hose who are thoroughly socialized in the presently-dominant language of global communications may find it harder to re-educate themselves than those who start from scratch. In the meanwhile, it is possible to venture the proposal that to survive beyond the tenure of the modern knowledge systems, the language of liberation will have to take into account, respectfully, the quests for freedom which are articulated in other languages and in other forms, sometimes even through the language of silence” (Nandy, 1989: 271).

Such non/articulations of freedom beyond and outside the tenure of the presently dominant Euro-Modern epistemic regime and discursive domains, having an ill-gotten tenure rather than a limitless universality, form the rupture in the coloniality of knowledge and power that
Indigenous resurgence instantiates through both refusal and refiguration. Refigurative practices (re)generate once, survivant and possible alternative lifeworlds and knowledge systems. Refusal challenges us to consider how we might ‘respectfully take this into account’ as Nandy puts it, without revelation and explanation of this regeneration that can lead to its stifling or deformative enclosure.

Attentiveness to the form of refusals suggests a way to indicate refigurative practices are being undertaken in such a way that does not seek to reveal or explain their substances. Rather in highlighting their contours that evade settler-colonial representation and intelligibility, and trace moves and connections between practices, that we may sketch a sense of their collective significance as resurgence. Key is making a distinction between identifying what specific practices are and mean and what, taken together, these practices do. To “trace the perimeter of the refusal” in Tuck and Yang’s words and circumscribe practices while circumventing ethnography - acknowledging these borders as subjectively and porously drawn by the person giving the account. There are many formulations of this challenge with varying views of the need to tell of the resistances, subversions and alternatives to an apprehensive Euro-Modernity (its exclusions and assimilations). For example, coloniality theorist Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls for a “sociology of absences” to address its “gigantic mode of production of silences, unpronounced abilities and absences” (de Sousa Santos quoted in Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012: 223). Tuck and Yang seem to indicate this perimeter tracing might be part of an analytical reorientation from ethnographic description of people that can restate colonial modes of representation and subjectification, to power relations.

Perimeter tracing analysis is partially echoed by Gyan Prakash on early projects of Subaltern Studies in relation to subjugated knowledges, speaking to my interest in storying INM into the future, he considers how Indian peasant movements emerge from “forms of sociality and political community” that “defy the models of rationality and social action that conventional historiography uses” (Prakash, 1992: 10). He goes on to suggest that:

“historians cannot recover what was suppressed, but they can critically confront the effects of that silencing, capitalism’s foundational status, by writing histories of irretrievable subject-positions, by sketching the traces of figures that come to us only as disfigurations…not to restore the “original” figures, but to find the limit of foundations in shadows that the disfigurations themselves outline” (15).
I am interested in how tracing refusals can not merely serve a critical function to consider how Indigenous subjectivities, socialities and knowledges have been disfigured or harmfully silenced by colonial power, but to tell of their survivance which may appear shadowed, spectral or archaic to Euro-Modernity or settler-colonial perception. Again this is not to say, as Prakash intimates of earlier theorists of subalternity like Ranajit Guha, that there are essential, originary or authentic Native “figures” that can or cannot be retrieved as colonial power has imagined them. Rather, that in tracing along the limits of a diverse Indigeneity’s enunciation and intelligibility in colonial frames of understanding, its escapes, silences and refusals we might find an ethical, methodologically effectual and non-apprehensive way of giving accounts of Indigenous resurgence.

As Tuck and Yang and other Indigenous thinkers have observed, the values around knowledge production and retention in the “white world…requires learning all and telling all in the interests of knowledge, objectivity, and freedom,” which prompts “a nearly neurotic distress in the presence of secrets and mystery” (Gunn Allen, 1998: 59). Many Indigenous intellectual traditions consider everything as always having an absence and presence, a hidden and unhidden, while the Euro-Modern knowing subject regarding its objects as things is “[p]roposed as the sole arbiter of the world [and so] the self-assertive self is barred from recognizing the thing as mysterious, uncertain and, ultimately, mutually constructive and sustaining” with the Self (Mika, 2016). Approaches to immanence as mystery (Ermine, 1995: 104), and acceptance of meaning-full albeit inaccessible silences in relationships of knowing in Indigenous philosophies, aligns with a view of refusal and silence as not signaling unknowing, ignorance or simply a negation. Yet in a settler-colonial theatre of apprehension, our refusals and silences will not necessarily be read as such by others and so we must tell some stories aloud, though we ultimately still cannot control how they are taken up by others. Though we are often individualized by the academy and must bear the resultant responsibilities, judging the borders of enunciation in scholarship has risks and cannot be understood as a solipsistic exercise for scholars.

The next chapter will further describe Western form political theory’s colonial apprehensiveness in regard to Indigenous peoples and ethnographic refusal at more depth by linking Euro-Modern political theory and anthropology’s disciplinary areas of inquiry to classifications of culture that depoliticizes ‘Nativeness’ in ways aligned to colonial domination.
and dispossession. This elucidates what Turner has described as the “peculiar ways of characterizing who we are as human beings and especially as political entities” (Turner, 2006: 106). Then I will consider the linkages between one methodological and ethical resource in Western form political theory in the work of Hannah Arendt, that might align with Indigenous storytelling principles that inside/outside scholars can draw on to trace the perimeter of refusals in the still settler-colonial academy and asymmetrical public domain of enunciation. As much Indigenous methodology, this can have profoundly decolonial implications (Morgensen, 2012).
CHAPTER FOUR

On Ethnological Reason:
Occupations of Anthropology and Political Theory

The Challenge of *Indigenous Politics*

“More, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Spencer and Engels, to name but a few...Despite all the time spent contemplating the life of the savage by these great thinkers, and despite the fact that Indians of the Americas have occupied the imaginations of the world since the time of discovery, Indians have not occupied the imaginations of modern political scientists...Unlike its intellectual forefathers, political science, for the most part, has ignored Indigenous political traditions; casting them aside as “savage,” “uncivilized” and “primitive” and viewing them as the subject matter of another discipline (anthropology)” (Ladner, 2017: 166).

One of the most impactful stories I have ever heard for my intellectual trajectory is one my Master’s supervisor Kiera Ladner shared about 10 years ago, and would relay in her Indigenous politics seminars at the University of Manitoba. She related that as a young Nêhiyaw student at another institution, perhaps during her undergrad, she had expressed interest in researching Indigenous political orders with a department chair or advisor in political science and was told, “anthropology is where you go to study Indians.” She went on to do a PhD on the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) and its organizational principles derived in observations and relations with the Bison Nation, a non-human society that had long been allies and sources of knowledge and political theory for the human Confederacy. I have carried her story with me since that time and it has emerged in some of my own in different guises. It is a story I have shared with students in my own ‘Indigenous Political Science’ course.¹

I was heartened to see an expression of Kiera’s story albeit in a different form in a recent article for the Canadian Journal of Political Science she wrote entitled “Taking the Field: 50

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¹ See my note in Chapter Three regarding the emergence of settler-colonialism as a term of reference in academic discourse in Canada. I shared the story in the context of discussing how recently Indigenous politics has been recognized as a field in mainstream Canadian political science. The course is offered in the Indigenous Studies program at Camosun College.
Years of Indigenous Politics in the CJPS” (2017), which considers the exclusion of Indigenous politics as an area of study from Canadian political science, as traced through the publishing history of the journal. She aligns her perspective with Kevin Bruyneel’s observations on the U.S. context, that due to the “methodological and epistemological presumptions” and “roots of the discipline,” and despite a recent upsurge in scholarship, political scientists have “largely ignored Indigenous political traditions and have largely studied contemporary Indigenous politics from the vantage point of the Western-euro-centric tradition” (164). The presumptions Bruyneel identifies as affecting political science’s “field of vision” are the association of sovereignty with the state or settler-state-centric interactions as exhausting Indigenous politics, and race or ethnicity-centered identity scholarship in the discipline being unable to account for Indigenous political identities and claims to sovereignty or self-determination. Here the suggestion Audra Simpson made in “Paths Toward a Mohawk Nation” which I have also carried is echoed, that “the very notion of an Indigenous nationhood” may be unintelligible to the ethnographic eye and ear (A. Simpson, 2000: 115) – and this is an issue for political science and theory as much as anthropology.

The first article Ladner notes from the CJPS that engages Indigenous political traditions, is a 1984 piece called “Tribal Traditions and European-Western Political Ideologies: The Dilemma of Canada’s Native Indians” by Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long, who argue in favor of recognizing Indigenous nationhoods, but assess sovereignty as both politically unrealistic and crucially, culturally incompatible (Ladner, 2017: 169-70). Tom Flanagan, once advisor on Indigenous affairs to former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, would submit a rebuttal the following year arguing nationhood as a Western concept, a salvo in his long campaign contesting Indigenous rights and Métis histories as scholar and legal intervener, the crown jewel of his oeuvre a multiple award-winning critique of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, First Nations, Second Thoughts (2000). It is significant that it is two well-intentioned non-Indigenous academics that from the first, evoke the double bind of recognition I discussed in previous chapters, prompting response from Flanagan who has been imbricated in the Federal Government’s settler-colonial agendas so directly. Yet also so because in some ways, the culturalist angle from which Boldt and Long presume to assess sovereignty’s incompatibility with Indigeneity is not so dissimilar at surface to Taiaiake Alfred’s from within resurgence discourse.
I am not here concerned with Indigenous politics’ inclusion to or recognition within the discipline of political science (the goal or possibility) precisely, nor reciting a genealogy of ideas around the “red roots” of Enlightenment (Ladner, 2017: 167), or notions of the Savage or Primitive in the canon of Western political theory and their persistence today (there are many, better and enough of those). I am interested in how the once uncontested disciplinary purviews of those who ‘study Indians’ and those who do not, reflect some ongoing distinctions, categories, classifications, with relevance to ethnographic refusal and giving accounts of Indigenous political movement and practices on their foundations. Particularly, the issue of replicating (even unwittingly) an opening to appropriations or delegitimations toward domination and dispossession, whether critically engaging or articulating Indigenous rhetorics and transformative practices discernable in the public theatre of colonial apprehension as ‘expressions of Nativeness,’ and not freedom or self-determination. This suggests caution as to which and whose culturalism is at issue in the problem of defining Indigeneity to exclude the political, or as offering a very truncated conception of the traditional and distinctive against the ‘contemporary’ in Indigenous cultural politics. Jeffery Tobin articulates the concern aptly in regard to Kanaka Maoli (Hawai’ian) nationalism in the mid 1990s, which Coulthard also addresses on critiques of perceived Indigenous cultural essentialism from constructivist perspectives (2014: 79-104):

“[As] Natives have begun to find concepts such as “culture,” “nation,” and indeed “native” to be adaptive to their own decolonizing interests...anthropologists and historians have come to notice that these concepts are artificial, even colonial. As Western scholars have lost control of the culture/nation discourse, they have taken to proclaiming “culture” and “nation” to be Western, colonizing inventions” (Tobin, 1994: 127-28).3

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2 So I leave aside discussion of transitional Enlightenment figures like Kant and Herder who many deem to have (Great White) fathered both political science and anthropology in common, and followed the early Euro-Modern philosophers who produced works of conjectural ethnography gleaned from travelogues based in the mythic Encounter with Indigeneity. See note below on Kant and Herder. For one treatment of European political thought and the colonial government of Indigenous peoples see Buchan, 2016.

3 See note below on constructivism and tradition. And again, my own use of the term Native is simply a place-holding rhetorical device to mark Indigenous peoples’ colonial subjectifications against our own self-understandings and names, not to suggest that Indigenous people do not or should not identify with and engage the term differently or redeploy the comparative referents with settlers, colonizers etc. it implies.
What is telling in Ladner’s reference to the “intellectual forefathers” of political science, who once found Indians so fascinating, is the divergence of Euro-Modern theories of the political undergirding this discipline, from identification with the speculative comparative ethnologies they relied on. Political Science’s current disciplinariness obscures the Eurocentric culturalism of what Bruyneel refers to as its basic “methodological and epistemological assumptions,” established in Western political theory’s split from anthropology. In this division is Indigenous resurgence’s challenge to intelligibility and representation in the terms of either/or. Like “Indigenous nationhood,” the significations of the words *Indigenous* (or Native, Indian, Aboriginal) and *politics* were designated to two different provinces in the Euro-Modern imaginary, a difference in which political science and Western theory remain rooted. And that there is still a sense, though no longer quite so likely to be uttered in scholarship directly, that *Indigenous politics* is an oxymoron rather than inextricable. So I am setting out here to consider Donna Haraway’s prompt I noted in Chapter One, on what scholars might reproduce in the “material-semiotic flesh of our language” – specifically of political theory. And also with Tobin, to assert that in critique of colonial processes of subjection/subjectification of Indigenous peoples we nevertheless “distinguish between discourses that naturalize oppression and discourses that naturalize resistance” (Tobin, 1994: 130-31) – or resurgence.

The critique of anthropology among Indigenous activists and intellectuals, particularly following the interventions of Vine Deloria Jr. (Speed, 2017: 179-80), is well established and largely led to the formation of Native Studies in the 1970s as a field for the advancement of self-determination, rights and title struggles. As Simpson and Andrea Smith have articulated, the sense was that here Indigenous inquiry “would no longer be captured by the so-called truth of particular intellectual traditions and disciplinary formations;” specifically the “ethnographic possessivism and entrapment of those fields that were closest to settler colonialism” and their “histories of taxonomic practice” (Simpson & Smith, 2014: 4, 6). There has been much subsequent debate as to its prevailing success in this and anthropology’s appropriative pull.4 Less attention has been paid to political theory as a field still close to settler-colonialism, and indeed disposed to ethnographic and taxonomic apprehensions of Indigeneity, which is spoken to in Ladner and Bruyneel’s contention on the presumptions that prevent political science from seeing

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4 Though there has been subsequent debate on the distinct aims of Native or Indigenous studies and its ‘re-colonization’ by anthropology (most vehemently intervened on by Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, 1997).
or hearing Indigenous politics, except partially within the dominant political rationality or the racial and ethnological.

Before moving on, I can position my intent in this chapter in relation to one work that in ways addresses similar questions but for different purpose, and in the process perhaps tacitly reiterates an ethnographic view of Indigenous peoples taken to be analytical ciphers or objects of inquiry for non-Indigenous thinkers. This is where Indigenous peoples are set up as such objects constituted by their difference from self while also assimilating this difference in the service of non-Indigenous critical projects. That is, setting up Indigenous peoples as resources to extract from for these projects’ imaginings of alternatives, as discussed in Chapter Three in regard to the incommensurability of INM and social justice movements.

Karena Shaw’s *Indigeneity and Political Theory* (2008) is presented as a project of self-examination avowedly not intending to speak for Indigenous peoples, or in fact “interested in” Indigenous “worlds, cosmologies, modes of social and political interaction.” Instead its arguments revolve around her characterization of Indigeneity and Indigenous peoples’ aspirations as constrained or enabled and indeed constituted, through necessary deferral to “their/her” (Euro-Modern) “modes of understanding, practices of knowing and acting, structures of social and political organization” (6-8). Specifically that these modes, practices and structures are centered in sovereignty, its violences and exclusions of Native difference from the “properly political” (with *politics* taken as processes of creating and legitimating collective forms of authority, 12). Shaw takes up Indigenous peoples as a kind of case study (only incidentally in Canada), providing a “microcosm” that reveals conditions of possibility on “rethinking the political” in contemporary global conditions of a seeming crisis of sovereignty and state. She deems Indigenous communities as highly conflicted, “constituted partly through the oppositional practices of modernity” and as generally “seem[ing] to share a desire to create collective futures for themselves that do not succumb to either side of the oppositional structures they face: to be Indigenous or Modern” (5). In this she re-presents a narrative of recognition’s double bind around sovereignty discourse, itself presented as a precondition for political theory, which appears mostly as a Euro-Western endeavor or subject of inquiry by definition in the book.  

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5 While she refers to some Indigenous scholars cited (whose work challenges disciplinarity) as theorists I do not recall seeing any referred to as *political theorists*. I may be incorrect in this imputation.
Most interestingly for me, Shaw considers the disciplining of knowledge as it “shapes apprehension of and response to the challenges posed by Indigenous politics,” specifically how sovereignty discourse and practice establishes conceptual and political limits, concentrating on the disciplines of anthropology and international relations (59). Her discussion of anthropology’s ethnocentrism helping to establish and police the regime of the political excluding Nativeness as “border guards” (75) aligns to mine presented in this Chapter. She discusses political anthropology (and its internal politics) attempting to come to grips with itself, and in her estimation failing, as she also posits of much political theory as unable to divest itself of sovereignty as an ordering principle. The latter assertion is perhaps apt to consider of her own orientation, to see the insides/outside of sovereignty as the hegemonic crux of all epistemic struggle in politics (for its dominance), and so all imaginings otherwise as other to sovereignty.

Shaw turns to some of the critical Indigenous scholarship I engage (after French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari), for ways of theorizing that respond to “the violences of our inheritances, and thus that contain possibilities for imagining different futures” (182). This includes a reading of Alfred’s rejection of sovereignty and questioning of “oppositional forms of subjectivity” (184), and Alfred and Cornassal’s work on self-conscious traditionalism as toward “recovering and inventing what it means to be Indigenous” for Indigenous peoples not settlers, depicting resurgence discourse as “framing an aspiration” towards a “politics that is almost unrecognizable.” Though rather than a “program for remaining imperceptible,” Shaw aptly interprets the point of “self-definition as prerequisite for engagement” in resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations (186-7). She contrasts this with the work of James Sakej Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw), who affirms the survivance of Indigenous knowledge systems but is concerned with the present political terrain of their authorization, as presenting a false inevitability of Euro-Modern imitation (190-2; Henderson, 2000: 256). She then turns to

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6 Zoe Todd (Métis, Otipemisiwak) has recently taken extractive approaches to engaging Indigenous theory, and Deleuzean scholarship in particular to task in the so-called “ontological turn” (2016, see also notes to Chapter 2). While Shaw accords Deleuze and the Indigenous theorists she cites (not all identified as political theorists) fairly equal citation standing, the project for which she brings them into conversation can still be critically troubled and associated with other employments of Deleuze and Guattari for iterations of ‘anarcho-primitivism.’ A consideration of ‘neo-primitivism’ in Western theory as always needing a savage Other to formulate critiques of itself might here be interjected as well, though beyond my scope to further interrogate (see Li, 2006). This desire might also be considered in relation to Jodi Byrd’s presentation of “indigenous peoples and nations” as “transits” – “those who provide the ontological and literal ground” for political theory debates, and “are continually deferred into a past that never happened and a future that will never come,” rendering the people themselves “unactionable” (2011: 221). This is in contrast to the solely negating emphasis of Indigenous elimination and negation as discussed in Chapter 3 (see also Vimalassery et. al, 2016).
Linda Tuhiwai Smith on methodology for a vision of research that is almost unrecognizable, in the rejection of a separation of knowledge and the political (the categorical collapse she associates with Deleuze and Guttari, 193). And finally John Borrows who forwards that “we have the nascent skills and traditions we need” for reimagining our horizons in Indigenous law (199).

In regard to the challenge these Indigenous theorists present to political theory’s knowledge production, her summary is pertinent to reproduce in full to gesture to the oversight in her own project, which aligns their work grounded in assertions of a principle of self-determination, to a problematic she presents as universal:

“Crucial to the analysis developed by the scholars above is their attempt to seize back control over their communities’ capacity even to articulate, let alone respond to, their own understanding of who they are and wish to be, and of the context in which they exist. This forces upon political theorists today an engagement with the conditions under which ‘we’ can and should theorize, the question of ‘for whom’ and ‘for what project’ we believe we are authorized to speak. It forces the question of what needs are shared, and how these can be articulated in ways that do not reproduce the violences expressed in and facilitated by Hobbes’ production of sovereignty. It forces an engagement with what we had come to assume were the safe assumptions: about knowledge, subjectivity, and the need for particular kinds of shared authority. It exposes these assumptions for what they are – assertions enabled by force and perpetuated by violence, even as they resulted in peace and prosperity for many” (Shaw, 2008: 200-1).

The synthesis of what dominant strains of Euro-Modernity and Western political theory has divided, including the terrain of struggle and engagement - politicizing knowledge production for example – seems by Shaw as a new necessity borne from the “taxonomic practice” of colonialism, rather than working from the point that Indigenous cultural/political theory has never presumed such divisions. There is also a possible recapitulation of “ethnographic possessivism,” toward Indigenous forms of theorizing despite the claims to the contrary above. Unlike Shaw, I am not interested in addressing an upheaval of dominant Euro-Modern understandings of the political or culture by mobilizing Indigenous struggles with the
limitations and hang-ups of this imaginary and its pretensions to totalization as a resource to craft universal counter-hegemonic possibilities. But rather, addressing the challenge posed by Indigenous refusal to the seeing and especially telling practices of dominant forms of political theory in regard to Indigenous cultural politics (as/always both).

My effort in this chapter is to take the *ethno-graphic* of this refusal, as Audra Simpson presents it, seriously (*a seeing as ethnos*), and the unsettling of classifications of the cultural and political Indigenous resurgence implies. The purpose is to give a further sense of the colonial apprehension being refused – as a field of intelligibility and enunciation of Indigeneity as caught between the overdetermining categories of others. With these categories, and colonialism, deemed as occupying *Indigenous* imaginations, to redeploy Ladner’s phrase. So, this is neither a critique of the terms of recognition (that Coulthard and others like Elizabeth Povinelli have already made), nor of assertions of sovereignty as the concept around or against which recognition must be oriented (well-trodden ground). The intent is simply to further affirm resurgence’s imputation of *whose* problem colonial apprehension ultimately is.

Simpson helped me to coalesce this problem in my thinking as relating to the ways Indigenous peoples are (attempted to be) rendered governable through processes of discernment and claims to knowledge of them, whether through state documentation technologies such as the Indian Act and Registry or broader imaging and imaginings of Indians drawn in stereotype or around absences and disappearances toward settler nation-building. Yet colonial apprehension is not just a problem of *mis*representation or *mis*recognition but of Indigenous people’s parsing as objects of inquiry, by authorized and authorizing knowers. And so I set out to consider “a project that responds to forms of ethnographic entrapment and its relationship to settler colonialism as not only a material practice of dispossession but as a representational practice of social scientific discourse” as Simpson and Smith put it (Simpson & Smith, 2014: 5). Critical attention has indeed mostly been centered on primary social science research practices and seeing/reading and hearing Nativeness through colonial discourse analysis – as made legible in textual documents and artifacts of bureaucratic statecraft, academic and popular forms of ‘cultural production’ and sometimes comparing these against Indigenous resistances, subversions and alternatives in self-representations, as discussed in the previous chapters on Edward Said’s legacy. What Simpson

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7 For some studies in the vein of ‘colonial discourse analysis,’ see Berkhofer (1978) and Francis (1992), and from within cultural and media studies contrasting colonial discourse with Indigenous subjectification practices, Emberley (2007) and Wakeham (2008).
helped bring into focus for me is a consideration of the coloniality of dominant discourses of culture and politics themselves, as formed in the encounter with what would come to be known as Indigeneity.

So, I am interested in what the “cultural organization of colonial power” (Pels and Salemink, 1999: 15) entails, suggesting a Euro-Modern concept of culture as crucial to Western political theory, though this is not meant as a critique of all ‘culturalism’ per say, nor a comparative treatment of different culturalisms, as I approach these questions tactically. Rather, I want to draw out what I am here calling the Euro-Modern *ethnological reason* applied toward expressions of Indigeneity (inextricably cultural/political), as the classificatory logic undergirding the dominant political rationality that is challenged by resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations. The Eurocentrism of this reason has produced a bifurcated, typological conception of culture as ethnic (traditional societies) or political (Euro-Modern societies) characterized by a catalogue of behaviors and practices that have spatiotemporal allusions. This references the frozen racialized ethnoculturalism in Euro-Modern containments of Nativeness that resurgence’s reorientations refuse. As I will reiterate in closing, while aware of the structural asymmetries of settler-colonialism (and its sovereign power) compelling public disclosure and appearance to/with settler state and society, this refusal (being generative, and affirming survivance) also rejects constraints on Indigenous imaginations, ways of knowing and action projected from limitations in dominant (but not hegemonic) Euro-Modern imaginations. That is, refusal rejects suggestions of Indigenous dependency, even if our imaginations are seen to be mutually interlocked as per Shaw and mindful of the risks and dangers of both inclusion and exclusion, interest and ignorance, perceptibility and imperceptibility, engagement and withdrawal.

The Culture Concept

“[F]or those...invested in questions and literatures of contemporary politics, ethnology would not be the go-to domain for an analysis of the political in settler states. However…anthropology has very much been the domain of defining the political for Indigenous peoples historically, and in fact was the mode for constructing and defining Indigeneity itself. In the case of Kahnawá:ke, this mode of apprehension has mapped out in ways that have been particularly judgmental,
authenticating, or disauthenticating - ultimately, *adjudicating* - all with the intent of upholding the law and filter of comprehension: hierarchically arranged ethnological categories” (A. Simpson, 2014: 33-34).

It was the above provocation in Simpson’s interrogation of anthropology as privileged interpreter of Indigeneity by claiming the domain of ‘culture’ as its purview, that initially led me to consider Indigenous refusal as refusing the ethno-graphic, and so how the culture concept is implicated in colonial apprehension and the telling practices of dominant Euro-Western modes of political theory in particular. Simpson describes how the “serious material and ideational context” of anthropology’s self-assigned role derived from alignment with the “heuristic and documentary requirements” for the administration of Empire. These requirements necessitated that Indigenous peoples’ alterity be made comprehensible and demarcated within a Eurocentric and historicized territorial schema of unequal nation-states (Simpson, 2014: 95). Fixity and not adaptability of identity became necessary to establish Indigenous peoples’ diminishment and facilitate their containment, physically and conceptually, to allow for dispossession and domination. Enter a homogenizing concept of culture as collections of traits pertaining to “ethnically-defined territorial spaces,” derived from Euro-Modernity’s Othering metric of similitude and difference from Self (Seth, 2001).

This culture concept emerged in part through anthropological intervention, to “stand in” for what Nicholas Thomas (1991) called “colonial entanglements,” the complex, sometimes ambiguous and always *mutually* transformative relations with Indigenous societies – “warfare, commerce, sex, trade, missionization” etc. - as imperial powers sought to establish grounds for the extension and solidification of their sovereignty in these places (Simpson, 2014: 96-97, 112; see also Pels, 1997). Government at this juncture became predicated not simply on the control of territory but its ordering, a form of classification in which its management involves the quantification of its inhabitants as populations and also their qualitative measurement – their identification as subjects (Pels & Salemink, 1999: 17-19). This distinguishing between governed and governing shifted with transitions from imperial drives to those that sought to make a home of the colony (33-34), as I have discussed in the previous chapters.

Who the practitioners of ethnology have been and are, in “the intellectual movement from relation to essence” that “made Indians, Orientals, and Africans into objects of desire as well as
contemplation,” is broader than association with its ‘scientific’ and academic professionals (Pels & Salemink, 1999: 4; 9-14). And the anthropological record is not simply one of ideas, but is rather bound up with the practicalities of ethnographic accounting crucial to colonial rule. As Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink have suggested, distaste for the messy identifications of these practitioners complicit in the cultural ordering of indeterminate “contact zones,” led to retrenchment of anthropology’s role as an emancipated or pure field of inquiry in the 20th century, a debate with continued reverberations. However, the discursive strategies employed by academic anthropology’s supposedly detached subject practitioners to produce knowledge of object-subject peoples (races, tribes, ethnic groups) are nonetheless locatable in these contact zones, establishing “rhetorical commonplaces that organized the intellectual containment of the practical anxieties of colonial rule [that then] became sufficiently entrenched in academic discourse to survive decolonization” (Pels & Salemink, 1999: 3), or transit into forms of indirect rule and settler-colonialism. Culture is one such rhetorical commonplace.

The culture concept of anthropology is associated with a shift in the 19th century from culture’s direct equation with civilization, both in its division from wilderness (see Nandy, 1989: 266) and social refinement, to signify custom and a whole way of life, and then to imply as Kulchyski has suggested, “all that is not natural” to displace the term race used similarly, as race had displaced nation (Amselle, 1998: 7), though Indigenous customary ‘attributes’ would assume a racialized inherence. Anthropologists then attempted to refine culture into further classifications such as “material culture (things) as opposed to ideological culture (thoughts and beliefs), social culture (kinship and clans), linguistic culture (language) and on through an indefinite list” which invariably break down in application (Kulchyski, 1997: 606).8 Outside anthropology, culture has become an amorphous and endlessly adjustable discursive instrument, and has accumulated perhaps as much anti-imperial force as imperial (see Ornter, 1995: 180), in self-determined significations of Indigenous lifeways for example. Yet this proliferation of meanings and its common usages belie its early imbrication with concepts of civilization and later race (see Baker, 2010) in its anthropological usage, to produce human taxonomies if not

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8 For purposes of discussing and intervening in the politics around cultural appropriation (“who should be permitted or permit themselves to represent whom”) Kulchyski (1997) turns to another set however (elite/high, popular, commodity/mass).
wholly in, than at the service of colonialism and imperialism. It is Euro-Modern comparative taxonomical thinking’s application to human social diversity – ethnological reason, following Jean-Loup Amselle’s phrase, as I will unpack below – that has been normalized as “law and filter of comprehension” producing the ethnographic possibility and authorization that Indigenous refusal intercepts.

As Simpson suggests, ethnology did not seem at first blush the go-to discursive domain to consider questions of knowing and telling contemporary Indigenous political life that my own story in this dissertation professes to be about (Indigenous resurgence, Idle No More). Yet here is exactly the relevance to especially Indigenous political theorists in the Academy grappling with disciplinary limits and their replication of colonial modes of apprehension. The question of identifying who constitutes ‘ethnographers’ complicit in colonial rule provokes professional anthropology in its selective memory or “amnesia” of its disciplinary founding (Pels & Salemink, 1999: 23). But it provokes political theory and science similarly. A disavowed cultural determinism or ethnological fundamentalism if you like, also lies at the heart of its claim to a specific domain of knowledge and enunciation in ‘the political.’ In a reflection that speaks to the work of Shaw discussed above, Simpson suggests that unlike anthropology however, “[p]olitical science, government and political theory are relatively new to questions of Indigenous politics and life and deal with them as a “case” that is wholly documentary or an ethical and practical test to the limits of Western norms of acknowledgement” (A. Simpson, 2014: 11) or as with Shaw, both. These are limits have been drawn to preclude and occlude their acknowledgement and so have prevented adequate engagement with “the possibility of Indigenous nationhood” (Simpson, 2014: 35) and indeed Indigenous politics and political theory in either anthropology or Western political theory on the whole.

Crucially Simpson points to a formalist concept of tradition as “difference that matters” to anthropology by linking Nativeness to specific or distinctive patterns of custom - whereby what is familiar to the outside ethnographer is made meaningless or can be dismissed as aberrant or anomalous, and what may be meaningful to Indigenous insiders or ‘Native informants’ is

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9 On the questions of anthropologists themselves as “instruments or agents” in the settler-Canadian context, see for example Noble, 2015.
10 It seems an oversight on Shaw’s part not to engage critical Indigenous anthropologists and theorists such as Simpson or Joanne Barker on the concept of sovereignty specifically but rather an array of thinkers on broad questions.
Cultural boundaries are then perceptible as having been transgressed, rather than entirely called into question when Indigenous peoples do not conform to them. This can be extended to say that conversely, what is established as difference not mattering to anthropology is deemed as the similarity only mattering to political theory. This particular appeal to formalism implies a static notion of Indigeneity connected to certain traditional practices that are not just incommensurable with the expression of ‘familiar’ forms of ‘modern’ political subjectivity, but incoherent as themselves political. A culture concept arrived at through ethnological reason, as a “map or set of rules” and “ideal model of behavior” derived from the outside ethnographer (Pels & Salemink, 1999: 8), can then serve as a colonially apprehensive and “adjudicating” instrument of rule. Then a perceived Native intersticiality, following the mythic singular event of colonial Encounter, poisons the cultural well (if not dry to begin with), making them inadequate to proper belonging to either traditional Nativeness or a recognizable political sociality. Ethnological reason searches for Nativeness or political subjectivity, only to find the remnants of “ancient order puncturing the present, often hybrid and degenerate, indigenous social horizon” (Povinelli, 1999: 19).

In considering Simpson’s presentation of ethnographic refusal, it is not my aim to wade naively into debates on the history of anthropology by providing commentary on the reputations of particular canonical anthropologists whose work may have supported articulations of Indigenous rights or critiques of colonialism, as those in the inheritance of Franz Boas, through contributions that were “often ambivalent, usually contradictory, and never straightforward” (Baker, 2010: 7). My specific employment of ethnology may still be construed as irresponsible, perhaps rightly, having only a basic versing in the specific gestures Simpson was making toward Anglo-American anthropology’s production of Iroquois studies with which her people must still

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11 For a treatment of the concept of tradition in Euro-Western usage see Noyes, 2009 who offers a possible definition aligned with many Indigenous conceptions as a transfer of responsibility for valued practices rather than the three other strains she identifies as either communicative transaction, communal property or as Indigenous peoples’ confront, as a temporal ideology “in tandem with the theory of modernity.” In the latter, “tradition is thought inevitably to decline as modernity rises; both cannot occupy a common space. Within modernity, isolated traditions can be identified as relics or survivals signaling the distance of the present from a lost lifeworld. Neither traditions nor their bearers are admitted to coevalness with the modern subject” (Noyes, 2009: 239-40). Noyes attends to how the constructivist turn in this view (eg. Hobsbawm’s Invention of Tradition), while amending the notion of ‘traditional peoples’ as mindless bearers of custom, became problematic when imputed as untruthfulness applied to historical and testimonial narratives of subalternized peoples. Constructivism has led to some reliance on positivist documentation for claims making, and so critiques of documentary evidence she notes therefore find “less resonance in a world that depends on documents to maintain order and in which tradition has so long been discredited,” citing Indigenous claims to land as an example (244). This forms an aspect of the imperative to tell our stories despite the risks I am concerned about. See also below note on the anthropological archive.
deal. However, I took and continue to take the ethnographic in refusal as a provocation with much broader resonances that make certain generalizations about anthropology as eminently politically valid, now as when Vine Deloria Jr. made them in the 1970s. Thus I acknowledge I am and must make critical judgments linking the role of anthropology as well as political theory in discursively reproducing the coloniality I am targeting, which I will return to. But I foremost find it helpful to consider Indigenous refusal by naming the form of reason that permeates how Indigenous life is known around the political/cultural divide as ethnological. How I may generalize political theory’s own reliance on the culture concept on the other hand, also prompts clarification as helpful to consider refusal in regard to practices and movement of resurgence such as the winter we danced.

While ultimately I hold up the imperative in Simpson’s words to “presume a political life for Indigenous people” not necessarily visible to the dominant ethnographic eye or audible to its ear (A. Simpson, 2007), the imperative to articulate Indigeneity to hold political ground in the settler-colonial theatre of apprehension remains, and so those of us who are interested in forms of analysis after refusal must be able to assert we can see and hear which and whose culturalism we are trying to avoid. In 1995 Shelley Ornter suggested in regard to looking for a replacement for ‘culture’ as the foundations of “subaltern” resistance, that “a radical reconceptualization of culture, including both the historicization and politicization of the concept, has been going on for at least the last decade or so in anthropology” and so “attacking” originary and problematic disciplinary significations is a futile exercise. She viewed the alternative to cultural grounding is to perceive resistance as reactive only, “ad hoc and incoherent, springing not from their own senses of order, justice, meaning, and the like but only from some set of ideas called into being by the situation of domination itself” (Ortner, 1995: 180). I would agree that the latter point is not an option, yet the disciplinary, typological and colonial culturalism at the split of anthropology and political theory still prevails in insidious ways in regard to how Indigenous politics are made known by and to dominant eye and ear.
Ethnological Reason

Foucault’s conception of ethnology as a pillar of the human sciences alongside psychoanalysis in *The Order of Things* is pertinent to consider as an opening.\(^\text{12}\) I can here return to a reference made back in Chapter Two on engaging Foucault’s notion of epistemic shifts that occurred in ‘the West’ from the colonial difference (Mignolo, 2000); specifically, the shift from a Renaissance ‘classical’ to a ‘modern’ episteme for determining the conditions of truth and discourse. As discussed in Chapter Three, this difference involves an adjustment to account for the way Indigenous peoples within ‘the West’ remain subjected, as with their simultaneous experience of sovereign power – as the *raison d’etat* – as well as governmentality in settler-states. Here proceeding from the (settler) colonial difference is to consider the persistence of the mode of reason Foucault associated with the ‘classic episteme,’ despite the supposed postmodern turn away from “the category of the universal human subject,” whose definition always constitutively excluded Indigenous peoples among other “particular subjects, bodies, and geographies from the category of the *human*” (Lowe, 2001: 10-11).

The classical episteme for Foucault is “a world that is laid out in terms of mathematical or classificatory forms of intelligibility that no longer pass through analogy and cipher” (Foucault, 2009: 236). Ethnology as an expression of this episteme organizes cultural differences, making them predictable, according to generalizable rules for the functioning of all societies modelled on the theorized development and definition of ‘European’ culture. This allows the production of knowledge considered as objective documentation, and sets the boundaries of all discourse on human diversity. As Robert Young describes,

“In producing a general model of how cultures organize and define themselves, ethnology for Foucault is not about the particular differences of other cultures [or “the forms of knowledge developed by other societies for themselves”], but about how such differences conform to an underlying theoretical pattern formulated according to the protocols of European thought” (Young, 1995: 7-8).

Young suggests that Foucault provides tools to analyze the structural predicates of the Eurocentrism expressed in ethnology, which is the historical formation of Euro-Western notions

\(^{12}\) Foucault gives the following definition of the human sciences in *The Order of Things*: “The human sciences are not, then, an analysis of what man is by nature; but rather an analysis that extends from what man is in his positivity (living, speaking, labouring being) to what enables this same being to know (or seek to know) what life is, in what the essence of labour and its laws consist, and in what way he is able to speak” (Foucault, 1994: 353).
of universal Reason and Man that “enables [this specific tradition] to link itself to other cultures in a mode of pure theory” (Foucault, 1994: 377). The practice of ethnology is then really the study of the “unconscious processes” of the self-referent culture, not its others.

Though Foucault conceded ethnological thinking’s imposition everywhere was singularly contingent on the particular structural violences of European colonialism and imperialism - as how what he calls the “historical sovereignty” of Western thought was established - he did not view coloniality as then “indispensable” to ethnological thinking. However, in my conception of colonial apprehension, this way of knowing as the imposition of such classification is entirely tangled up with a governing and dominating reason with aspirations to totalization, as the Coloniality/Modernity critics such as Sylvia Wynter attested must be unsettled (2003). Its enabling of documentation, the ethnography, which can be instrumentalized for colonial projects as it is also employed by dominated peoples from the sense of necessity, makes ethnology a highly ambivalent concept. To clarify my own terms here before proceeding, ethnology as I use it refers to an approach to the knowledge of human cultures (as the concept has shifted), based in classifying difference from a self and also the accumulated body of knowledge produced. Ethnography refers to surveys or studies of particular cultural groups (employing ethnological reason). Anthropologist Clifford Geertz has suggested of ethnography: “any attempt to portray it as anything more than the representation of one sort of life in the categories of another is impossible to defend” (quoted in Kulchyski, 2005: 27). This is a point of agreement here.

“Ethnological reason” is a phrase I have taken up as used by French critical anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle in his Meztizo Logics: Anthropology of Identity in Africa and Elsewhere (1998). He defines it broadly as the “procedure that extracts, refines, and classifies with the intention of isolating types,” whether in the spheres of politics (state versus stateless society as his example), economics (self-sufficient versus market economy), religion, ethnicity or culture, which as a theoretical perspective has been one foundation of “European domination over the rest of the planet, a sort of Ariadne’s thread running through the history of Western thought” (Amselle, 1998: 1). I add to this the division of these spheres as such. It is an impetus to organize social phenomena and collectivities comparatively, which requires a delineation of sameness and difference from self, involving a commitment to the possibility for external identification and understanding of unified, stable and coherent identities.

13 Wynter wrote on the gendered and racialized subjection of this Man as the coloniality of being (2003).
For Amselle ethnological reason is also extractive and decontextualizing. It extracts social beings and collectivities (he uses the terms “ensemble” and “entities”) from their dynamic spatiotemporal contexts, fragmenting the continuum of spatial interactions and change through time that they are a part of; discounts people’s active practices of negotiating these, and reifies them according to a set of elements, internal features and modes of organization which serve to contrast them from other beings and collectivities. For example, Amselle considers a number of anthropologists who have been founders of distinct theoretical strands (including Boas) as base comparatists who presuppose “the existence of elements separable from their intersocial fabric,” and that these elements do not constitute “political units” situated within this fabric. This affects the fracture, segmentation and closure of sociopolitical formations and communities, especially when their centres and boundaries are unclear or incoherent to their observers, or made so as a result of external interference or disruption. This process of organization provides the order and coherence necessary for their governability.

The more specific iteration of ethnological reason Amselle is concerned with is as an instrument of coloniality in Euro-Modernity’s dominant approach to knowledge. Here ethnological reason refers to the matrix of typological thinking that connects definitional and analytical practices of ethnology with practices of governing, especially settler nation building, colonial administration and imperialist expansion. Amselle clarifies that this is not to say that peoples everywhere and always have not used comparative processes and appellations to describe and distinguish themselves from others, and in this even assert a kind of priority or even superiority on the basis of membership or commonality (Amselle, 1998: 6). While I cannot agree with him here that the “spontaneous ethnology” every society may engage in by some other name to establish its identity and distinctiveness needs a “devalorized alterity,” I do agree that “only in the history of Western thought does the development of ethnological reason reach its limit” in this regard (Amselle, 1998: 23). What is distinctive of Western ethnological reason is the claim to authority for the discernment of types, with the Euro-Western self set up as an objectively universal referent, as having the prerogative to apply or impose a unified order of

14 Reminiscent of Amselle, anthropologist Keith Thor Carlson has advocated attention to change through continuity rather than the reverse in his work with the Stó:lō (2010). In his defense of a reliance on Indigenous thought, Youngblood Henderson (in the piece Shaw engaged mentioned above) critiques the “ethnographic impulse to regard cultures as fixed images that have an integrity and coherence that allow them to be studied” as in the written narratives of ethnographers. He subsequently indicates he rejects the term culture (2000: 255, 261).

15 I should here clarify that I am only engaging Amselle’s diagnostic argument rather than his prescriptive alternative of “Mestizo logics” which is antithetical to boundedness in its poststructuralist approach.
identification on all – Europe made as what Walter Mignolo calls the epistemological “zero point” (2011). I will refer to this authoritative typologizing based on devalorized alterity that found its totalizing extremity in Euro-Modernity and expression in European colonial and imperial expansionism “limit ethnological reason” going forward – the Euro-Modern variety of ethnological reason that imperializes its ethnographic stance.

‘America, 1492,’ as the Modernity/Coloniality thinkers posited and I introduced in Chapter Two, is the decisive, albeit mythologized event, the spatiotemporal “matrix” that made two “axes of power” crucial for European Empire operable, global capitalism and racial-cultural classification and codification of difference (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 243-4; Wynter, 1995). Turtle Island and the Indigenous Americas provided a prime ethnological object-subject as at once noble and “devalorized” alterity, against which the Euro-West began to define itself and produce the typologies that have infused their ethnological thinking made imperial. As such, a consideration of the production of this dynamic is helpful to unpack the challenge to discernibility, intelligibility and knowledge in its terms that Indigenous resurgence presents, particularly in regard to categories and representations of the political and the cultural. And so I will make a number of assertions as to the Euro-Modern limit ethnological reason (part of Mignolo’s “zero point epistemology”) I am implicating Indigenous refusal is responsive to, though I can only make them incompletely here: 1) it has effected the typological organization of authoritative knowledge (its objects, its practitioners/subjects) through a bifurcated concept of culture that produces a division between the ethnic (as particular) and political (as universal); 2) this division has been integral to the colonial domination and dispossession of Indigenous societies; 3) this operated in the disciplinary split of anthropology and political theory and should be accounted for in considering the potential for decolonial projects of knowing and telling Indigenous practices avowedly situated in either. This accounting is to consider the function of and commitment to, ordering knowledge and formulating an understanding of culture according to the presumptions of limit ethnological reason as it has perhaps become axiomatic to enunciations of Indigeneity as Nativeness in the colonial theatre of apprehension.

The Bifurcation of Culture: Ethnos and Politas

The specific limit ethnological reason Amselle points to can be traced through several moves in the genealogy of what came to be narrativized as Western thought, around self-
conception responsive to difference. It was expressed in an underlying “paradigm of comparative naturalism” utilizing descriptions of the Indigenous Other, linking political philosophy and scientific rationalism in the Eighteenth through Nineteenth centuries (Zobel, 2011). For example, Seventeenth century and later Enlightenment philosophers from Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau were interested in forwarding absolutist concepts of natural law but struggled with the confines of Biblical time to account for the contemporaneous difference of Indigenous peoples that became observable with America’s ‘discovery.’ Yet this discovery also provided substantiation for their theories on the founding, development and proper constitution of political societies. Thus, they initially chose to see in America the model of a universal State of Nature, which the free and pristine, if necessarily savage individual leaves for the security and certainties of society and then political organization proper through a social contract. In the mid Nineteenth century this incipient developmentalism began to take full form through the intervention of both liberalism, and social theory influenced by evolutionary science. Evolution began to reverse the direction of progress associated with the degree of individualism or collectivism previously read by European philosophers in travelogue accounts of ‘savage’ life. ‘Civilization’ began to be presented as a process moving from a collectivist dependence on social relations structured by mutual dependencies and kinship toward territorially demarcated polities cohered by the reasoned assent of matured individuals voluntarily submitting to a sovereign authority. This transition from what was deemed essentialist factors for belonging would culminate in membership according to decisional ‘civic’ factors - citizenship.

This instantiated a division of culture into a spectrum of types according to the extent to which communities were organized by either factor, from what would be defined as more ethnic to more political societies. This spectrum would become spatialized and temporalized to align with the location and genealogical narratives of the Euro-Modern West at the vanguard of World Historical development from ethnocultures to political cultures. By political cultures I here mean

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16 By naturalism I mean here the orientation to knowledge (associated with materialism and empiricism) that suggests first, there can be no knowledge outside the perceivable, second, that theories on its functioning must be verified through methodical observation of phenomena (most effectively, comparatively) and third that principles or laws of nature can be gleaned in this way when difference and repetition is registered, corroborated and seen as generalizable. This is how knowledge is ‘gained’ and universal truth claims may be made. ‘Spiritual’ and otherwise ‘conjectural’ observations are forms of human comprehension that exist but they do not constitute knowledge in this view.

17 For a discussion of the language of modern citizenship that involves classificatory criteria along a stagist historic path see Tully, 2008b: 248.
a society that is recognized to have a political community and order, to be a polity, which also corresponds to the other sense of political cultures as prevailing norms, ideals, beliefs and attitudes of politics in a given society. Yet where is the ethnic (as in contrast to political) concept of a total society-defining culture derived from, how does it appear on the scene and subsequently become imbedded in governing conceptions of Nativeseness?

Here Amselle offers some food for thought on the “material-semiotic flesh of our language,” particularly the lineage of two key words in the “vocabulary of Indo-European institutions and Greek political thought” to the formation of ethnology (Amselle, 1998: 5). The process of the West forming as a geographic and temporal location and universal Self, involved the reading of ancient Greek philosophy into its narrative, as being intellectual or direct ancestors or antecedents. Amselle describes how a hierarchical distinction between two forms of society made by the Greeks according to their perceived degree of integration and complexity, would go on to inform the theoretical division between the societies of Western Modernity and those societies that would come to be seen as pre-modern and indeed pre-political, so crucial to the split of anthropology and political theory. These two forms are the ethnos and the politas.

In Aristotle’s Politics, ethnos was a category referring to those not living in the city-state (the polis), a large urban community with associated infrastructure, self-governed by a (class stratified) body of citizens. Aristotle used the term to refer to the Greek rural village-dwelling peoples, those who had highly localized and customary systems of self-governance - that is, whose social organization was respondent to place, tradition and specificity rather than unifying and generalized philosophical principles of law. The inequality of these types of social organization was judged in part as due to their spatiality (ruralness and distance from the polis), and gauged according to their chosen deviation from differently located but co-existing ‘optimal’ or more ideal constitutions. The ethnus simply had a different type of social organization that could be assessed on its perceived merit and sophistication vis-à-vis the polis-dwellers, a chauvinistic view though thoroughly acknowledged as such. More crucial perhaps is Aristotle’s use of ethnos in replacement of barbaros in the then-standard distinction of Greek/Barbarian, and so extending the label to any of diverse societies “lacking integration” (Amselle, 1998: 6-7) akin to the Greek polis, whose practices as barbaric (barbarikos) signified “something outmoded or unsophisticated” (Ward, 2002: 19). Here is ethnos as a segmentary “form of social organization that lacks political institutions...whereas polis always refers to a society living under
common laws for the sake of a common end, which he identifies as living the complete, excellent human life” and so the ethnos would correspond with the notion of the pre-political and archaic (Ward, 2002: 18-19).

Aristotle’s discursive intervention presaged Euro-Modern developmentalism by millennia, in which the spatialized and political assessment of difference that ethnos/politas initially signified gave full way to a temporal and cultural assessment: the notion of a “comparative series of human communities situated at different stages in their evolution, that is, separated in time” as well as space (9). American ethnographer of the Haudensaunee Lewis Henry Morgan’s 1877 *Ancient Society* and its “ethnic stages” theory of a climb from savagery through barbarism to civilization, is one example that Amselle draws on to illustrate this temporalizing move leading to what Johannes Fabian termed the “denial of coevalness” (Fabian, 2014). Parallel to ethnos/politas, Morgan utilized *societas* (as ‘savage’ peoples organized by clan or tribe, Latinate term akin to *ethnos*) and *civitas* (‘civil’ political organization with state and territory, Latinate term akin to *politas*). A split was being re-codified between the spheres of the *ethnos* or ethnic, and the *politas* or political according to what social organizational characteristics were seen to belong to each, and indeed which ‘type of Man’ belongs to each, that would also become necessary to a division of the analytical fields of anthropology and political theory and science. While the *ethnos* were still deemed segmentary societies, ethnological reason would impose a kind of integration or unification as a boundedness and cultural essence, either unchanging or underdeveloped (depending on the view of racial inherence). This split would help form the dualism between West and the Rest, organized spatially and temporally to conform to difference measured in distance from the Euro-Modern Self geographically and historically along their own timescale. I will discuss Fabian’s denial of coevalness and the significance of connecting the spatial to the ethnic, and the temporal to the political, for Indigenous peoples further in the next section. Here I can gesture to the naturalization of this categorical division through the imperial expansion of limit ethnological reason, and so a necessary return to the question of context, complicity and effect, in regard to the scholarly disciplines. I will focus here on anthropology and political theory in the next section.

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18 There is disagreement on reading proto or full racialization in the Greek ethnos, see Ward, 2002 and Amselle, 1998: 8.
As Simpson suggests of Morgan’s ethnography concerned with Haudenesaunee political systems, the “very occasion” of his work “owed itself to Indigenous dispossession...The paradigmatic work in political anthropology was itself inherently political, and yet what was defined as “political” in these texts was presented as an order outside of the ordering context itself. The people; the place; their culture – all orderable, ranked, discernible, and ultimately (it was thought) governable” (A. Simpson, 2016: 326-7; also 2007: 71). Of course we can make distinctions among what feminist anthropologist Micaela di Leonardo called a “shifting set of individual lives, discursive practices, and material traces labeled as a single anthropology,” as rather anthropologies (di Leonardo, 1998: 14). For example, the question of how to appraise cultural change across societies became a point of internal divergence for anthropologists, as social evolutionism was concomitant with theories of race that introduced biologically essentialist arguments for a ranking of human difference. Objection to racism spurred the response of structuralism and cultural relativism in fieldwork-based academic ethnography at the end of the 19th century and first half of the 20th. The “paradigmatic work” of anthropologists at the helm of the relativist and structuralist responses to racist evolutionism, such as Boas and Claude Levi-Strauss (and indeed Morgan), are recalled as advocating for intercultural respect, understanding and dialogue, with much of their surveys of Indigenous societies still utilized by descendant communities as an archive of ancestral sources of subjugated self-knowledges.  

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19 di Leonardo is highly critical of monolithic critiques of anthropology. She suggested three strains in the debate on anthropology and historical change as 1) a positivist view of an unchangingly objective scientific eye 2) those she identified with postmodernism in the inverse as “anthropology bashers” assuming the field as of “unchanging imperial focus, of Michel Foucault’s single oppressive panopticon, of an inherently criminal, timeless, objectifying eye” and then 3) historians of anthropology she identifies with as, producing nuanced work contextualizing those shifting lives, practices and traces. In Indigenous critiques of anthropology writ large however is a tactical rhetoric and a truth of experience only lately disrupted by increased Indigenous scholarship in, across and against the discipline.


21 In regard to Africanist knowledge, Achille Mudimbe has suggested the “colonial library” as the site of colonial discursive reproduction is not only in the actual archives of the textual output of both academic and governing colonial narrators, but a virtual body that colonized peoples themselves end up drawing on to rediscover and articulate foundational resources of self-knowledge (Wai, 2015). The importance of certain ethnographic documentations in claims making is another consideration as can be seen of Aboriginal rights jurisprudence (see also note on constructivism above). In terms of Indigenous re-sourcing of ethnographies, Amselle uses the term “feedback” when discussing the phenomena of the sometimes “bizarre conjunction of nineteenth-century European racial theory with the history of a local population” (Amselle, 1998: 160). In his view this alignment has much to do with how ethnographers and colonial administrators privileged some “Indigenous theories,” knowledges, versions of stories over others by recording, collecting and so historicizing them, arbitrarily or in support of their own characterizations of Indigenous communities. When those communities subsequently utilize those accounts in self-representations, a kind of legitimation ‘feedback loop’ occurs whereby written ethnographies are taken as authoritative. This relates to the formalist organization of societies as having primarily oral or “scriptural” modes of
Critics of anthropology as a monolith might target the preservationist or salvage ethnography of dying or disappearing cultures as a straightforward example of the objectification of Indigenous peoples through developmentalism, or as apologism for the settler-colonial drive to elimination, and might be rebuffed as generalizing. However, even anthropologies together played a broader role in promulgating the limit ethnological reason in question, through the diffusion of a culture concept that through varied iterations, still hinge on it as the presupposition for knowing (Amselle, 1998: 19). As to accounting for change across anthropology as a discipline, Nicholas Thomas in his Colonialism’s Culture puts the point aptly:

“Anthropology...is not merely a disciplined expression of a universal human curiosity, but a modern discourse that has subsumed humanity to the grand narratives and analogies of natural history. Even when anthropology has apparently been a project of hermeneutics rather than the science of man, particular peoples (or races, or cultures) have been seen, like species, as the bearers of particular characters, physiques, dispositions, systems of meaning and forms of social and political organization...Sometimes a relativist project, this has also been articulated with evolutionary hierarchization, and has implicated anthropology in the practical work of colonialism: if ethnology was in fact often of little practical value for administration, it can be understood at least to reinforce an imperial sense of epistemic superiority” (Thomas, 1994: 6).  

As Thomas describes above, at issue are this imperial sense of epistemic superiority, and the insidiousness of its promulgation through comparative naturalism and the universalizing notions of Reason and Man that Foucault described. The concern is in how coloniality manifests epistemically, particularly in the preconditions for relating with alterity derived from ethnological reason, which stunts the engagement with that alterity on its own terms from the transmitting knowledge, another duality formed by colonial ethnographic practices. The validity and privileging of certain stories is bound to a sense of their narrative historicity as marked by their transcription in linear written accounts – their entering into ‘archive.’ There is some alignment in Amselle’s observation with Simpson’s concern with the “authenticating loop” of ethnographies (such as Morgan’s) that have “circumscribed the Iroquois past (and present)...created a limited semantic and ideological space for contemporary Iroquois people to inherit” (Simpson, 2014: 76). For an extended treatment of the colonial archive in relation to governance focusing on the Netherlands see Stoler, 2010.

See also Eriksen & Stjernfelt, 2010 on the culturalism in question as an ordering “unconscious presupposition” for relativism.
outset. In this, anthropology’s culturalism and racialism do not so clearly diverge. For example, structuralist anthropology works from the idea of distinct cultures but with homologous and universal elements, particularly the pattern of duality or binary opposition and synthesis in cultural development or change, ‘discovered’ and applied to produce positive knowledge by Westerners. To echo Foucault again, “ethnology is situated within the particular relation that the Western ratio establishes with all other cultures; and from that starting-point it avoids the representations that men in any civilization may give of themselves, of their life, of their needs, of the significations laid down in their language” (Foucault, 1994: 378). Rather it ascribes a determining system of norms and form of historicity behind self-representations that a scientific method can then reveal.

While ethnological reason in its relativist anthropology branching seems to reject Eurocentric universalism, it merely obfuscates its operation. Evolutionist and later relativist notions of cultural difference, share the aforementioned self-referential paradigm of comparative naturalism. That is, structuralist notions of cross-societal cultural dialectics and intercultural dialogue can obscure a “fundamental ethnocentrism” (Amselle, 1998: 5), as any ethnology must first presume its object, the ethnos, and herein is ethnological reason bound up with colonial ideologies. The critique of anthropology as an enterprise is not as Johannes Fabian put it “bad intentions [which] alone do not invalidate knowledge,” but rather “bad epistemology, which advances cognitive interests without regard for their ideological presuppositions” (Fabian, 2014: 32-33).23

It is then misleading to focus on the direct complicity of professional anthropologists in processes of colonization, rather than ethnography as a field of practice mobilized through the epistemology and discourse of ethnology emergent from colonial contexts. As Pels and Salemink argue, when this is accounted for, a continuity of ethnological reason with other “genres” of thinking preceding and exceeding anthropology, is made visible, and the academy as just one location or stage in the theatre of colonial apprehension. This necessarily broadens consideration of how limit ethnological reason is an aspect of colonial power-knowledge, not just the texts and artifacts of professional anthropology and its use in government. Amselle’s reader and translator

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23 “The critique of anthropology is too easily mistaken for moral condemnation. But at least the more clearheaded radical critics know that bad intentions alone do not invalidate knowledge. For that to happen it takes bad epistemology which advances cognitive interests without regard for their ideological presuppositions” (Fabian, 2014: 32-33).
Clemens Zobel, suggests that rather than fixating on instances or occasions of academic ethnography acting as the willful accomplice of colonial policy-making, limit ethnological reason’s coloniality must be highlighted to fully appreciate the extent of the attempted violent reformation of peoples into colonial subjects:

“[I]n terms of colonial policy this perspective translated into a method of government that considered colonial subjects in ethnic terms and as separate from a metropolitan and hence contemporary understanding of citizenship. As the characteristics of ethnic groups were understood either in terms of innate cultural features or as resulting from the influence of conquerors, no change from within was imaginable” (Zobel, 2011: 17).

Zobel here suggests the rendering of colonial subject peoples as belonging to the ethnos is facilitated by a “common epistemology that constructed ethnic societies by obliterating their spatial interaction – each group representing an integrated whole – and failing to recognize their historical nature” (Zobel, 2011: 19), or rather relational and so political dynamism in place and time. He also cues the liminal cultural position of authenticity or mimicry, which then has implications for these subjected peoples to be objectified in the knowledge production of their colonizers, but also incapable of self-determined change and indeed imagination, of and for themselves.

The New World: Anthropos Aspiring to Humanitas

“They are “passive, non-participating...above all, non-active, non-autonomous, non-sovereign.” Their essence is “fundamentally a-historical,” transfixed within an “inalienable and non-evolutive specificity,” instead of being defined as “all other beings, states, nations, peoples, and cultures” - that is, intrinsically changeable, adaptive or progressive. The only agency possible for them is as “alienated being[s]” in a relationship to themselves as “posed, understood, defined - and acted - by others” (Abdel Malek quoted in Said, 2003: 97).

In the bifurcation of culture that led to an aligned typology of societies and their practices, Indigenous alterity has been designated an opposing and subordinate position to Euro-modernity. This informed the organization of ethnological knowledge into an authorizing regime
and the disciplinary split in the purviews of anthropologists (traditional ethnic or kinship societies) on the one hand and political theorists, scientists and sociologists (contemporary consent or contract-based societies) on the other. Following a terminological distinction set out by Japanese philosopher Osamu Nishitani (2006) and also taken up by Walter Mignolo (2011, 2013), I would like to forward that ethnological reason’s division of the cultural realms of *ethnos* and *politas* also came with a discursive division in the order of people inhabiting their spheres, each with a distinct relation to the operation of knowledge. These can also be marked by “two families of terms” that signify people as human beings in Greek and Latinate-rooted Indo-European languages, which Nishitani calls *humanitas* and *anthropos*. The former family of terms is generally employed to refer to humanity or human nature as a “general concept,” while the latter came to be used especially in academic parlance during the Nineteenth century (as in *anthropology*) to reference the study of humans in the ethno-cultural sense of a non-Western particularity. This duality in terminology is not incidental according to Nishitani but rather their asymmetrical relation performs a systemic function in the regime of modern humanistic knowledge, producing its “double standard” – the formation of two varieties, genres or “species” of human (Nishitani, 2006: 259-60).

The *humanitas* became the subject that “produces knowledge and enriches itself by that knowledge,” while the *anthropos* as Other to Euro-Modernity, “designates the position of the object that is absorbed into the domain of knowledge produced by ‘humanitas’” (Nishitani, 2006: 266). Nishitani articulates the significance of this distinction in terms of colonial apprehension succinctly:

“Grasping and defining something as an object is, literally, to capture it and, furthermore, to gain the ability to manipulate it. It is already an operation of power. Within this relationship, the subject is active while the object can only passively accept that activity. Moreover, to grant something the status of object is to assimilate it into the subject's world of cognition, granting it the right to exist there. Things can exist if they are left alone, but in order for them to be recognized as actually existing, they must gain the position of object within the subject's gaze. Otherwise, they cannot exist meaningfully within the “human world” defined by ‘humanitas’” (Nishitani, 2006: 267).
Crucially Nishitani highlights that in this regime of knowledge the *anthropos* and *humanitas* have spatiotemporal designations. Here I can turn to Fabian’s commentary on the temporalized construction of the *anthropos* in his influential *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983/2014). Fabian is helpful to unpack the moves by which Indigenous peoples become dispossessed of land and also political and knowledge-producing subjectivity in Euro-Modern terms by the spatiotemporal designation as *anthropos*. Fabian’s argument is that anthropology can be deemed a “political” undertaking in its “alliance with the forces of oppression,” when accounting for how it rhetorically “constitutes and demotes” its objects ideologically. That is, in alignment with established relations of power between ethnographers’ societies and those they study (Fabian, 2014: 2, 28; Bunzl, 2014: viii–ix). The key way it does so is by relegating the *anthropos* to the past in its dominant models of representation and analysis, presenting certain societies as in earlier states, as primitive or savage and thereby suppressing the actual simultaneity and intersubjectivity of ethnographic encounters. Fabian asserts this is most evident in a disjuncture between anthropological fieldwork and writing. This is the crux of his well-known formulation of the “denial of coevalness,” the banishment of anthropology’s objects from the present, with the *anthropos* deemed as belonging to ‘an Other time’ and therefore not existing ‘in time’ with *humanitas* (in the figure of the anthropologist).

According to Fabian, the denial of coevalness is not the same as viewing the anthropos as anachronistic, which would suggest anthropology has the mistaken view that some peoples are out of sync with an objectively given time frame. Rather, he suggests anthropology uses universal time itself as a framing device to apprehend the Other by distancing them from the Self.24 This allows anthropology to authorize ‘its Self’ as in a privileged position of access to knowledge, and also creates a stagist cultural hierarchy - from most primordial *ethnos* at its base, to most advanced *politas* at its apex, in the wording of the last section (Fabian includes the anti-evolutionary paradigm here). Time is used in one sense to forward a neutral chronological scale to sequence sociocultural processes and measure change or movement successively (which he calls “physical” time). Time is also used to qualitatively categorize and designate the “socioculturally meaningful” condition of populations, which leads to unequal Self/Other

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24 Fabian calls anthropology “*allochronistic*” (other-timed) rather than *anachronistic* which suggests an error of chronology, which assumes that there is a universally perceptible and correct linear time. For a consideration of this in regard to Indigenous conceptions of time and history see Rifkin, 2017.
dualisms like traditional vs. modern (which he calls “typological” time) (Fabian, 2014: 22-24). Knowledge of the Other is thus not deemed hermeneutically and dialogically produced but rather derived from observation and merely disclosed by the ethnographer. Here Fabian crucially indicates how rather than the oral/aural the “rhetoric of vision” is central to anthropology in positing and emphasizing the capacity for representation, and so ethnographic possibility, which Audra Simpson draws out so effectively (Fabian, 2014). The ethnographic object (the anthropos) is seen, they must be visible to the ethnographic eye. Time then gives meaning to ‘visible’ alterity and the spatial or geographic distribution of humanity. Here we might rethink the inaudibility of ethnographic objects, observable but not really listened to (Kulchyski, 2007). Audibility implicates equals capable of discursive exchange as the basis for political relations.

It was the reckoning with Indigenous alterity on Turtle Island and the Americas and a foundational act of coloniality in its naming, that might be said to have shaped how time and space would figure in the ascendance of both limit ethnological reason and its practitioners. As Nishitani put it, “what was accomplished with the naming of “America” may…be called the prototype of “humanitas’” ever-expanding act of self-definition” (Nishitani, 2006: 267; 271). To engage this argument, we can consider the idea of ‘America’ as ‘the New World’ in political theory at the cusp of its break with anthropology, when natural history, political economy and speculative philosophy topically converged. In 1689 Locke made his infamous statement that “in the beginning all the world was America.” He did so in an effort to explicate and validate an emerging Eurocentric world-system (Lebovics, 1986), and ground a social contract theory of legitimate government by seeing natural law evidenced in the societies of the ‘newfound’ continent. Locke’s statement, in his Second Treatise on Government was premised in an argument on the origins of private property as underpinning civil or political society. Property is for Locke derived from the mixture of labour with resources that prior to this are accessible in common. He saw this process being actualized contemporaneously in America, where the

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25 Fabian identifies a third use of time as “intersubjective” which signals a newer struggle in anthropology to emphasize “the communicative nature of human action and interaction” where time must be acknowledged as a constitutive dimension “as soon as culture is no longer primarily conceived as a set of rules to be enacted by individual members of distinct groups, but as the specific way in which actors create and produce beliefs, values, and other means of social life” (Fabian, 2014: 24). I am contending in this chapter that the former view of culture is still prevalent in conceptions of Nativeness according to ethnological reason.

26 This relates to the distinction between ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ standpoints in ethnography. Emic refers to describing ‘local knowledge’ from the perspective of the subject-object people, how they imagine and explain, perceive and categorize, assign meaning. Etic refers to description from the ‘observer’ perspective and is the dominant ethnographic posture Fabian describes.
“original Law of Nature for the beginning of Property, in what was before common, still takes place,” undiluted by civilization (Locke quoted Lebovics, 1986: 570). In this formulation the state of nature is mostly a social condition free of government. It is a more basic way of life in which natural law relating to the acquisition and possession of resources is more readily apparent than in that of the Europeans, who organized themselves into political societies to prevent this law’s violation. In America land and its resources as yet not exerted on by human labour and protected by government as property, was vast, abundant and consequently there for the appropriation.

As Anthony Pagden relates, depictions of Indigenous societies at this juncture and before were not a matter of misapprehension - that is, a wrong perception of their alterity that then produced misrepresentations. This would suggest the objectivity of the eye, in which the “act of seeing and the process by which what has been seen is classified” are distinct operations (Pagden, 1982: 2). Nor were they made as part of a concerted philosophical effort to make sense of a new world in terms of its difference. Rather, commentators were compelled to adapt their existing worldview to make Indigenous peoples’ existence coherent within it, and so sustain the

27 In his much read semiological study *Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, Tzvetan Todorov contrarily forwards the notion of a European capacity to perceive difference as contributing to their victory over the Indians, unlike my Nahua relations the Mexica (Aztecs) who integrated the coming of Europeans into their existing relational order as preordained (Todorov, 1987: 74). The Indians’ communicative practices neglected open-ended “interhuman” exchanges of the moment and privileged interpretations in interface with their world - natural, social and religious (Todorov, 1987: 69). In his estimation the Spaniards’ problem was the ascription of their own value judgments to difference, equating sameness with equality and difference with inequality. He “narrates” this story as a kind of parable with a view to consider how such a relational failure in the past can provide lessons for the present on “how to deal with the other” (Todorov, 1987: 4). He chose this story not only for its “paradigmatic value” as an “extreme and exemplary encounter” with “radical difference” but 1492’s “direct causality” in inaugurating ‘Modernity’ (Todorov, 1988: 5). Deborah Root has aptly critiqued Todorov as de-politicizing colonial relations (whose violence is deemed in the past) and being racially essentialist in his inconsideration of how the Other (the Indian/Native and European) is actually “produced within Imperial economies of power” (Root, 1988: 199-200). Further, Todorov’s characterization of the Mexica’s incapacity to respond and adapt to the coming of Europeans is in continuity with the denial of coevalness Fabian identifies (and also recalls Hegel). Indigenous societies’ non-secular, non-anthropocentric (ethno-cultural) relation to universal linear time as cyclical and fatalist, rendered them as effectively static, collectivist and socially conformist or “overstructured,” and prevented their ability to change from within. His depiction of oral culture as acontentual and out of sync with the present can be rebutted (see Chapter 6): “Masters in the art of ritual discourse, the Indians are inadequate in a situation requiring improvisation and this is precisely the situation of the conquest. Their verbal education favours paradigm over syntagm [sequence], code over context, conformity-to-order over efficacy-of-the-moment, the past over the present” (Todorov, 1984: 87).

It must be noted that Todorov relies on the existing record of written Spanish accounts and in the case of Indigenous accounts, notes these are all subsequent to Conquest or translated and so perspectival. He suggests they are valid not for their objective veracity but their ideological significance as received accounts (Todorov, 1987: 53-54). Root also notes that he projects accounts of the “singular”/eccentric (as many emperors are wont to be) Montezuma on all Mexica and their subject peoples.
interests of their own position at its center. Hannah Arendt also suggested the mythic ‘discovery’ of America as an event at the “threshold” of Euro-Modernity, inaugurating the possessive surveying which would form the notion of the global, but also a sense of the detached removal of observation that made the European worldview a whole World-view, which in part led to Euro-Modern alienation from the earth (Arendt, 1998: 248-57). She like Pagden, suggests that the explorers associated with the ‘age of discovery’ are not Moderns obsessed with the “problem of the new” I discussed in Chapter One:

“[T]he strange pathos of novelty, the almost violent insistence of nearly all the great authors, scientists, and philosophers since the seventeenth century that they saw things never seen before, thought thoughts never thought before, can be found in none of them, not even in Galileo. These precursors are not revolutionists, and their motives and intentions are still securely rooted in tradition” (248-9).

The series of adjustments in comparative ethnology as an organizer of this emerging World-view after 1492 (Wynter, 1995) would be made according to shifts in this goal of representation, from making sense within established tradition and similarity, to the new and different.

In the Sixteenth century, debate on what or who the Indian is, began with the question of whether they had a soul and so were indeed human and able to receive the word of God. Native resemblance to Self was sought, which was favorable to argue evangelization as integral with their subjugation, and so the obligatory missionary role. Locke’s Seventeenth century Treatise was still set on representing the Native way of life as indicative of a shared subjection to natural law that Europeans nevertheless had an advanced capacity to manage. However, the colonial and imperial, then capitalist imperative to expand dispossession from the Eighteenth century on, was served best by emphasizing differentiation. This imperative is reflected and refracted in the desire to apprehend Otherness that launched modern anthropology, and the denial of coevalness that produces and denigrates the anthropos as Others in time and space. This shift to differentiation relates to the advent of Enlightenment, and is evident 130 years following Locke, in Hegel’s influential view of World History as the unfolding development of universal Reason, which can be drawn on as one illustrative example.28

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28 Between the Spanish Conquistadors and Locke was nearly two centuries of imperial and colonial expansions. Between Locke and Hegel was the 18th century and self-styled age of Enlightenment. I am mindful of the caution not to present Enlightenment as it projected itself, “a unified construct” which then allows us “see the ‘West’ and its colonial projects as animated by a common purpose” (Festa & Carey, 2009). I am jumping into this fragment of
In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1822-30) Hegel would assert that America as the *New World* is new relatively, in that it is distinct from the Old but more, it is new because it is perceived as intrinsically *younger*, which is the source of its difference. For Hegel America’s youthfulness is not derived from its geological age in physical time, but rather described as an immaturity gauged in typological time, to use Fabian’s idiom. This immaturity was nonetheless deemed visible in the land’s topography, as well as physiologically embodied by its animals, and its Indians. Behaviorally and intellectually, it was characterized by a situated national character (that is, ethno-culture), lacking self-awareness and the active energy for true self-determination, a youthfulness that cannot survive once encountered by bearers of the progressive and transcendental human spirit:

“Of America and its grade of civilization, especially in Mexico and Peru, we have information, but it imports nothing more than that this culture was an entirely national one, which must expire as soon as Spirit approached it. America has always shown itself physically and psychically powerless, and still shows itself so. For the aborigines, after the landing of the Europeans in America, gradually vanished at the breath of European activity” (Hegel, 2001: 98).

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Hegel’s thought as an illustrative aside to highlight the graduated shift in representations of the *anthropos* with the onset of a hegemonic Euro-Modernity, I cannot here tally the many varied iterations of these. I am also mindful of Spivak’s point on the ‘German’ Enlightenment’s engagement with difference:

“Cultural and intellectual "Germany," the place of self-styled difference from the rest of what is still understood as “continental” Europe and Britain, was the main source of the meticulous scholarship that established the vocabulary of proto-archetypal (“comparative” in the disciplinary sense) identity, or kinship, without direct involvement in the utilization of that other difference, between the colonizer and the colonized” [until later in the 19th century] (Spivak, 1999: 8).

29 Hegel on the New World:

“The World is divided into *Old* and *New*: the name of *New* having originated in the fact that America and Australia have only lately become known to us. But these parts of the world are not only relatively new, but intrinsically so in respect of their entire physical and psychical constitution. Their geological antiquity we have nothing to do with. I will not deny the New World the honor of having emerged from the sea at the world’s formation contemporaneously with the old…” (Hegel, 2001: 98; see also Dussel, 1993: 69).

30 ‘National’ is used by Hegel here in the sense of a society or people as used by the ancient Greeks, and which race and then culture displaced, as mentioned earlier. There are only a few and still incomplete English translations of the *Lectures*, I consulted both the standard Sibree (1857) and the critical edition by Nisbet (1974) as well as the reading by Dussel from a German edition (1993). There are some not insignificant differences in terminology between the translations in the section on the New World that together suggest their fuller implications, and also a shift in how these terms are read with the earlier senses absorbed but occluded. For example (Sibree/Nisbet): psychical/political, civilization/culture, national/natural, expire/perish, powerless/impotent, vanished/destroyed.
Immaturity is coded here as an inferior condition, a weakness of character mutually constituted and reinforced by being of America as land and place. The state-founding heirs of the Old World could see in the continent a promise to reap the seeds of an ideal political constitution sown by their forebears. Or, more accurately to have the courage to plant those imported seeds in hostile yet fertile ground, and then refine their modes of cultivation toward the ideal (this is a sense of youthfulness as potency and potentiality). The Indian on the other hand is doomed to die young, closed upon themselves, victim of their own stubborn habits and stationary, inadaptable objecthood. However the Indian’s land, as a “land of the future” in Hegel’s phrase, can only find its full productivity in the hands of those capable of growth and creativity, who began to engage their independence through a detachment from land in the Old World, and so also the vagaries of ecological heterogeneity and a reliance on nature’s whims for survival. It is those who have gained mastery over themselves through a disentanglement from land and place, that can then tame wilderness and shape it into sovereign territory through the assertion of their will over it. These are properly and distinct Humans - apex humanitas, in the form of the Euro-Modern Man – who by the dictates of universal Reason have left nature for political society (their character is as politas). They have gone furthest on this path of emancipation by also extricating themselves from a reliance on their particular national ethno-culture (custom, tradition) for moral and political authority, like children from their parent. They have found the “courage to use their own understanding,” in Kant’s words. However in those for whom the land still forms their subjectivity in indistinguishable continuity with itself - the prime anthropos, in the form of those colonized Natives who manage to subsist (whose character is as ethnos) – maturation was unlikely.

Here I just aim to indicate how the temporalization Fabian describes is linked to a specific kind of emplacement or attachment to colonized/colonizable land, that makes Indigenous peoples ineligible to both develop into full political maturity and also stay Native. This is important to keep in mind for how the anthropos’ unchanging formalist traditionalism as localized and particular, is set in contrast to the detached dynamism of a universalized Euro-

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31 Hegel engaged in a geographical/climate-based cultural determinism popular at this time, to suggest Indigenous Americans were not equipped as Northern Europeans were for cultural maturation due to their emplacement, suggesting “[n]ature is the first standpoint from which man can gain freedom within himself, and this liberation must not be rendered difficult by natural obstructions…” etc. (Hegel, 2001: 97).

32 Emmanuel Wallerstein described the distinction of modernization and modernity similarly, the first as a supposed triumph of humankind over nature and the latter as triumph over itself (Wallerstein quoted in Chakrabarty, 2011: 669). Thus a society can be modernized but not Modern.
modern political culture and its obsession with newness and futurity. The colonial implications of the denial of coevalness are clarified when access to land is opened, by perceiving its occupants as existing in a pre-political or (contemporarily) politically irrelevant condition. It is a “political physics,” formulated to deal with the coexistence of two bodies politic occupying the same space, using time to divide and measure them – a physics at the heart of liberal recognition and reconciliation politics in Canada, as a reconcilement of Indigenous presence with settler-state sovereignty (Fabian, 2014: 29; Coulthard, 2014: 22). Yet the notion of maturation in the stagist concept of cultural development also produced the condition of humanitas as an aspiration for colonized peoples. Maturation could be judged according to changes in practices and behaviours associated with rational and political societies - practices seen as rationally political/aligned with the dominant political rationality. That is, as ethno-cultures advancing toward modern statehood. The colonized could in principle enter the time of their colonizers and then become marked and engaged as nations with entitlement to their territories.

However, the West’s geographic encounters with human diversity and alterity were conceived in historical terms that involved an aspiration to reform this into sameness or similitude from the outset - first in theological, then scientific-evolutionary terms. Judeo-Christian time as a “history of salvation” gradually became secularized and naturalized, though most decisively in the so-called age of Enlightenment (Fabian, 2014: 26; 2-21). As Fabian points out, Judeo-Christian time was incorporative, yet also classifying in a way that effected eligibility and likelihood of conversion, with the Others at the periphery of the world, the “pagans and infidels (rather than savages and primitives) viewed as candidates for salvation.” The dispersed flock could be gathered and converted. Yet while the “pagan was always already marked for salvation, the savage is not yet ready for civilization.” (Fabian, 2014: 26). While Euro-modern evolutionism and its associated colonial and imperial practices also appear incorporative or assimilative, they are reliant on the maintenance of distance and separation at least symbolically, as I discussed in the last chapter regarding the ambivalences in a drive to eliminate the Native. For the anthropos aspiring to humanitas, the answer to whether an adequate maturation for self-determination has been achieved is always ‘not yet.’

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33 On the ‘not yet’ as discussed by anti-colonial thinkers on racialization see notes in Chapter Three.
Hegel believed, they would in Dipesh Chakrabarty’s phrase, be consigned to “the waiting room of History” (Chakrabarty, 2008: 8). With the naturalization of a historical salvation discourse into one of aspirational cultural or civilizational development, knowledge production also becomes “directional” (Nishitani, 2006: 262-4), or more specifically, unidirectional. The expansion of a Eurocentric World-view involved an understanding of where Knowledge is from in spatiotemporal terms. With an orientation toward the future, discovery and innovation or novelty with the benefit of hindsight, humanitas has the capacity to discern and grasp the truth of both the general condition of the universal human subject and also the habits of particular object Others. Yet the anthropos are beholden to correspond to these truths and so affirm humanitas’ power of apprehension (Nishitani, 2006: 265; 269), located at Mignolo’s “zero point.” From their passive and closed position, the Native anthropos cannot authoritatively access and produce knowledge independently. Embedded in their places, and a way of thinking that uncritically reflects this embeddedness, the Native cannot gain transcendent perspective on themselves or their situation. They cannot offer authoritative understanding of their own ways of being and doing, as the quote by Said and Abdel-Malek at the opening of this section gestured to, but nor will the ethnologist listen as Foucault suggests. What the Natives claim to know from their places, is deemed instinctive or at best intuited practical wisdom, as it does not conform to processes of critical reason; as it is shared and replicated orally, ceremonially and repetitively in a emotive, collective

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34 We can point here to the argument for imperial stewardship and civilizing tutelage by Britain, so influentially laid out by John Stuart Mill later in the 19th century (and comparable to Morgan), as an example. As the seminal thinker of liberal imperialism Mill forwarded an argument for paternalism for some as an exception to a commitment to liberty, his formulation not applying to those in a state of immaturity such as children or those “backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered in its nonage” (Mill, 1999: 52). He linked the right of liberty to governability, for individuals as well as peoples (which Foucault’s work on Madness and Civilization I discussed in Chapter 2 speaks to). For Mill the mark of maturation is the extent to which one is self-governable or self-disciplined. Through development of the faculty of critical reason we come to understand and accept external authority or law (if itself established according to principles of universal reason) as having its source internally in ourselves. Absolute liberty, in which we can all be trusted to discern and follow universally valid law and live harmoniously, is an ideal and telos always pushed to the horizon however. Developmentalism in his formulation of self-governance can validate both perpetual inequality within Euro-modern societies, as well as perpetual imperial and colonial governance of ‘developing’ societies, as in the “permanent interests of man as a progressive being” (Mill, 1999: 53). Explicit external control (as in colonial government or despotism) for the savage and barbarian societies Mill describes can only foreseeably give way to the internalization of an assumption of consent to that governance, accepting it as representative (see Mill, 1999 and Smith, 2008). Theorist Karuna Matena (2010) has made an argument against the idea that British Empire was motivated entirely by liberal imperialism, that as the Empire expanded, a new culturalism that emphasized the difficulties of the civilizing mission was instantiated and is linked to a shift toward indirect rule. This would be interesting to consider in relation to Harris’ arguments on settler-colonialism and land clearance at the ‘edge of Empire’ in British Columbia (2002) discussed in Chapter Three.
and deferential manner not centering individual free will, eco-logical in its alignment with a non-linear time lived in rhythm with the cyclical patterns of a living and sacred earth, undivided from non-human societies, animality and spirit - this cannot be knowledge production. Wisdom may sit in places (Basso, 1996), but knowledge moves through space and was never propelled further than by the energy of the colonial encounter with/production of the New World.

Denise Ferreira de Silva (2007) has described the spatiotemporally, culturally bifurcated “modern subjects” this produces. Western philosophy marks its Self or ‘I’ as a self-determining subject commanding universal reason (as regulative and productive force), and its others as in a condition of affectability belonging to the world of things or objects, subjected to both ‘natural’ conditions and others’ power or “outer determination,” both externally/materially/structurally and also as the interior condition of the “non-European mind” (de Silva, 2007). The (gendered) denigration of Indigenous ‘affective’ or felt knowledges and theory (Million, 2009, 2014) that will come up later in my story can also be traced here. di Silva locates the view of this condition of object-subjects’ inherence, in a racialization of culture that “describes the trajectory of the others of Europe as a movement toward obliteration” (si Silva, 2007: xxxix). We might revisit Fanon’s assertion of colonialism’s spatial quality of dispossession rather than capitalism’s dispossession of time (Sekyi-Otu, 1997: 77), in which he noted the Native’s fusion with the land in the colonial imagination, against the settler’s temporality. That is, where the “innovative dynamism” of settler labor clears, reforms and extracts value from an inanimate landscape, of which the Native is deemed a part (Fanon, 2004: 14-15):

“Hostile nature, obstinate and fundamentally rebellious, is in fact represented in the colonies by the bush, by mosquitoes, natives, and fever, and colonization is a success when all this indocile nature has finally been tamed. Railways across the bush, the

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35 See notes above on Todorov and Arendt on theory.
36 di Silva presents an argument in line with mine on anthropos/humanitas and suggests it is the tandem of anthropology and “race relations” (both broader and more specific than colonialism and imperialism) which produces two kinds of modern subjects by tying certain bodily and mental configurations to different global regions: the subject of transparency, for whom universal reason is an interior guide, and subjects of affectability, for whom universal reason remains an exterior ruler” (2007: xxxix). The anthropos is an object-subject. This also implicates the notion of a being outside or without historical becoming, as historian Richard White has put it: “is to naturalize them, to render them powerless. They are not only victims of the modern world - a world that defines itself as historical and always in the act of becoming - but they are reduced to victims who are both incapable of understanding the narratives of their own subjugation (which are historical) and who are liable to be erased from those narratives themselves” (White quoted in Million, 2009: 66-7). It must be noted here Dian Million critiques White for chastising Indigenous scholars who he perceives as playing to the designation as victim and are reductive in their view of colonial “aggressors.”
draining of swamps and a native population which is non-existent politically and economically are in fact one and the same thing” (Fanon, 1968: 250).

Native Informants and Foreclosure of the Aboriginal: A Critical Impasse?

“How then to describe or theorize that which is cognizant of its own space of articulation? The history that governs apprehension?” (A. Simpson, 2016).

While this chapter has thus far mostly been concerned with explicating the ethnological in ‘ethnological reason’ rather than its designation as reason, these are inextricably linked in how it operates to attempt to apprehend Indigenous peoples, and is especially pertinent for my concern on giving accounts of Indigenous political practices and movement. Particularly, telling as forwarding critical understandings from our own foundations and experience within the asymmetrical settler-colonial theatre. This linkage is then crucial to reiterate in considering how resurgence’s ethnographic refusals instantiate epistemic and discursive reorientations and assertions of authority. That is, reorientations in ways of knowing-being-doing, and how and whether to be made known. Limit ethnological reason’s designation as universal is the source of its authority regarding cultural classification and knowledge production, and it is the notion of an uneven development of the faculty of reason that largely divides the anthropos from the humanitas, as di Silva unravels so well and which I cannot duplicate here. Instead, I will focus on a particular telling of the problem of apprehension as it speaks to Indigenous ethnographic refusal and the undertaking of political storying-theorizing that relates to the ongoing influence of Kantian rationalism on critical theory. This rationalism, associated with Euro-modernity, is fundamentally ethno-logical both in the sense that it is ethnocentric, and also in that its conception relies on the bifurcation of culture instrumental to dispossession I have already described (as ethno-logical). This presents another iteration of the problem of colonial

37 There has been much work on colonial knowing and intelligibility centered largely in treatments of Whiteness and critical race studies, interfaced with queer theory (Martinez, 2013), the concept of “common sense” (Stoler, 2008; Rifkin, 2013), as well as focusing on the obverse of naivety, willful ignorance, unknowing and “epistemologies of ignorance” – the cultivated or intentional gap in knowledge or oversight as instrument of oppression or survival strategy as discussed by Charles Mills (Andersen & Hokowhitu, 2007; Vinlassery, 2016 et al. and the collection Sullivan & Tuana Eds, 2007) that I have not been able to fully engage but could undoubtedly enrich the telling here. 38 Kant opposed both pure rationalism (knowledge from a priori metaphysical principles) and pure empiricism (knowledge from a posteriori physical experience) to suggest that justified knowledge is derived from the human faculty of reason’s critical engagement with the empirical world. That is, not strictly before nor after this engagement.
apprehension to Indigenous theorists occupying/occupied by Western form, academic political
to account for: that we may be beholden to a ‘critical’ reason that is fundamentally
ethnological in its association with *humanitas* and disavows ours, which it relies on as affective
*anthropos*. This seems a complication of our refusal of the posture of Native Informants, to be
‘Bad Indians’ as I discussed in Chapter Three.

Here I can suggest alignment with the concerns articulated by Gayatri Spivak’s
“anthropologizing of philosophy” set out in the first chapter of her *Critique of Postcolonial
Reason* (1999) and her interlocutor theorist Dina Al-Kassim (2002), who I have found speaks
eloquently to the posture of refusal for Indigenous theorists. Spivak describes how the
conception of reason and the Human subject’s rational will inherited from the European
Enlightenment and especially Kant, involves what she calls the “foreclosure of the Aboriginal”
as a precondition. Spivak borrows the term *foreclosure* from Lacanian psychoanalysis. It refers to
an idea and its affect that the Ego cannot acknowledge and thereby cannot have an ethical
relation with. Foreclosure here can be taken as the subjecting, discursive “social regulation of
intelligibility” (Al-Assim, 2002: 173). Spivak tellingly names the Aboriginal subject of this
“expulsion” with the title of an all-important figure from the ethnographic lexicon - the Native
informant (Spivak, 1999: 6). The modern, rational Subject/Self (who we might call ‘the
anthropologist’ here in keeping with this lexicon) assumes the exclusive role of knowledge
producer, while the Native informant is disavowed as their constitutive Other. For Spivak, the
Aboriginal/Native informant’s “lack of access to the position of narrator is the condition of
possibility of the consolidation of Kant’s position” on the ostensibly universal human faculty of
reason (Spivak, 1999: 9). She locates the Aboriginal in an “anthropomorphic moment” in Kant’s
philosophic work: the metaphorized invocation of an Indigenous man of Tierra del Fuego as
“raw man” - “an example of a wildness from which the civilized cultivation of reason departs”
(Spivak, 1999: 14-6; Al-Kassim, 2002: 170).39

39 Simon Swift has argued that Spivak’s interrogation of Kant, presented as an attempt to “recover a buried moment
of ethnographic determination from within the self-dissimulating text of transcendental philosophy” is “pushing at
an open door” (Swift, 2005: 220). He suggests that reading Kant’s epistemological work alongside his anthropology
reveals how he was not ideologically blind to ethnographic influence on his conception of Reason, particularly as he
utilizes the figure of the Savage as metaphor:

“The example of the savage is...less important to Kant as a spectacle of a type of primitive species-
being which Enlightened society must continually remind itself that it has overcome or that it must
cast out of the definition of the human, than as a metaphor for a threat to the culture of Enlightenment
that exists within its own form; that is, the counter-Enlightenment fetishizing of primitive power”
(Swift, 2005: 231).
Spivak suggests the foreclosed Aboriginal/Native Informant is requisite to Kant’s formulation of reason and the human subject, part of the bedrock of Enlightenment philosophy and the dominant Euro-Modern episteme. They can thus be directly equated to Nishitani’s *anthropos* and di Silva’s affectable Others. While she presents the Aboriginal/Native informant as an allegorical figure for whom the current “typecase is the poorest woman of the South” (Spivak, 1999: 6), this figure’s actual ethnographic origin and ongoing association with Indigeneity and the peoples of the ‘New World’ should be foregrounded. What then are the implications of this foreclosure for critics in the position of Spivak’s metaphoric Aboriginal and further, Indigenous thinkers whose peoples are the basis of this allegory in actuality? When as Cree/Métis scholar Emma LaRocque (2010) asks, “the Other is Me”? That is, in terms of mounting a critique of Euro-Modernity and its ethnological reason without being determined by it? Her answer is a kind of critical impasse, or perhaps more, *an impasse for critique* and indication of its limitations, which must be confronted and *refused* to assert a generative and grounded theory that is itself refigurative.

Spivak first suggested this impasse in her influential 1988 essay I discussed in Chapter Two, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” formulated in a decisive moment in critical theory and revisited in *Critique* (Warrior, 2011: 87). The earlier essay begins by considering how Western

In this Kant is generally compared to his intellectual rival at the time Johann Gottfried Herder, regarding who it is worth making an aside here. Herder is variously described as a founder of anthropology, linguistics and hermeneutics as well as an ethnic chauvinism precedential to German nationalism. Of late he is also recuperated as an early and subalternized exponent of cultural relativism providing the prime ‘counter-Enlightenment’ vision in the romantic tradition to Kant’s overt universalism and championing of reason. His legacy in this light is defended as imminent critique of the dominant Euro-modern epistemic order that is hostile to alterity (Sikka, 2005, Zammito, 2002 and Zammito et al., 2010). Others contest the notion of counter-Enlightenment (first posed by Isaiah Berlin) as a revisionist myth but it is at least redescription in the service of contemporary political needs in the Western Academy for intellectual ancestors capable of recovering its history to ‘the right side’ (Norton, 2007; Piirimae 2015). His restitution has variously involved citing him as critic of colonialism (Spencer, 2007 & 2015) as well as projects toward finding theoretical precedents that might align with Indigenous perspectives on forming just and respectful relations between peoples and thereby building shared understandings on processes of authorization for settlers to remain (see Asch, 2014). However it has been argued that Herder also offered a progressive notion of reason and definition of culture akin to the “unitary Enlightenment model of civilization” that Kant espoused and thus their divergences have been oversimplified (Denby, 2005:55). Herder’s connection of quantified populations to qualitative identity typology can indeed be seen to “lay the groundwork for the scientific conceptions of race and culture” (Pels & Salemink, 1999: 19). It suffices here to suggest that both Kant and Herder belong squarely to Enlightenment as transitional figures toward the bifurcation of culture and naturalization of ethnological reason within the Euro-modern episteme, claimed as they are by both anthropology and political theory.

40 While Mignolo suggests the anthropos is “not literally the native barbarians of the sixteenth century or the naked primitives of the eighteenth,” but defined as the epistemic difference from humanitas (2011: 85), Indigenous peoples I contend here are actually Euro-Modernity’s prime anthropos, as Fanon identified Black slaves as the actuality of Hegel’s Master/Slave dialectic.

41 The externalization of the Aboriginal to Modernity is here described as subalternity.
critics who have deconstructed Modern subjectivity and its location of power (she points to Foucault and Deleuze), suggest that “intellectuals must attempt to disclose and know the discourse of society’s Other,” the heterogeneous reality of experience for the most disavowed and homogenized object-subjects (Spivak, 1988: 272). However while they purport to reject the “role of referee, judge, and universal witness,” and the hegemonic and essentialist “sign-system” that makes any representation possible, they reassert both. Spivak indicates that this is because they do not account for their own location as practitioners of theory constituting Others against a supposedly transparent and universal Western subject (themselves – their I/We/Self). Theirs is then an ideological role that falls squarely on “the exploiters side of the international division of labour” - the “dynamic economic situation requiring that interests, motives (desires), and power (of knowledge) be ruthlessly dislocated” (Spivak, 1988: 280). 42 So much for these Western critics, but where does this leave their counterparts in the Othered non-West, are they better positioned to represent their own foreclosed peoples and knowledges, and what of the possibility for ‘Aboriginal’ self-storying?

In her commentary on Spivak, Dina Al-Kassim eloquently describes the possible critical impasse Spivak perceives, in such a way that helps clarify the stakes I am interested in for the scholar discussing Indigenous politics against colonial apprehension by limit ethnological reason, especially the Indigenous Insider scholar positioned as ethnographically (self) ‘representative’ of their Othered people. It is worth quoting her here at length to bring the stakes for the ‘insider’ theorist, the risks of inclusion or exclusion, disclosure and refusal into focus:

“The representative intellectual, in wanting to/attempting to speak for the other, inevitably rebounds into a descriptive and representational depiction of that other’s speech and interest because the subaltern is denied the right of entry. [Yet] to demand or make room for the subaltern’s speech is equivalent to demanding that the subaltern adopt the discourse of political agency and enter into that enlightenment space of self-representation. This demand effectively censors those others who cannot assume their own ‘image’ in the space cleared for an enlightenment politics by perversely asking that the subaltern cease to be ‘herself’ as the price of becoming a modern subject. Thus the subaltern other is never presented and does not speak in

42 Spivak’s example of this replication is a dialogue between Foucault and Deleuze, choosing this approach as it “undoes the opposition between authoritative theoretical production and the unguarded practice of conversation, enabling one to glimpse the track of ideology” (Spivak, 1988: 272).
her own name or her own voice because to do so would mean ceasing to be that aboriginal whose knowledge and memory is a priori excluded from the domain of Reason’s cultivation…

In essence, the Aboriginal/Fuegan/Native Informant is threatened both with disappearance and representation, and the latter in at least two ways: first as the figure of the ‘aboriginal’ pre-modern so useful to the self-reflection of the enlightenment subject and second by the later substitution of another figure, and this as a perverse effect of ‘freedom’, that of the postcolonial critic who comes to stand in for the subaltern Native Informant” (Al-Kassim, 2002: 170).

This vicious circle of disappearance and representation is a particular epistemic and discursive limbo reserved for the colonized Native. It is sustained by the bifurcation of culture and its impossible choice for the anthropos aspiring to humanitas: to retain their Nativeness or Aboriginality (an unintelligible difference incongruent with political and critical agency) and remain in the domain of the ethnos, or take up a Modern subjectivity (an intelligible similarity that assimilates) and enter the domain of the politas. Both involve her disappearance as herself. Each option is only possible through her external or affected representation. Yet Spivak wonders on how the reason that renders the Aboriginal apprehensible/apprehend-able may be indispensable even to the rejection of this positioning. Is our critical reason inescapably ethnological? This is the critical impasse of her concern, that brings her “postcolonial critic” or for my concern here, Indigenous theorist, into the role of proxy Native Informant.

Spivak’s impasse can be compared to Foucault’s reflections on what he called the “intellectual blackmail of Enlightenment” for Western thinkers, whereby “you either accept the Enlightenment and remain within the tradition of its rationalism…or else you criticize the Enlightenment and then try to escape from its principles of rationality” (Foucault, 1984: 43). Interestingly (and rather appropriately for my consideration here) Foucault advocates “refusal” of this blackmail, which nevertheless “means precisely that one has to refuse everything that might present itself in the form of a simplistic and authoritarian alternative.” However, such a posture of refusal is deemed by Foucault to itself derive from the “ethos of permanent critique”

43 This is the double-barreled sense of representation that Spivak engages: as re-presenting, signifying/depicting a reality (the sense in art and philosophy) and as speaking for/of (as in the institutional political sense), which are nevertheless linked and describe a power relation.
that is claimed by the Enlightenment as its animating force following Kant. And so, Enlightenment captures even the critique of its own “doctrinal elements” (Foucault, 1984: 42), as I spoke to Modernity’s apprehending of resistance in Chapter Two. Foucault’s ‘we’/Self remains historically determined by Enlightenment rationality - but what of ‘our’ modalities of critique and alternatives, that is, Western thinkers’ Indigenous counterparts? Can this ‘we’ articulate who we are, our resistances and resurgence from this position that may be seen/heard as Nativeness or conversely as assimilation, that can be used as ethnographic resource by enemies and professed ‘allies’ or co-resistors alike?

On the sources of Western critical theory, Spivak suggests we need not “ostentatiously” turn our backs on their undeniable influence, but rather practice a kind of insubordinate reading of the Western theory Canon, such as the “magisterial texts” of Kant, Hegel and Marx that they might now be our servants (Spivak, 1999: 6-9). Indeed here she can be said to follow Foucault who suggested we “be oriented toward the “contemporary limits of the necessary,” that is, toward what is not or is no longer “indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects” (Foucault, 1984: 43). On parsing what is indispensible, to be Indigenous, we can consider how we might take up Nativeness as it may appear in the settler-colonial public, to speak to our own sources without believing it to be a strategic essentialism, but a self-conscious activity.

Al-Kassim suggests Spivak’s own openings to a critical posture that refuses the labor of representation for others and shifts through a seeming critical impasse to a subversion of Indigenous peoples’ positioning as theoretical models or “transits” in Jodi Byrd’s formulation. This involves projecting Nativeness and ourselves as such, but also as more than just a “figure of foreclosure,” or “concept-metaphor” as Spivak suggests. In assuming and subverting the identification of Indigenous or Native intellectual, that this is a critical role that claims a “transformative, even performative, power for figuration,” whose own sources in “repudiated” or “non-knowledge refused in the subject,” is not just deemed a “well-spring...of negative

44 As Mark Olssen (2003) writes: “In Foucault's view, Kant founded the two great critical traditions between which modern philosophy has been divided. On the one hand, Kant laid down and founded that critical tradition of philosophy which defines the conditions under which a true knowledge is possible, of which a whole area of modern philosophy since the nineteenth century has been presented and developed on that basis as an analytic of truth; on the other hand, he initiated a mode of critical interrogation that is immanent in the movement of the Enlightenment and which directs our attention to the present and asks `what is the contemporary field of possible experience?’” (Olssen, 2003: 74).
attachment to the social world.” This requires an active self-awareness of one’s perhaps contradictory positioning, and demands a responsibility to find ways to speak, and so theory-story affirmatively and otherwise: “This critical position does not speak for others but, instead, imagines a speech that takes stock of the violent proscription of those others” and their ways of knowing/being/doing’s “foundational banishment and the captive haunting still underway,” in a common but dominated domain of enunciation, while also initiating a “restrained sidestepping of appropriated certainty regarding the Aboriginal’s knowledge [that] resists the reduction of the Native Informant to mere mascot of counter-hegemonic activism” (Al-Assim, 2002: 171-72).

Walter Mignolo among others similarly point to how the exile of the colonized’s knowledges and self-expressions from permissibility by Euro-modernity - anthropos’ “exteriority” from the inside defined and constantly re-mapped by humanitas (Mignolo, 2011: 83-5) - seems to suggest the necessity to perform/conform to this inside/outside dichotomy in order to be seen and heard. Whereby, there is an ironic need to simultaneously re-source and reject its ethnological terms of similarity and difference to assert a place from which to resist the coloniality of power that “converted difference into values and hierarchies,” a location to offer grounded alternatives (Mignolo, 2008: 239). To interrogate the possibility of “decolonizing the mind” is to “face the experience of colonialism” and also recognize “the precolonial,” and has produced what Roberto Bernasconi calls the “destructive importance of so-called ethnophilosophy,” affirming that there are culturally specific and unified intellectual systems with a limited external accessibility, such as ‘African philosophy’ or ‘Indigenous philosophies.’ This leads to another double bind of recognition in the confrontation with Western philosophy’s claims to authorization. Mignolo and Bernasconi acknowledge these are “tasks and issues” for

45 As the thinkers on the coloniality of being have suggested of Fanon’s experiential rooting of Hegel’s Master-Slave dialectic’s power for his critique (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Al-Kassim’s reflection on a passage in Spivak reads in full: “figuration can exhibit the foreclosed in such a way as to transform the lost life, affect or mode of being in the world into another assumable artifice, that of a role. To claim such a transformative, even performative, power for figuration would seem to imply that a founding foreclosure can become a textual sympto

46 As I discussed in Chapter Two, Foucault acknowledges this subjugation of “a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scienticity” (Foucault quoted Spivak, 1999: 267).
47 Quoting Bernasconi: “Western philosophy traps African philosophy in a double bind. Either African philosophy is so similar to Western philosophy that it makes no distinctive contribution and effectively disappears; or it is so different that its credentials to be genuine philosophy will always be in doubt” (Bernasconi quoted in Mignolo, 2008: 238-9). Nishitani echoes Al-Kassim that even to “preserve” their knowledge, the anthropos must learn “the language of humanitas”: “In other words, they had to become "humanitas" to some extent in order to leave a trace in the domain of knowledge” (Nishitani, 2006: 268).
African and Indigenous philosophers, which nevertheless challenge Euro-Western theorists to rethink their own traditions from the colonial difference.

Indigenous resurgence discourse’s emphasis on the regeneration of grounded normativities could be said to involve articulations of what is called ethnophilosophy, they also radically disrupt the spatiotemporal ethnic/political bifurcation of culture and subjectivity the depiction as *ethnos* relies on however. Resurgence discourse does not accept that there are no cohesive or coherent alternatives, but acknowledges their public “context of articulation” in a theatre of apprehension still invested in a project of Indigenous elimination and *epistemicide*. It does not accept entrapment in a discursive and epistemic limbo of Nativeness ‘contaminated’ by intercultural contact and exchange, unable to go back or forward. Audra Simpson’s depiction of this and the concern with “formalist” approaches to performing tradition equated to a kind of essentialism I discussed at the outset, raises more questions however, as resurgence emphasizes the transformative vitality in the repetition of traditional forms, although not as sameness and preservation, but regeneration:

“culture as the pure,” “culture as tradition,” “culture as what is prior to settlement” disavows or pushes away its context of articulation: the political project of dispossession and containment, as it actually works to contain, to fetishize and entrap and distill Indigenous discourses into memorizable, repeatable rituals for preservation against a social and political death that was foretold but did not happen” (Simpson, 2014: 99).

I return again and again to the opening lines of Jean-Paul Sartre’s preface to Fanon’s *Les Damnés des le Terre*, because they speak acutely to the colonial subjection of Nativeness and ‘foreclosure of the Aboriginal’ who can speak themselves following the mythic Encounter as a rupture in history and culture, with all then being post-colonialism; the stillbirth of the Native: “Not long ago the Earth numbered 2 billion inhabitants, i.e., 500 million men and 1.5 billion ‘natives.’ The first possessed the Word, the others borrowed it” (Sartre, 1961/2014: xliii). While taken from the communist hymn “L’Internationale,” the incisiveness of Fanon’s description of the *colonized Native* as *les damnés*, the damned of the colonizer’s earth or rather World, is not
done justice by the popular English translation of ‘wretched.’ Particularly, to get at the discursive and epistemic limbo outlined above as a kind of purgatory (the way-station to heaven), as well as the affective, earth boundedness as bondage of the Native’s association with colonizable land – to be damned to the earth.

Puerto-Rican scholar of theology and coloniality Nelson Maldonado-Torres engages the notion of **damnés** in reference to Fanon’s criticism of Western humanism’s colonial exceptionalism (despite its universalist salvation discourse). According to Maldonado-Torres, this is the colonized Native’s condemnation to a naturalized and perpetual state of being akin to slavery and war, with its violent suspension of ethical relations. This is a “living in Hell,” or in Fanon’s words an “incomplete death” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 247, Fanon quoted 255). While Maldonado-Torres’ interpretation is all too accurate, for me the latter sense of a state of incomplete death or stillbirth is an apt way to describe the impasse-effect for Indigenous thinkers, in which even articulations of freedom or emancipation tied to Indigeneity may be perceived as derivative, that we cannot possess but only borrow the Word. Here Fanon’s aspersions against colonized intellectuals, as I mentioned in the opening of my story in Chapter One can be recalled, and the call of resurgence discourse to engage self-consciously in traditional practices, whose formalism is figurative.

In his 1956 lecture on “Racism and Culture,” Fanon gives an acute depiction of the necessity for Indigenous cultural destruction to colonial domination (culture as a whole way of life), that their “social panorama” and “systems of reference have to be broken” (see also Coulthard, 2014: 214):

“The setting up of the colonial system does not of itself bring about the death of the native culture. Historic observation reveals, on the contrary, that the aim sought is rather a continued agony than a total disappearance...This culture, once living and

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48 The opening lines of “The International” written for the First and Second International and later the first anthem of the Soviet Union, do encompass Fanon’s Marxist humanist view of revolution. The direct translation of Eugène Pottier’s original lyrics are:

“Arise, the damned of the earth!
Arise prisoners of hunger!
Reason thunders in its crater,
’Tis the eruption of the end.
Let’s make a clean slate of the past,
Enslaved mass, arise, arise!
The world’s foundation will change,
We are nothing, now let’s be all!” (Pottier trans. Mitchell Abidor, “The International”).
open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yoke of oppression. Both present and mummified, it testifies against its members. It defines them in fact without appeal. The cultural mummification leads to a mummification of individual thinking. *The apathy so universally noted among colonial peoples is but the logical consequence of this operation. The reproach of inertia constantly directed at “the native” is utterly dishonest* (Fanon, 1994: 34 emphasis mine).

Yet while Fanon describes subsequent blame placed on ‘Natives’ for their ‘inertia’ or idleness as dishonest, as Nativeness is fabricated by the colonial system, and the rupture of their cultural/political ‘historical’ trajectories is caused by external violent intervention, he suggested this fixity or “mummification” of culture has been achieved and cannot be revitalized through tradition which is retrograde, but only a revolutionary break from the colonial yoke, and the creation of a new world. Resurgence discourse’s reorientations do not advocate essentializing reclamation of Nativeness however, but rather a self-conscious traditionalism (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005) that can refigure the past, present and future, and in refusal of the stifling bifurcations of ethnological reason as totalizing, asserts survivance and a principle of self-determination. In this is the assertion that Indigenous subjection as ethnos/anthropos/Native to the politas/humanitas/Colonizer is far from settled. Indigenous peoples have never ceased having our own words for ourselves: Nahua, Nêhiyaw, Kanien’kehá:ka, Stó:lō, WSÁNEĆ...

Embracing Damnation and Dancing Between Worlds

“Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we *could be* to get rid of this kind of political ‘double blind,’ which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures” (Foucault quoted in Flowers, 2015: 34).

The above quotation of Foucault was evoked by Rachel Flowers in her defense of Indigenous women’s anger and refusal as a generative ‘No’ in her essay discussed in Chapter Three, and speaks to how the double bind of recognition and colonial apprehension is perhaps

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49 In his critique of the Negritude movement’s race-based projects of reclaiming Blackness and as he saw it a nonexistent Black past, Fanon did posit that he should be able to “revise my past, prize it, or condemn it, depending on what I choose” (Fanon, 2008: 202).
more of a “double blind” as to what ethnological reason and colonial subjection says we are, against what we know and can tell otherwise. Vine Deloria’s work echoes this, whose *God Is Red* pronounced a liberation of the Indigenous imagination against the ruse of collective and individual domination as a totalizing ‘cultural hegemony,’ one that rejected the salvation offered by the White Euro-Modern Word and World, and affirmed that Indigenous peoples have our own knowledges, our own theories, our own words, our own worlds, our own ways of telling that were not absolutely circumscribed by Nativeness.\(^5^0\) And further, that these are ours regardless of the language we employ, though we must remain introspective on how our language figures and refigures. As I discussed in Chapter Three on Deloria Jr.’s challenge to me, that we not be preoccupied by this ruse of domination any longer. And, in the phrasing of Mignolo, that we then might embrace our supposed “exteriority” to Euro-Modernity and its epistemologies, aware that dependency is the “basic strategy in the exercise of the coloniality of power” (Mignolo, 2008: 230). Perhaps even embrace seeing this exteriority as a kind of damnation, in a turn toward our own non-dichotomous foundations for knowledge, critique and action.\(^5^1\)

Yet in my discussion of Nativeness as a colonial, racialized (as made inherent) ethnocultural subjection, this is not to suggest an absolute unreality or non-correspondence to experience as this Nativeness has been structurally codified,\(^5^2\) nor in self-conceptions or naming,

\(^5^0\) Taiaiake Alfred described his recollection of reading Vine Deloria Jr. for the first time this way:

“I can still conjure the feeling 20 years later - the confused knot of identity in my stomach began to relax. The architecture of their dominance was exposed. They were still in control, but I wasn't fooled anymore. God and Crown and savages and civilization: it was all a lie. My heart soared and I saw my people and myself in a new way - with respect” (Alfred, 1999).

\(^5^1\) Mignolo suggests moving toward decolonial options involves uncovering the lie of and perhaps appropriating the concept of *humanitas* but to “become something other than humanitas” (2011: 90-1). This speaks to the role of the Indigenous scholar in the Academy and resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations:

> “the anthropos, in inhabiting non-European places, discovered that she/he has been invented, as anthropos, by a locus of enunciation self-defined as humanitas. Now the anthropos is inside the space and institutions that created him/her...the former anthropos, who are no longer claiming recognition by or inclusion in the humanitas, but engaging in epistemic disobedience and delinking from the magic of the Western idea of modernity, ideals of humanity, and promises of economic growth and financial prosperity...the definitive rejection of "being told," from the epistemic privileges of the zero point, what "we" are, what our ranking is in relation to the ideal of humanitas, and what we have to do to be recognized as such” (Mignolo, 2013: 119-21).

\(^5^2\) Some like Gerald Vizenor, have taken up strands in poststructuralism’s decentering of the subject against the possibility for representation of the ‘real Indian’ as “discoverable other.” For example Vizenor engages French theorist Jean Baudrillard’s theory of ‘simulacra,’ which took ‘the Indian’ as a model for all postmodern subjects (not so unlike Spivak’s metaphor). The Indian as Baudrillard presents is an effigy of ethnology which has substituted the ‘real’ for a “simulation of all possible Indians from before ethnology,” a savage that is “posthumous: frozen, cyrogenized, sterilized, protected to death” (Vizenor and Baudrillard quoted in Ganser, 2017: 20-1). Thomas King would also engage the concept with more humor in *An Inconvenient Indian* (2013). Like the Modernity/Coloniality
such as the international or transnational self-identification of Indigeneity, which is itself bound up with the colonial and imperial relation, Western political theory and anthropology.\textsuperscript{53} I have already addressed the issues of discursive invention of colonial subjects raised by Said’s work in Chapter Two, but it should suffice it here to say that a consideration of how Nativeness may seem performed to the ethnographic settler-colonial eye if inaudible to its ear, and what might be critical opportunities in this self-awareness, is not an attempt to recover an essence but to engage the undeniable power of this construct as it impacts our own realities. Further, the culturalism at issue as I have presented it here in terms of limit ethnological reason is specific, and critique is aimed at making distinctions between as Tobin suggests, “discourses that naturalize oppression and discourses that naturalize resistance.” And so, we might distinguish the culturalism advocated by resurgence discourse and many Indigenous activists, and can also account for the critical and Marxist anthropology that supports these assertions of Indigenous cultures as lifeworlds or ways of life (knowing-being-doing) deeply challenging to the dominant colonial-capitalist order.\textsuperscript{54} In this we can also account for the nationalist and self-determination centered arguments in the assertion of Indigenous “difference that matters” as Simpson puts it in relation to sovereignty, that emphasize the political relation with settler-colonial state and society and absent culture for purposes of declaring authority in relation to this state and society. This does not preclude we contemplate issues of means and ends however.

\textsuperscript{53} The category of Indigeneity as a self-definition is connected to the various colonial characterizations of Nativeness linked to the concept of culture Simpson critiques, as she points out. However it is a category that I take as a starting point though it is not uncontested as a basis for affinity and still often retains equation to specific ethnocultural markers ‘recognizable’ as Indigenous in expressions of the relationship to land (eg. tribal social organization, animistic spirituality etc.) On the question of whether Indigeneity can/should be forwarded as existing prior or regardless of anthropology and colonization, Simpson responds “I would say that (a) politically it must know itself as having been in place prior to both, and (b) it is made in its present form through these matrices” (Simpson, 2014: 218). I agree that as a connective thread across shared experiences of dispossession and also a mode of self-definition referent to but not reliant on the colonizer, it is in the colonial/decolonial present rhetorically crucial to solidarity. See also Note in Chapter One on Indigeneity.

\textsuperscript{54} In his commentary on Coulthard Peter Kulchyski evokes a Marxist historical-materialist culturalism, “culture as the manner in which values and ways of seeing the self, the other, the world are shaped by distinct modes of production” (Kulchyski, 2016: 37; also see 2005, 37-42). He suggests that “there is no essentialist element to the Indigenous-egalitarianism thesis advanced by many Indigenous activists” (Kulchyski, 2016: 39) but that “absent a strong notion of mode of production, the Indigenous cultural turn becomes based on an essentialised ‘ethnic’ difference” (Kulchyski, 2016: 43). The materialist (re)turn in regard to culture as mode of life incompatible with global capitalism, while an important intervention can raise other issues in regard to perceptions of decolonial action and transformation as I will return to in the final chapter.
What remains is to consider the sources we have available, not as resources to extract but perhaps to re-source, for how we can story the difference or Indigeneity of our politics otherwise, and the next two chapters take this up. Before turning to these, one an engagement of storytelling from a self-located pariah within the (margins of) Western political theory, the other of Indigenous theorists, I can speak briefly to the liminal positioning ascribed to Indigenous scholars in the Western Academy for its culturalist connotation, as my decision to make linkages between these ‘worlds’ in my story might be read to reflect this. It might because Indigenous scholars are often positioned as the ‘model figures’ of in-betweenness as cultural purgatory. As geographer Sarah Hunt has articulated, as many have, “[s]hapeshifting is an important skill for those of us who occupy multiple voices, who embody supposedly dichotomous subject positions: colonizer/colonized, native/academic, and community member/scholar” (Hunt, 2014: 28). I recently read an articulation of the perception of this negotiation of a racialized ethno-logic by non-Indigenous scholar Mark Rifkin that provides a neat summation:

“The notion of being “between two worlds” often has been used as a way of characterizing mixed-blood Native people, those who live off-reservation and those who have been educated in primarily white institutions, among other forms of “hybridity.” Employed in this way, the phrase tends to focus on “cultural” difference at the expense of attending to ongoing modes of colonial power and its effects on Indigenous people(s), as well as to present Natives as if any exposure to anything non-native led to a fall from a prelapsarian Indian wholeness. However, in Remember This! Waziyatawin Angela Wilson observes that the Dakota phrase usually translated as “liv[ing] in two worlds” literally means “being tied to two states of being” or involving “two ways of knowing” (116, 134), and the concept might be recuperated in this sense of referring to modes of being, knowing, and becoming, in contrast to the image of sealed-off spaces of purity” (2017: note 5 at 193).

For myself, as a Mestiza/“mixed-blood” diasporic or nepantlera Indigenous scholar who has been educated in Western Academia, I have always identified with the concept of between two worlds in the way Rifkin presents through Waziyatawin, without equating this to the limit ethnological reason of being pulled between occupying one or another as “sealed off spaces of purity,” but nor in terms of a hybridity which denigrates the experience and existence of different
worlds with very real boundaries to which we might have differential allegiance. We might nevertheless travel between or traverse them to make connections and find where perhaps we cannot, and where for our allegiance we might hold boundaries of discourse and disclosure, as I will touch on in the following chapters.

On this some of the scholars on Arendt I discuss emphasize her view of the worldly (activist in Haraway’s sense) theorist, committed to the possibility of critical judgment and action among a perspectival relativism, as ‘world travelling’ (Disch). But in this travelling we might still have a home to return to, and our own understandings of our home worlds’ internal coherence, though the intelligibility between them might be limited. This relates to the groundedness or spatiality of the conceptions of theory-storying I discuss in Chapter Six that also emphasize movement, but as ethically informed in relation with the place of storying as a social, reciprocal, political environment we are interdependent with. As critical anthropologist Michael Jackson relates of the Arendtian view of life as story, in which the metaphor of journeying for storytelling is patterned on our interactive movement in the every day, the “intelligibility of any story or journey will depend on this unconscious bodily rhythm of going out from some place of certainty or familiarity into a space of contingency and strangeness, then returning to take stock.” Yet Jackson is himself concerned with what happens in contexts of violence, “ruthless dislocations” (Spivak) and forced migrations, when “we lose touch with the people who know our names and speak our language, when life is no longer a journey or narrative the meaning of which is consummated in return, or even, indeed, in time” (Jackson, 2002: 33). Sometimes the places we find ourselves are far from hospitable or habitual and sometimes they stifle our movement, stories, lives; sometimes our homelands, our home worlds have been occupied and we have been displaced as a result. These places might include most in the Academy and the wider public realm of discourse and action.

55 This suggests a conception of the role of storytellers and theorist storiers as it may interface with Indigenous storytelling ethics (bound to make mistakes in travelling “fumbling, misfiting” (Maracle, 2015: 224-5) and Trickster discourse (for example as Vizenor presents, see Kovach, 2009: 97) and also decolonial Indigenous and Ch/Xicana/x feminist and queer methodologies – in Xicana the work of Maria Lugones on world-travelling and forms of address (see 1987; Roelofs, 2016) and Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderlands and nepantlera theory in particular (see Keating, 2006) - that is of great interest to me though I am unable to pursue this at present. Greg Sarris has spoken to the position of border thinking and scholarship aptly in relation to Indigenous identities:

“The position of having multiple identities at once as a result of belonging to multiple, overlapping communities may underscore the potential for new and inventive projects, but a borderlands position often is not an easy or comfortable one to be in, nor does it guarantee a project or report agreeable and intelligible to all of the communities involved. I must think about the many communities where I live and work, and I must remember my allegiance to my Indian community” (Sarris, 1993: 69-70).
So what then for the Indigenous academic as mover between lifeworlds and theory-storier in places that remain occupied? In his essay on openings for Indigenous critical theory perceptible in Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Osage scholar Robert Warrior considers differences between her published versions and suggests her earlier conclusion of an aporia to the question her title poses, which she later thought inadvisable, “rings truer” in considering the relation of subalternity and intellectuality. That is “how the subaltern is constituted in such a way that speaking represents a constitutional shift - that which mobilizes the speaker, in other words (political organizing, education), is also that which marks the movement from subalternity to something else” (Warrior, 2011: 90). Here Warrior considers the intellectual who comes to a position of privilege as a loss of their subalternity in either of the dual senses of economic or cultural positioning he presents. Yet Spivak’s double sense of speaker and subalternized discourse itself is in play, that in the movement both are ‘changed,’ are transformed by being made mobile within a dominant domain of enunciation and activity that a subaltern by their definition is not.

Warrior rejects the notion of a necessary colonial complicity of the intellectual, which Spivak accepts, and instead evokes the dance society to which he belongs as a space of communication and memory for Osage that is leveling of power among their internal diversity, and indeed upholding of the otherwise subaltern in the embodied language of the dance. I do not especially subscribe to a simple view of the upward transition to mobility that the Indigenous scholar in the Western Academy has made, especially in an epistemic and discursive sense (more than a structural or economic one), and so also a Gramscian hierarchy that does not consider intersectionalities of power and knowledge – of which gender and neurotypical normativities are dimensions I am all too familiar. However Warrior’s depiction of this space or place of freedom he has experienced, gives me pause to consider what was ‘said’ and unsaid the winter we danced, how we might remember this, how we might move and story between:

“let’s be less anxious and more generous. As we strain to hear the subaltern, let’s recognize that she or he might have just tried to speak up in class or danced by or given us a parting glance. Anxious feet don’t dance well, and ears that lack

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Warrior’s notion of subalternity has two forms, “economic” and the more “fetishized” subalternity of “rejectionism” a “historical rejection of American power and values in favour of retention of older, indigenous forms of polity and sociality” cutting them off from the ease and relief that inclusion could afford, and that both produce intellectuals (Warrior, 2011: 91).
generosity miss lots that’s going on. So let’s keep paying attention, and let’s keep dancing” (Warrior, 2011: 94).

Les Damnés

Baldwin said
“All your buried corpses are now beginning to speak”

Bullet-ins from a shallow grave
pierce the dirt
penetrate our third eyes
obscured
by dirt

“they tried to bury me...”
in Algeria

“they didn’t know I was a seed…”

I germinated

my roots spread
to the four directions

and my voice

permeates
the

black earth

white earth

yellow earth

red earth

we are not wretched
we are rising
CHAPTER FIVE

Theorist as Storyteller: Hannah Arendt on Story and Political Action

Making Distinctions and Drawing Correspondences

“What is it in the way that we imagine the political that might demand or suggest an easy answer? By “easy answer” one might think of a diagnostic, a characteristic of action, a statement of effect, rather than analysis that may course to the unthinkable. Recognition, repair, resilience, resistance, revolution - all diagnostics, all characterological, all containers for describing the political. And in this, for grasping at intent and at outcomes. The political describes distributions of power, of effective and affective possibility, the imagination of how action will unfold to reach back to that distribution for a re-sort, but also for a push on what should be” (A. Simpson, 2016: 326)

To employ Arendtian language, I would here like to begin to address making distinctions and drawing correspondences between the work of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) and the specific questions of this dissertation. While engaging Arendt to discuss Indigenous-settler relations in Canada is not entirely unique (see Strakosch, 2016; Wyile, 2014; Bohle, 2017), it may seem an unexpected response to Indigenous resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations and challenge to Western form political theory and scholarship. These reorientations might imply that my articulation of political theory as storying and storytelling as a political knowledge practice should begin with Indigenous thinkers’ articulations of the same, of which there are many and diverse, as I set out in Chapter One and take up in Chapter Six. In fact I have not made this decision arbitrarily or without reasons that stem directly from resurgence’s challenge. Arendt is a Euro-Western (German-Jewish) theorist that provides an example of the limitations of her (claimed) tradition when it comes to a depiction of political action that denies many Indigenous practices this designation. But she also provides an immanent critique from within its margins that mirrors my depiction of the problem of colonial apprehension that Indigenous refusal is responsive to. Her depiction of storytelling as a praxis with potential to articulate our identities and worlds in a non-authoritarian way, emerging from and reflecting the irreducible relationality...
and plurality of experience and active, creative and unpredictable quality of life among others – as the realm of the political - does also align with Indigenous views on story in interesting ways. This will be apparent in the next chapter where I discuss thinkers’ like Jo-Ann Archibald and Lee Maracle’s articulation of principles toward a storytelling ethic for political theory, though not with an exhaustive or documentary intent.

Storytelling is about navigating intersubjectivity and involves line or boundary drawing. Arendt’s own efforts at making “distinctions” as she calls them, in premise aligns with asserting the ‘colonial difference’ in our analyses as Walter Mignolo calls it. However as I will discuss, her specific distinctions are not immune to charges that they align with coloniality – especially those she draws between public and private spheres to delineate the social from political world (these in the singular) and between different types of activity (like acting against making) that ‘belong’ to each. Nevertheless, her view of storytelling’s integral role in reproducing and asserting identities and world(s), and its necessary self-disclosing character speaks to this dissertation’s questions on several registers. These include the imperative for giving accounts of Indigenous resurgent and decolonial action and movement like that of Idle No More in ways that affirm meaningful correspondences between them, and telling to articulate who we are in an apprehensive colonial context that will nevertheless try to deform, exclude or appropriate our stories. We must have the capacity to assert critical understandings of and describe our experiences otherwise/alternatively to colonial ways of knowing not only to counter harmful narratives, but also to affirm the reality transforming – the refigurative - potential in doing so.

As I mentioned in Chapter One, where Arendt’s work might be seen to most directly speak to questions of the public disclosure of Indigenous stories, is in relation to truth and reconciliation discourse and processes. Indeed in regard to the concept of genocide and critiques on the replication of pain or victimhood stories, Dian Million has suggested that “while it is necessary to understand exactly where and how and why our narratives are contested now, World War II and the Jewish Holocaust set a new paradigm for “telling.” Because of our political identity as Natives, or as Indigenous, we are increasingly positioned in this paradigm and challenged when we necessarily speak from it” (Million, 2009: 64).  

1 Arendt’s contributions

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1 The term ‘disclosure’ here specifically relates to Arendt’s concept of a person, action or story’s ‘public appearance.’ I am mindful that the term in relation to the revelation of ‘secret’ traumatic experiences has had pushback for its imputation of fault or shamefulness on the part of the teller (see the discussion of ‘confession’ in
to and reflections on the paradigm Million alludes to, is certainly important in regard to Indigenous stories (especially women’s) that centre trauma. Yet the imperative to ‘speak our truth to power,’ to witness and testify to the meaningfulness of common experiences, and so consider how we commit public events and action to memory where structural power arbitrates assessments of ‘truth,’ is also pertinent in recounting stories of resistance or resurgence and not only the violences of colonialism. Yet the inability for some Indigenous stories and practices to intelligibly appear to others (like settler state and society) as we intend, or at all, in such a context, may encourage deliberate silences and retreat from publicity, when telling could be construed as exposure to colonial apprehension or itself violent to the lives and lifeworlds these stories and practices help sustain.

Arendt’s consideration of what Audra Simpson, in the opening quotation calls “analysis that may course to the unthinkable” speaks to Indigenous disclosures in a context that, as Kulchyski suggests, “contains at its heart the same structural exigencies we find in more explicitly totalitarian contexts” (Kuchyski, 2005: 69). Indigenous peoples experience the settler-state and society as a totalizing and “overwhelming presence” despite any postmodern turn that minimizes state power in the experience of others. Mirroring Simpson’s articulation above, Arendt was concerned with accounting for any political action, its contingencies and uncertainties of affect and effect and the Euro-Modern desire for permanent “easy answers,” to establish intent and predictable outcomes, with events imagined in a linear-causal historical narrative toward a finality. But especially so when any pretence of past and present as ‘settled,’ of universalism or consensus on the meaning of common ‘facts’ of public record is challenged by seemingly unthinkable or unexpected events out of history, revealing this desire as itself authoritarian. Yet in the need to assert critical understanding of experience, in recalling and judging these events, Arendt forwards a “push back on what should be.”

The intent of this chapter is to consider how Arendt’s conception of political theory as storytelling may be helpful to telling of resurgent Indigenous practices and movement and their characterization as political action from a posture of refusal responsive to the risks of colonial apprehension in some of the fragile and pluralistic “spaces of appearance” to others, as Arendt calls them. That is, to convey their meaningfulness where relevant without defining them as a

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Chapter two in relation to Fanon). On genocide and Indigenous discourse see notes to Chapter Three and more on Million’s feminist view of the critique of ‘victimhood’ in storytelling in Chapter Seven.
closure, for example toward transforming power relationships with settler society, addressing a past and current common reality and possible shared futures. In doing so I will outline how story figures in Arendt’s larger intellectual project and context, especially in grappling with the phenomena of totalitarianism and how it brought a Euro-Modern impasse on truth and politics to a head.

As a reluctant ‘public intellectual’ Arendt evaded the demand to explain her theoretical orientation definitively and refuted her characterization as a philosopher, insisting her concern was politics (Benhabib, 2003: ix). She viewed philosophers in the Western strain as tending toward abstraction, determinism and conservatism due to an alienation from politics, resulting from seeking detachment or a vantage point above or outside the noisy experiential realm of action in the intersubjective world, in an effort to escape or resolve it as a problem (Herzog, 2001; Disch, 1993). While rejecting the label of philosopher she also disliked social scientists’ emphasis on explanation and automatized or routine behavior that “falsely reduces political conduct to the measurable and the predictable,” a Euro-Modern tendency aligned to totalitarianism (Buckler, 2011: 2-3; Arendt, 1998: 45; Kristeva, 2011: 7). Arendt’s own biography, as an exile that escaped the Shoah would bring her to address how this detachment and emphasis on normalization proved devastating conceits. Her training implied an expectation to engage in a critical theory conventionally preoccupied with and “deeply implicated in redeeming the emancipatory promise of modernity” (Disch 1996: x), when she saw this promise ruptured in the concentration camps. This was a promise that, in its master-narrative toward an ultimate universal reconciliation of humanity with difference and philosophy with active life, was always and “inevitably authoritarian” (Disch, 1996: 9) - and I will add, colonial - in its dictation of this reconciliation and life.

As Lisa Disch has suggested, totalitarianism demonstrated to Arendt how Western philosophy did not have the “conceptual and ethical resources to understand…and resist it,” and the crisis it precipitated “accentuated the features of politics that require the political theorist to be a storyteller” (Disch 1993: 668). While she rejected the inevitability of philosophical or narrative authoritarianism leading to atrocity and did seek in her own way to remake the “dignity of the Western philosophical tradition” (Bernasconi, 2007), Arendt remained pessimistic on this potential. She was unconventional and critically divisive as a political theorist in regard to the substance of her thought, but as Steve Buckler has suggested in his *Hannah Arendt and Political*
Theory: Challenging the Tradition (2011), little attention has been paid to “what Arendt believed political theory to be for and how, in the light of this, it should be undertaken” - that is, the question of methodological approach and engagement by the theorist (Buckler, 2011: 2-4). It is on this question, which Buckler sees as an attempt to think on and I would add recount politics in a way that models a “fidelity” to its experience that I consider her work of relevance here (model as exercise of exemplifying in form, not a normalizing or universally applicable model, as in a blueprint) Rather than entirely distinctive within or against dominant strains of Western theoretical praxis, Arendt’s correspondences with the traditions the Indigenous thinkers on story express in the following chapter can be drawn.

Arendt’s most explicit and well-known discussion of story as integral to political life and the thinker’s engagement in it, came in her 1958 monograph The Human Condition. Arendt scholars Disch and Annabel Herzog have traced story into her archive and earlier work on totalitarianism, and I will engage them below but will start with how it figures in the Human Condition’s broader purview. Specifically, how Arendt connects story to action in public and public action to politics. I will then bring in elaborations and extensions of her concepts from other works such as the essay collections Men in Dark Times and Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought. This will provide a sense of the depth to which she viewed story as permeating human experience in ways that align with Indigenous perspectives on story’s integralty to our existence – our subjectivities as people(s) and relations with each other. Yet a more expansive engagement with Arendt’s projects also indicates serious points of divergence that complicate a straightforward alignment of her storytelling with Indigenous perspectives, such as the ‘novelty’ of both totalitarianism and her approach. I will focus on the root issue of Arendt’s recourse to typological thinking, drawing on Seyla Benhabib’s commentaries which suggest the need to appreciate Arendt’s emphasis on contextualization and then shift or de-center her concepts for relevance to thinking on and recounting politics from the margins or here, outside, Euro-Modernity.

Applying Benhabib’s approach of “thinking with Arendt, contra Arendt” to the scale and location of her views of action/story/politics and the impasse in critical understanding she was responding to proves generative. That is, de-centering her focus from people in/of Euro-Modern societies to inter-societal relations of peoples from ‘different worlds’ in common pluralistic spaces structured by asymmetries of material and discursive power experienced as totalizing (as
in the settler-colonial context in Canada). This approach affords the opportunity to assess concepts in Arendt’s discussion of story-theory like “disclosure” and “public” toward an adoption of them that I think can be helpful to 1) articulate the problem of colonial apprehension for Indigenous peoples and 2) provide a re-source for Western-trained political theorists on what a posture of its refusal in scholarship might entail, that is, avowedly telling stories otherwise and so also potentially contributing to decolonial refiguration, though without guarantees or definitive answers. As with Buckler’s reconstructive approach to discerning methodology in Arendt’s work by its exemplifications, I will glean helpful considerations on an ethic for the scholar telling of Indigenous politics and its ‘unexpected’ or incongruous events, a “modal immanence” she embodies in her work (Buckler, 2011: 6).

Story and Active Life

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt aimed to disrupt Western philosophy’s preoccupation with “contemplative” life as an aspiration to transcendence, presenting her conception of the *vita activa* or active life, the fundamental modes of activity that comprise our earthly experience as human beings (Arendt, 1998: 7). She sought to distinguish between these activities as labour (natural activity to meet our needs of self-preservation – for necessity), work (as *poiesis* - ends-based fabrication of objects – for utility) and action (as *praxis* – the necessarily intersubjective process of acting – for freedom).² Arendt argues that labour and work are the ascendant activities in Euro-Modernity to the decline of action, which is integral to how we produce and reproduce a common human world, communicating who we are as unique beings together. It is action that constitutes us as political animals. Though Arendt did not complete a planned extension of her work on action into a theory of politics, she did outline how action requires and demonstrates

² Arendt traced the hierarchical opposition of active against contemplative life in Western thought to Plato’s disavowal of politics following the death of Socrates in late antiquity. The intellectual tradition this inaugurated gradually saw freedom as liberation from the world of human affairs and so a matter of philosophy rather than politics (Arendt, 2006: 157-8). She suggested one outcome is little conceptual distinction between types of activity in this tradition, drawing renewed attention to the Greek concepts of *praxis* and *poiesis* (as making or fabrication; Kristeva, 2011: 14). Arendt also speaks to the classificatory detachment of *theory* (*theoria* in Greek is to observe or behold something, the contemplation of truth), which has some relation to *poiesis*, from *political science* as associated with *dianoia* and *episteme praktikae* as technical thinking and practical knowledge (Arendt, 1998: 301, 304). Her conception of theory as storytelling is to make linkages through contemplation of events and action (observation not as objective revelation of their inherent meaning and causation). The other outcome was in connecting freedom with a faculty of independent will - that becomes will-to-power - which effected an equation of power with rule, and ‘political’ power with sovereignty – as the zero-sum oppression of an individual or general will (Arendt, 2006: 162-5).
two characteristics of the human condition that also correspond to the condition for politics (Canovan, 1998: viii-ix). These characteristics are plurality and natality. Plurality refers to our “paradoxical” collective quality as unique beings, that “we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live” (Arendt, 1998: 8). Action (which includes speech) expresses our distinctiveness and affinity simultaneously, as both can only be made to appear between us, in a state of togetherness. Arendt suggests that otherness or alterity in its “most abstract form” is a quality that humans share with “everything that is.” It is distinction through “sheer multiplication,” while distinctiveness is a quality shared with all “organic life” that shows variation. What is particular to humans is the ability and imperative to communicate this distinctiveness and affinity – to distinguish our Selves and Selfhood as human through our agency (Arendt, 1998: 176).

The other characteristic of the human condition that action involves is natality, the counterpart to our mortality. This is our ‘capacity for birthing,’ the initiative to begin something new, to set into motion, which corresponds to our faculty for freedom. In Chapter One I discussed Arendt on the “problem of the new” and how newness figures in assessments of transformative or revolutionary political action, whereby traditional practices might be dismissed as repetitions of sameness or restitution rather than regenerative expressions of self-determination. For Arendt natality is not contrary to the necessary repetitions of storytelling to the recreation of our worlds, as I will return to, but rather describes how through action we bring our distinct Selves into – and come to inhabit - a common world. We are both a “beginning and a beginner,” the initiation of our identification (who we are) through praxis among others is “not the beginning of something but of somebody” – biography, a life story, but one irreducibly

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3 Arendt’s relationship with Heidegger was complex but for my purposes here it is worthwhile to focus on what Benhabib considers her key conceptual appropriation from him. This is his insight from Being and Time that locates humans not just as knowing subjects but as constituted by their being in the world and crucially that the “world is always the one that I share with Others.” This for Arendt allowed theorists access to the political, against which she found Heidegger retained a philosophical prejudice – one she connected to his sympathy for Nazism (totalitarianism as anti-politics). With the concept of plurality Arendt modified his concept of being-in-the-world-with (Benhabib, 2003: 50-3).

4 Though for Arendt “in the political realm restoration is never a substitute for a new foundation” (Arendt quoted Herzog, 2001) – Indigenous resurgence is not about restoration. Replication is not of the same in story for Arendt. Natality is in distinction from the conditioning of human action by “automatic” processes (such as those of the natural earth), and she notes that human-initiated processes can become similarly automatic (Arendt, 2006: 168). The replication of the same is a characteristic of ‘modern’ mass societies she relates to totalitarianism.
relational to those before and after, we are newcomers in this sense (Arendt, 2006: 169; 1998: 177 emphasis mine; 2006: 61).\(^5\)

Arendt takes up storytelling as metaphor for how action functions to disclose who we are – our intangible subjecthood or identity – as “enacted stories” in the “web of relationships.” In this web, action also “produces stories with or without intention as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things” (Arendt, 1998: 184). But like the Selves or distinct human lives that action discloses, these stories (of our action and occurrences in the world) are not things. She distinguishes our role as agents of our life’s stories from authorship, the invention of narratives whose closure or outcome is attributable to an isolated maker. Story is more than narrative. Narrative shapes story into a kind of thing, an object with a finite structure and causation in the author’s intent or aim for plotting. Conversely story is initiated - inherently relational, heterogeneous and uncontainable in its unfolding and transmission once told, reflective of how action and speech is “surrounded by and in constant contact with the web of the acts and words of other[s]” (Arendt, 1998: 188).

Arendt’s contrast between narrative and story is in part derived from her distinction between work as an activity of making or fabrication (including artwork) and action. She suggests that the desire for control, to reify action and agents in Euro-Modernity thought derives from apprehensiveness about the unpredictability of outcomes and inability to establish authorship in active life. This apprehensiveness produces the desire to treat people and our interactions as materials that can be engineered and managed like things, while our historical consciousness (how we perceive continuity and change through time) is “constru[ed] in the image of making” (Arendt quoted Ricoeur, 1990: 160). The stories that carry this consciousness can then be related as purposeful narratives describing a series of events in a unidirectional and linear progress or plot. And in Euro-Modernity’s dominant strain, these narratives document ever-increasing control over an evolving human condition, ultimately toward the end of history as its record.

\(^5\) Though Arendt describes natality, like this:

“With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. This insertion is not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and it is not prompted by utility, like work…its impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative” (Arendt, 1998: 176-7).
How then can we give accounts of action and agents in ways that do not reify or essentialize them, “solidify[ing] in words the living essence of the person as it shows itself in the flux of action and speech” (Arendt, 1998: 181)? Arendt suggests that it is story, which she does not seek to define,⁶ that demonstrates and can best model action in the web of relationships and multiplicity that is the practical space of politics. While Euro-Modern philosophy and history is marked by the tendency to approach politics deterministically and predictively (Garner, 1990), stories recount action and are part of its outcomes, which may or may not align with any original intent of its agents if perceived as their authors. Yet as a form of remembrance, storytelling provides continuity through action’s evanescence and “frailty” which is compounded by our mortality. Stories sustain common human worlds that are formed by action in ways that efforts at establishing their permanence through “monuments and documents” cannot (Ricoeur, 1990: 157). Storying action can “immortalize living beings” and the “living flux of action and speech” (Kristeva, 2001: 19-20). For Arendt the human world or as I will assert below, worlds plural - provide us with a “relatively secure, relatively imperishable home” while we are alive and gives continuity to our life in stories after we leave it (Arendt, 1968c: 10-11). Our life-stories are then never individual and finite but collective and potentially infinite.

Arendt’s view of story in relation to rememberance brings the question on avoiding reification and petrification in accounts of action and agents into alignment with my specific inquiry here. How can we reconceptualise the task and indeed responsibility of political theorists as storytellers, so as to mitigate the risks that come with the self-disclosing quality of story, respecting and modelling refusal in a settler-colonial theatre of apprehension? And can our accounts of political movement reflect it modally which may contribute to decolonial refiguration? To address this I have to first consider Arendt’s views on disclosure’s publicity – the condition of being public or making known to others - which she deems as requisite to establishing political community and indeed affirming our common humanity. Any assumption of a single public realm in which we all can and must appear to be mutually affirmed as political and human beings however, raises concerns similar to those with liberal recognition theory, as dismantled by Coulthard via Fanon, and discussed at the opening of my story in Chapter One.

⁶ Lisa Disch suggests that “[b]y stories, she meant everything from the casual anecdotes told by friends over dinner or by parents to children, to novels and short stories, to the narratives and essays she herself wrote for The New Yorker and Commentary” (Disch, 1993: 668). The scope of story for Arendt however is broader than concerted tellings.
Further, Arendt’s depiction of ‘truly creative’ (not just automatic) natality and story as a “specifically human” and non-animal praxis that establishes a sense of active living, not just bare life as a value in itself (Kristeva, 2011: 7-9) is anthropocentric. That is, excluding deep enough account for relations with land and the non-human in an intersubjective, animate (and by Arendt’s sense, political) universe, as Indigenous onto-epistemic views centre. Arendt’s concept of the public realm as the realm of politics (action that manifests freedom and transformation) as distinguished from certain (still social) activities outside it also indicates its Eurocentrism and gendering, which she has been critiqued for. Nevertheless the public/private exteriority/interiority distinctions she committed to may also speak to the threshold of refusal in what stories may be told where, how and why; which spaces of appearance with others might be considered homely, and which hostile. To get to this possibility, I will first have to consider how Arendt’s ‘distinctions’ fall back to a typological thinking around what qualifies as political activity and where that indicates distinctions thinkers on and of Indigenous politics must make in engaging her categories.

Publicity and Politics

“The moment we want to say who somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying what he is; we get entangled in a description of qualities he necessarily shares with others like him; we begin to describe a type or a ‘character’ in the old meaning of the word with the result that his specific uniqueness escapes us” (Arendt, 1998: 181 emphasis mine).

While Arendt never produced a concerted theory of politics she did present a view of its relational conditions of possibility and also ideal setting in the interactions of and within the polity, which is based in the ancient Greek concept of the polis – the city-state or its collective of citizens; which I discussed in the previous chapter in the specific sense those ancients employed. For Arendt, a polity/polis can be generated wherever people live for the purpose of “acting and speaking together,” it is the “space of appearance…where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance
explicitly” (Arendt, 1998: 199 emphasis mine; also Kristeva, 2011: 14). How this space is structured will be particular to each polis, which establishes its permanence in a physical location and through laws that function as a form of “organized remembrance” for the retention of its identity and order (Arendt, 1998: 198). The animator and “raison d'être” of the polis for Arendt is always freedom, only experienced as a reality when demonstrable in praxis. Freedom requires the ability to act among others (who are equals) rather than to choose among possibilities. It is not an imperceptible feeling or “attribute of will and thought” internal to us as individuals, but derives from our condition of plurality and natality (Arendt, 2006: 145, 153).

Arendt’s conception of “freedom as a way of life” is connected to but not synonymous with liberation from the constraints of necessity (as Western thought emphasizes) or social oppressions (Arendt quoted in Benhabib, 2003: 159). It is especially distinct from a view of freedom as emancipation from the exertions of political life, amounting to removal from ‘the world’ for Arendt. That is, freedom as located in the self-contained person and domain of economic and family interests represented by the capitalist market and bourgeois home. In some ways her liberation/freedom distinction aligns with the view on decolonial and self-determining practices of Indigenous resurgence I discussed in Chapter Two: that they are both for and of freedom (Tully), transforming both relations with settler state and society and regenerating and sustaining Indigenous lifeworlds, nations and communities. However, her distinctions proved to contribute to inconsistencies and biases in her arguments that prevent a straightforward application of her terms to Indigenous politics.

Arendt’s critique of Euro-Modernity in Human Condition paints with fairly broad strokes how the imperatives of individualism, utilitarian and competitive social activities have eclipsed the cooperative. This has skewed the conception of politics away from the actuation of freedom.

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7 Arendt has been associated with a theory of performativity in identity, though Benhabib has taken issue with such a reading’s downplaying of story (Benhabib, 2003: xiv-xviii). For a comparison of Arendt and Judith Butler on the performative and precarious (risky) conditions of the political centered in the space of appearance see Emma Ingala (2018) who suggests Arendt’s influence on Butler. This is an interesting connection and worth pursuing to consider the conditions of the settler-colonial theatre of apprehension, for example that depoliticize ‘ethno-cultural’ practices.

8 In fact for Arendt the process of our identification as distinctive individuals and not simply distinct, the subjectivity and Self-realization so fixated on since the 16th century in the West can only happen among others, in public.

9 Benhabib suggests Arendt’s diagnosis of the ‘rise of the social’ and ‘displacement of politics’ (Honig, 1993) involving the amorphous and anonymous dynamics of the capitalist economy and mass society presupposes their normalization without explaining the mechanisms of power that make normalization possible. She suggests Foucault on biopower and governmentality and Weber on instrumental rationality among others contribute to a more comprehensive and effective analysis (Benhabib, 2003: 26). Benhabib has also suggested that philosopher Jurgen Habermas shows an Arendtian influence in his theory of communicative action, one aspect of which is his depiction
through collaboratively undertaking the creation and conservation of a shared (and not only common) world. Yet she also seems to vacillate between a more open and unspecific view of what such a world can look like and a specifically structured (Western form) polity as the site of politics. This vacillation relates to an untenable division she makes of the political and a generalized ‘social’ realm, though her critique was of modern mass society mediating public and private life (Kemple, 2011). She also wavered between presenting political action as at best, the “collective process of deliberation and decision-making that rests on equality and solidarity” and as the “performance of noble deeds by outstanding individuals” from a republican elite dedicated to this performance (d’Entrèves quoted in Benhabib, 2003: 125).10

In her focus on originary concepts of the polis, she has subsequently been read as nostalgic for the organization of Greek city-states or a “classical model of politics as an ‘agonal’ undertaking, geared to self-disclosure and the realization of glory,” an individualist vocation that minimizes ethical constraints on action (Buckler, 2011b: 117). With a nuanced contextualization of the Human Condition with Arendt’s other work (especially on totalitarianism), it may be more accurate to say that she was seeking to elucidate features of ‘dehumanization’ and ‘world loss’ in her present and location as well as find inspiration for addressing them by delving into the same beleaguered Western intellectual genealogies that contributed to these processes. Thus she argued it is “difficult and even misleading” not to talk about the political in relation to the polis, not just for etymological reasons (which she maintained as rhetorically important to making distinctions) but because she saw a unique clarity in the Greek conception of that human activity that came to be called politics (Arendt, 2006: 95-6, 153).11 This may have been her intent, but as

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10 Both vacillations to the latter options appear prominently in her later book On Revolution (1963) mentioned in Chapter One, which assesses the ‘success’ of revolutions based on the establishment of protected public-political space for the actuating of freedom and equality, the foundations of authority. She suggests the French Revolution failed in its turn to ‘social’ considerations (the wellbeing of ‘the masses’), unlike the Americans who remained focused on freedom and whose leaders are revered and remembered. As a former student noted and cannot be ignored, her praise for both classical Greek and 18th century systems showed a “disturbing attraction to societies built upon a system of slavery and affording only restricted access to full citizenship” (Botstein, 2010: 171). For a discussion of the American Revolution as a fable of foundations for authority and the virtuosity of political action in Arendt, see Honig, 1993 (Chapter 4). See also notes below on racism.

11 Arendt is convincing when she says that all problems are language problems:

“Any period to which its own past has become as questionable as it has to us must eventually come up against the phenomenon of language, for in it the past is contained ineradicably, thwarting all attempts to get rid of it once and for all. The Greek polis will continue to exist at the bottom of our political
she herself repeatedly asserted, looking for causal explanation of effects in the intent of our undertakings only gets us so far, though we can still judge actors or storytellers for how they reveal themselves through their actions and tellings, how they appear as I will return to.

For Arendt freedom must be “tangible in words which can be heard, in deeds which can be seen, and in events which are talked about, remembered, and turned into stories” (Arendt, 2006: 153). The assertion that freedom requires actualization lets us be unequivocal about the conditions of oppression as the control and prevention of the capacity to act and thus what is required to address them. And Arendt’s concept of what constitutes action including retrospective storytelling to remember events and deeds is crucial to an upholding of the decolonial imperative and transformative power of story. However associating political action for and of freedom with a particular kind of performativity among equals as distinct from other activities is problematic to account for oppression and its resistance that is organized along this divide. For example, in emphasizing public display (action that can be seen and heard) in determining the political she has been roundly critiqued for minimizing the importance of specifically who has been “banished” to concealment in the private realm such as “the home” (Arendt, 2006: 147) or censorship leading to invisibility/inaudibility, especially by feminist commentators (Herzog, 2001).

The polity of ancient Greek citizens was egalitarian but exclusive and competitive – they were equals in freedom as they were neither slaves or labourers, nor women. Those who could “appear” in public through action/speech were reliant on exploiting the productive activities of those made to live in a state of coercion and ‘necessity.’ Occupation of or access to, the realm of politics in actuality has been reinforced by its conceptual definition to favour the activities conventionally associated with men, ruling classes and imperial powers. Arendt did not entirely ignore these constitutive exceptions as I will return to, but she proved “entangled” in a typological thinking she acknowledged was difficult to escape (in part due to the limits of her vocabulary) when seeking to “say who somebody is” rather than what (Arendt, 1998: 181). This would lead to a defence of discriminatory social categories on principle without attending enough to context, which I will return to below. Indeed, conceptions of Indigeneity through
Eurocentric classifications of certain practices as ethno-cultural and not politically relevant or even less distinctly human, is replicated by Arendt’s categorization of political versus ‘social’ collective activities - where some display characteristics of natal action’s initiative and others ‘natural’ patterns of ‘behaviour.’ This is suggested by her view of the predominance of what she considers ‘labour’ in tribal societies rather than politics in her essay “What is Freedom?” (1968):

“Obviously not every form of human intercourse and not every kind of community is characterized by freedom. Where men live together but do not form a body politic as, for example, in tribal societies or in the privacy of the household the factors ruling their actions and conduct are not freedom but the necessities of life and concern for its preservation…without a politically guaranteed public realm, freedom lacks the worldly space to make its appearance” (Arendt, 2006: 147).

As mentioned, Arendt suggests a polity can spring up anywhere but becomes tethered through permanent settlement, establishment of its own internal structures and laws etc. This is how the polity functions to provide a protected and reliable space for actualizing freedom and equality, dedicated to political action and insulated from the concerns of labour and work. Non-sedentary Indigenous societies interdependent with land and of a place, who understand the activities that form their law and sustenance as peoples as well as living physical beings wholistically – are not polities by Arendt’s criteria. However Euro-Modern societies and their claimed precedents have never been fully realized polities by these criteria either. She is thus not arguing that they be taken as a blueprint for an evolved or superior civilization but rather that they have merely inherited some semblance of public space, although what she considers politics has been relegated to a narrow field within it. Arendt considers plurality and not homogeneity as a hallmark of our humanity. Yet she is offering a Eurocentric and humanist vision of what the

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12 As Paul Ricoeur noted in his commentary on Human Condition, Arendt’s criteria for distinction between categories of activity have been critiqued for their accuracy, coherence and consistency, especially in relation to Marx’s inversion of their “traditional hierarchy” (Arendt, 2006: 77-84; see Ricoeur, 1990, also Benhabib, 2003: 123, 130-7). However he suggests that these categories are not essential and abstract for Arendt but historical and flexible, and calling back to past articulations in Greece, Medieval Europe etc., was part of her strategy to disrupt Euro-Modernity’s “pretension to radical newness” (Ricoeur, 1990: 150). It is beyond my scope of concerns here to delve into deep critical engagement with these categories beyond indicating that they still operate within the same typologizing tendency that I discussed in regard to ethnological reason in Chapter Four. See note below on race and Arendt’s “antiprimitivism” (Klausen, 2010).
refinement of our collective species-being entails, one that “reaches into all the countries of the globe and into all their pasts” and which “everyone can come to out of their own origins” (Arendt, 1968b: 80).

In this vision Arendt used the term *humanitas* to describe what she considers the “virtuosity” of those activities specifically cultivated for public/political life and those individuals who she considered paragons of commitment to its flourishing (Arendt, 1968b; Garner, 1990; Honig, 1993). Recall from Chapter Four that *humanitas* is the term used by Osamu Nishitani for the category of ‘human’ that is set against the *anthropos*, the category Indigenous peoples were relegated to by Euro-Modern ethnological reason. While Arendt concedes that whatever occurs publicly takes on a political character “by definition even when it is not a direct product of action” and that this varies between societies (Arendt, 2006: 153), she stubbornly maintains that all activities have a “proper place in the world” (singular) as either public or private, either prompted by freedom, utility or necessity (Arendt, 1998: 73). This appears to disqualify whole societies that do not conceive of or enforce such organization from ever being ‘fully-realized polities.’ It also renders ‘socio-economic issues’ permeated by power relations, such as distribution and dispossession, as non-political (Benhabib, 2003: 155-8).

My depiction of Arendt in this section certainly makes engaging her work for any discussion of decolonial Indigenous praxis seem counter-intuitive. Despite her stance against the Euro-Modern impetus to definition (especially of actors and action), Arendt’s commitment to her own typological thinking leads her to define active life, and in a way that is counter to the plurality she places at the centre of the human condition. However I would like to forward that Arendt’s overall conceptual lexicon – public space of appearance, disclosure, meaningfulness rather than definition, and her use of liberation, freedom and equality - can still be mobilized in interesting ways if we re-apply plurality to its categories and add further lenses of power and contingency than Arendt did to contextualize their formation and function. This multiplies the iterations of concepts like publics or spaces of appearance and diversifies their ‘contents,’ while a power lens like coloniality refracts them through different peoples’ experiences (of being inside or outside them). In doing so we can argue that rather than unusual to the ‘Western canon,’ Arendt’s categories of activity seem to replicate the dominant ethnological classification I described in the previous chapter that excludes Indigenous peoples from the political. They are then actually quite useful to (negatively) characterize the apprehensive conditions Indigenous
peoples’ face in order to “disclose” themselves or be “disclosed” as actively political rather than *idle* for example, in the eyes or intelligible to the ears of settler state and society.

Notwithstanding, Arendt’s descriptions of story-action do also affirmatively align with Indigenous conceptions of story-action. So, Arendt’s lexicon can be mobilized to indicate how Indigenous political-cultural practices make unsettling incursions into dominant settler-colonial spaces of appearance, or theatre of apprehension. What might be apprehended in these spaces as non-political or traditional/cultural labour or work activities (like food harvesting) appear as transgressive to their definitional boundaries. Ostensibly ‘political’ ‘public’ resistance practices (like blockades or marches) that also display characteristics of depoliticized Indigeneity (like dancing, drumming and singing) appear as non-conforming to either. Arendt’s distinctions such as public-world/private-home - can then also be re-sourced to articulate the meaningfulness of Indigenous resurgence practices’ reorientations. That is, these practices may be described as decolonial, concerned with “liberation” – and then a kind of “freedom and equality” only actuated in relations with others (settler society and state). Scholars might recount experiences of this “public” praxis in stories, more responsibly than telling of resurgence practices engaged within Indigenous communities whose stories may not be for external disclosure by non-members. I will circle back to how Arendt offers methodological insights to Western-trained political theorists modelling the posture of refusal along this line. First I would like to turn to Turkish-Sephardic critical theorist Seyla Benhabib’s negotiation of Arendt for feminist and gendered analysis, as I find this helpful to articulate a similar refraction of Arendt’s ‘distinctions’ through considerations of Indigeneity and coloniality.

**Benhabib on Thinking With Arendt, Contra Arendt**

Benhabib suggests that feminists may have some productive exchange with Arendt, emerging from tension between two threads in her thought on ‘distinction’ that are responsible for many of her inconsistencies (as essentialist/anti-essentialist, modern/anti-modern etc.). One thread is universalist-foundationalist, toward the ‘recovery’ of original meaning or essences and the other is toward addressing her contemporary experience of fragmentation, disruption and exception.¹³ Benhabib hones in on the conflict between two manifestations of these threads. The

¹³ Benhabib suggests these threads correspond to influences from Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) respectively. See note below on these influences.
first thread manifests in what Benhabib calls Arendt’s “phenomenological essentialism” or “categorical problem,” the conviction that there are ‘proper’ places for different human activities (the typological thinking I have previously discussed). This often leads her to “conflate conceptual distinctions with social processes, ontological analyses with institutional and historical descriptions” (Benhabib, 2003: 124). The second, conflicting thread manifests in the quality of being an outsider, marginal or “pariah” in Arendt’s thinking on Jewishness and also pervaded her own life story, scholarly and political reputation (Benhabib, 1993: 100; Feldman, 2010; Botstein, 2010). This makes her acontextual conflations when it comes to gender, racialized populations, non-Europeans etc. particularly frustrating for me.

It is Arendt’s appeal to “the importance of making distinctions” as integral to critical thinking and ethical judgment (the basis for her denouncement of Western philosophy’s rejection of politics) that resonates in conditions of oppression (Arendt, 2006: 95-6). It resonates with an accounting for deep alterity while maintaining a commitment to meaningfulness in concepts of freedom and equality where we must relate. It resonates in assessing competing stories of common experiences to assert critical understanding as it does in comparing multiple perspectives on phenomena and being able to suggest (without being logocentric), how best to describe them - as in the distinction of story from narrative for rhetorical purposes, or where the interchangeability or transliteration of terms has obfuscated important differences. All of these resonances are pertinent to a Western form political theory coming to grips with the problem of colonial apprehension and the challenge of Indigenous refusal. And yet Arendt’s commitment to her categories or certain distinctions where these should be assessed, shifted, subverted or denied for a critical or ethical outlook on power relations, can take on the character of essentialism, pedantic or biased and selective oversimplification. This is where unjust discrimination (based in ethnocultural or racist typologies) may be conflated with distinction and vice versa. The potential to make categorical distinctions that lead to censorship, exclusion or marginalization and so complicity in systems of domination and dispossession requires the contextualization of experience and judgment, such as accounting for the colonial difference.  

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14 Arendt could consider the mass demonstrations of the 1960s American civil rights movement as an example of authentic political action yet question racial desegregation as a matter of social preference - where she conflates racist discrimination with freedom of association (Benhabib, 2003: 149-50). She recanted but this particular conflation has impacted critical engagement with her views on the implosive force of European imperialist ‘race thinking’ in the Origins of Totalitarianism (Benhabib, 2003: 78; Arendt, 1973: 158-84). See for example Kathryn T. Gines’ 2014 Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question. Arendt went so far as to assert the following in 1968:
On engaging earlier situated texts and thinkers like Arendt from a critical position in the present and a distinct location, Benhabib asserts that neither “disinterested historicism” that does not ask questions exceeding the contexts of those texts and thinkers, nor a “dogmatic self-righteousness” that engages only to “debunk” them is appropriate (Benhabib, 2003: 3-4). This directly echoes Arendt’s characterization of her own “exercises in political thought” between past and future, as I will return to later (Arendt, 2006: 13-14). What Benhabib suggests here is to confront Arendt’s contradictions as a kind of liminal thinker against/of Euro-Modernity and self-consciously “displace” her political thought, by reading her “from the margins to the centre” (Benhabib, 2003: 20). In regard to her concepts of public/private and social/political, this allows a “cull[ing] from these distinctions fragments which can be rendered fruitful.” Benhabib calls this “thinking with Arendt contra Arendt” (Benhabib, 2003: xi). I propose to do similarly here although Arendt herself submitted that seeking to separate wheat from chaff when it comes to any genealogy of thought and practice can be disingenuous (despite also being accused of doing so) (Bernasconi, 2007: 56). Nevertheless I maintain that tactical engagement to re-source for our needs and stories can be imperative to and model our politics and ethics, as a “push on what should be.” Though as Indigenous thinkers on story maintain and I will discuss in the next chapter, fragmentation and displacement is a Euro-Modern tendency to disrupt.

While not quite articulated as such by Benhabib, she suggests taking up one of the threads of Arendt’s thought to address issues in the other. For my purposes here, contextualizing her categorical problem through the experiences of ‘outsiders,’ to think of her distinctions otherwise and from the settler-colonial difference. This may be an engagement with her distinctions that Arendt did not necessarily intend but intention does not control and causation make, as she would also agree. So, I am forwarding that we can see in her work a depiction of

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“no society can properly function without classification, without an arrangement of things and men in classes and prescribed types. This necessary classification is the basis for all social discrimination, and discrimination, present opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, is no less a constituent element of the social realm than equality is a constituent element of the political” (Arendt, 2007: 3)

This suggests equality must pertain in the realm of the political but treating people as a ‘what’ not a ‘who’ is acceptable in the social. Arendt does not appreciate that here typological classification (as an approach to making distinctions in Euro-modern thought) is the problem. It is the problem for her concern of philosophy and history thingifying political action, and it is the problem in how it manifests as ethnological reason leading to colonial, Eurocentric and racialized discrimination as I discussed in the last chapter. Arendt insisted on dividing our relational existence into social and political realms in a way that mirrors the division of ethno-cultural from political. For a comparative consideration of Arendt with debate at this time (1940s – 60s) on questions of race and culture see R. King, 2010. On her view of race-thinking based primarily on Nazism and the Jewish Holocaust and discounting racism in state formation and colonial discourse previously see Hesse, 2011.
politics that reflects its (still) dominant Euro-Modernity and also Western theorists’ difficulty in thinking outside its categories. But that we also might engage with her as a liminal thinker, in ways that are productive to not only presenting political theory as storytelling but also a way of telling responsive to Indigenous refusal. That we can tell of Arendt, contra Arendt. Benhabib’s discussion of feminist engagement with her public-political/private-social divide is helpful to get here, so is worth unpacking in more detail.¹⁵

In addressing feminist critiques of Arendt, Benhabib agrees that the *Human Condition* gives the impression that she “ontologizes the division of labour between the sexes, and those biological presuppositions which have historically confined women to the household and to the sphere of reproduction alone” (Benhabib, 1993: 98; 2003: 2). Characterized by Arendt as cyclical labouring necessary for our physical preservation, she does not equate housekeeping, caretaking and nurturing activities such as child-rearing with the “world-protection, world-preservation, and world-repair” she associates with both ‘work’ and ‘action’ (Benhabib, 2003: 135-6). A gendered analysis disrupts this compartmentalization, such as the bourgeoning work on intersectionality and Indigenous feminisms that emphasize the layered experience of repression in colonial contexts as well as gendered roles in its subversion, linked to women’s perceived traditional responsibilities in sustaining Indigenous worlds and engaging in everyday practices of resistance.

Here Benhabib provides a jumping off point in more general terms. She suggests Arendt’s ‘phenomenological essentialism,’ which tries to delineate public space by certain types of activity or define the substantive content of its agenda of concerns, does not square with her view that a polity does not require a specific “topography” or location – that it can appear wherever people come together to act (Benhabib, 2003: 123, 129; 1993: 104). To put it differently, Arendt’s depiction of politics as wherever action appears in public *space* is hampered by her imputation of a public *sphere* of specific collective activities and agendas tenable/permissible as ‘political’ rather than ‘social.’ In this she “runs together the phenomenological concept of the “space of appearances” with the institutional concept of the “public space”” and also the “world” in common (Benhabib, 2003: 127-8). While action may require appearance between people, Benhabib here points out that this does not necessarily

¹⁵ Bonnie Honig has engaged in an extended feminist reading of Arendt, contra Arendt, suggesting that those who take seriously her conception of the politics, must then “resist the a priori determination of a public-private distinction that is beyond contestation and amendment” (Honig, 1993: 118-9).
equate to a requirement this occur in a “public space, accessible to all.” This importantly speaks
to the defense of action in or belonging to private spaces such as ‘the household’ but also
questions the given accessibility of any so-called public as a common and thereby shared space.

Arendt did not dwell on the exclusivity of the ancient Greek polis which served as her
theoretical base model and this corresponded to a weakness in her accounting for how the public
sphere in a society can transform – that its scope and access might widen or shift, with issues of
perceived “public justice” changing accordingly and that formal or institutionalized public space
as she depicts it only emerges in specific conditions, in specific societies (Benhabib, 2003: 127).
However for Benhabib her “non-topographical” view of politics as wherever collective action
occurs, can break down essentializing distinctions of public/political versus private/social
activities and agendas and so can be aligned with feminist theory in a few ways. One, to
articulate alternative models of public space, which Benhabib suggests is crucial if feminism(s]
are “to articulate a liberatory vision of human relations” (Benhabib, 1993: 100).16 Two, in the
argument that alternative spaces of appearance have always existed despite the dominant Euro-
Modern model coinciding with a form of publicity Arendt (too readily) presented as hegemonic.
While this form may not in fact be utterly hegemonic it does prevail as dominant and remains
inhospitable and deeply incompatible for many outside it. Indeed while a non-topographical view
of polities and politics is helpful in the ways Benhabib notes, specific Indigenous polities might
be argued to require location in the particular places, the homelands with which they are
inextricably intertwined but have been colonized by others. These places are occupied by
multiple spaces of appearance, some accessible to all and others not.

Benhabib asserts that Arendt also speaks to the need for a positive concept of the private.
As much as she argued the need for a public space in which human freedom and equality is
actualized in our relations with others, Arendt also maintained the desirability of retreat from it
as “there are things that need to be hidden and others that need to be displayed publicly if they
are to exist at all” (Arendt, 1998: 73; Benhabib, 1993: 105; Herzog, 2001: 175). By private space
Arendt did not mean a liberal privacy or property right but rather the sense of a shelter from the
scrutinizing glare of an outside world, without which life emerging in that world would become
hollowed and shallow. This shelter is a place that centers, protects and nurtures us so we may

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16 This has been the project of thinkers like Iris Marion Young in her 1990 Justice and the Politics of Difference.
Behabib was party to liberal debates on recognition, individualism, communitarianism and multiculturalism in
1990s, which Glen Coulthard (2014) has taken to task, see notes to Chapter One.
appear externally with confidence and depth, not as “shadows without selves.” Benhabib names this place as home. It is a metaphor for such a shelter derived from the actual nurturing activities of our specific homes that establish our identities and are the setting for much of our concerted storytelling, making them integral to “world-sustenance” (Benhabib, 2003: 137). This metaphoric home is not to be equated with a house, household or any “specific domestic structure, [like] the monogamous nuclear male-headed family” but can refer to “many different forms of kinship and family-like arrangements” of collective care (Benhabib, 1993: 107-8).

The idea of home Benhabib forwards complicates a straightforward dismissal of Arendt’s concerns on the accommodation or rendering intelligible in public of what “should remain hidden,” protected or cared for in ‘privacy.’ Conservative gendered or other essentialist assessments of what does or does not belong here in the service of oppression can be rejected. However when pluralization and a lens of power and contingency are applied to Arendt’s distinctions here at the scale of societies in colonial contexts, her concerns take on relevance. That is, to ask when a particular outsider to a specific public is rendered discernable in it might be detrimental to the substance of their difference or distinctiveness in Arendt’s terminology, compromising who they are. In this vein Arendt’s own Eurocentric, essentialist categorization of political practices might be seen as defining limits of intelligibility faced by Indigenous peoples in settler-colonial (dominated) spaces of appearance. Indigenous peoples are considered compelled to disclose themselves to settler state and society in these inhospitable spaces, exposing their stories to the risks of colonial apprehension.17

I submit here that Arendt’s terms of public/private and world/home can be considered from the colonial (and gendered) difference, stacked or nested to describe the cohabitation of multiple publics and worlds in a settler-colonial context, as spheres of existence and intelligibility with distinct systems of belonging, being, doing and knowing (although they are transversal, traversable and not essential, insular or necessarily unique). These are differently

17 Arendt’s view of public space as where politics, when optimally associational, generates freedom and equality in plurality may have something to offer those interested in articulating a dynamic of decolonial relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies (treaty politics, dialogism) as works cited in my introduction to this chapter consider, in relation to theories of agonism and deliberative democracy (Strakosch, 2016; Wylie, 2014; Bohle, 2017). Benhabib’s description of the discernable “normative core of the Arendtian conception of the political” (against accusations otherwise) certainly speaks to this: “the creation of a common world through the capacity to make and keep promises among a plurality of humans who mutually respect one another” (Behabib, 2003: 166). However I am not focused here on this aspirational work but rather the current realities of inhospitality/incompatibility that require refusal.
experienced and accessed, by individuals and collectives, with different terms for appearance and
enunciation. The ‘inclusionary’ Canadian state and society and its world (encapsulating the
common ‘public’ and enforcing dominant parameters for ‘private’ realms of activity) is homely
to most settlers (in principle). Yet it is both exclusionary and assimilatory to Indigenous peoples
who subsequently share a Native ‘Fourth world’ formed in part by colonialism as George
Manuel and Michael Posluns once asserted as the “Indian reality” (Manuel & Posluns, 1974),
and have also sustained diverse home-worlds as nations (with their own internal
configurations). 18

By this formulation, certain practices of Indigenous resurgence like those associated with
Idle No More may be said to occur as incursions into a common public space of appearance
between Indigenous peoples and settlers created by colonization. This is a space still ruled by a
dominant Euro-Modern conception of the political oriented toward mastery, mistaking strength
for power as Arendt described it (1998: 220) – of antagonism, sovereignty, individual self-
interest, consuming capitalist accumulation and expansionism etc.); a space and realm of activity
serving to actualize settler freedom and equality at Indigenous peoples’ expense. Canada’s
“house of difference” (Mackey, 2002) is a systematically “unhomely state” for Indigenous
peoples in particular, in ways not equatable to a liminality experienced by settlers or diasporic
peoples (as Cynthia Sugars implicated see Sugars, 2004: xix-xx). Here resurgent activity, when
rupturing the dominant space of appearance, makes seen/heard how Indigenous peoples have
been obscured, silenced and depoliticized in their own lands, though only perceptible to some.

Indigeneity has been ‘domesticated’ through settler-colonial process of internalization –
structurally (politically, economically, territorially), ideologically (nationalizing imperatives) and
psycho-affectively (to then accept and desire this internalization, as Coulthard argues). This takes
on added layers of meaning through Arendtian terms and can be considered alongside gendered
analyses (see for example Piatote, 2013; Emberley, 2007). The publicity of some resurgent
movement as with Idle No More, draws attention to the need for decolonization, without seeking
the validation of external recognition or explication within the apprehensive framework of
intelligibility ruling the settler public of politics/consumption. The flash mob round dances I will

18 It is relevant that Arendt herself applied the term home to her concept of world, using the word home in reference
to a (albeit singular) shared “human” world that “lies between people” when story provides stability and continuity
and also to describe the “modern feeling of homelessness in the world” as now one of isolated and lonely individuals
consider further in Chapter Seven, appeared in shopping malls but the dancers faced inwards to each other. They demonstrate the reality and vitality of not one uncontestable human world and experience of reality but multiple, overlapping, co-existent worlds in which different activities may indeed have their proper places - that there might be Indigenous home-worlds (in homelands). Such practices demand regard in their publicity but are not performed for an external gaze as a spectacle, though they are unexpected within the settler-dominated spaces they ‘rupture’ and so may elicit response similar to spectacle. Their disclosure of story and presence is not a display or divulgence of that which should remain hidden or cannot be discernable or audible within its horizons. These practices are meaning-full but not necessarily intelligible equally or in the same ways to all. This differential intelligibility is not a matter of essentialist discrimination in terms of who has access to knowledge or innate perceptibility. It is a matter of making distinctions in a context of colonial apprehension. Making distinctions here involves accounting for the colonial difference in why understanding of common experience is not shared and it then also involves asserting a principle of self-determination; that establishing what belongs where, where the threshold of home and so disclosure and refusal is in communicating meaning, is for Indigenous peoples to decide.

Outsiders or Pariahs?

The figure of the outsider in Arendt’s ‘Jewish writings’ offers some alignment to Indigenous experiences in an unhomely state, though her account of imperialism troubles this somewhat and calls for further engagement ‘with her, contra her.’ Arendt’s experience as a Jewish-German woman and refugee contributed to her sense of stateless and minoritized peoples’ forced ‘worldlessness’ and ‘homelessness.’ This experience prompted her philosophical and political preoccupation with both shared worlds of meaning to actuate human equality and the (re)establishment of homelands to protect difference. In this regard she became a controversial secularist, federalist participant in Zionist debates on a Jewish-only state for the diaspora, concerned as she was about “recapitulat[ing] the blindness of European nationalism” (Benhabib, 1993: 46). For Arendt, 20th century anti-Semitism in an era of ‘emancipation’ highlighted the tension between equality and difference in humanist-universalist principles of justice and the precariousness of the nation-state as their guarantor. Though formal political equality made the reality of social inequalities more pronounced and perplexing, she saw any
social levelling or homogenization from above as threatening to plurality and ultimately tyrannical (Botstein, 2010: 168; Benhabib, 2003: 27-8). For Arendt, Jewishness (across diversity) was in part formed through the experience of exclusion from full citizenship in the societies Jews lived among as minorities, which led to the cultivation of vibrant (albeit not fully political in her sense) enclaves of Jewish life within them. A majority state would rectify the problems of exclusion from the public realm of politics and secure a homeland for the flourishing of Jewish life, but the religious ethno-nationalization of Jewish identity as requiring independent statehood was an ambivalent prospect for Arendt. The status of Jews as not just oppressed inside-outsiders to Euro-Modernity, but a “pariah people” provides an interesting point of convergence and divergence with Indigenous experiences.

Alongside her analysis of anti-Semitism, Arendt devotes a large section of her 1951 Origins of Totalitarianism (1973) to the contradictions of late 19th century imperialism to account for the propulsion of Jewish exclusion to elimination in Europe. These contradictions include capitalism’s structural necessity for continuous accumulation by expropriation. But more crucial was in how its extreme violent exceptionalism toward subject-object peoples on the peripheries of Empire became habituated in Western thought (1973: 185-221). This for her produced a “boomerang effect” of its full permissibility in Europe (1973: xvii, 155, 206; Mantena, 2010; King & Stone, 2007). Although the connections Arendt draws in regard to this effect are ambiguous, commentator Karuna Mantena suggests Arendt’s intended argument is that

“imperialist expansion necessitated the invention of race and bureaucracy as instrumentalities of rule, which served both to exacerbate the inner contradictions of the nation-state and to degrade Western moral principles and political institutions so

19 Here one of Arendt’s conflations occurs between the importance of retaining people’s identity/cultural distinctiveness and socio-economic discrimination as a necessary by-product of freedom. See note above on race.

20 The nation-state had been set up as the structural safeguard for any formal entitlement to equality as a human being. Yet the disintegration of the state-system with the First World War exposed millions to the precariousness of the nation-state as formal political guarantor of humanist principles who had not been before, which would be brought fully into stark relief with the Second World War. In regard to the Jewish experience anticipating this, Arendt puts it this way:

“That the status of the Jews in Europe has been not only that of an oppressed people but also of what Max Weber has called a "pariah people" is a fact most clearly appreciated by those who have had practical experience of just how ambiguous is the freedom which emancipation has ensured, and how treacherous the promise of equality which assimilation has held out” (Arendt, 1944: 100).

21 Arendt agreed with Rosa Luxemburg’s contention against Lenin that imperialism was not the highest stage of capitalism but rather that ‘original accumulation’ must be ongoing and so capitalism was not a “closed system” but feeds on “outside factors” (Arendt, 1968d). Though she did not see the nation-state as its instrument as much as it actually being at odds with this fundamental expansionism (Benhabib, 2003: 77-79).
as to make the extermination of peoples appear to be acceptable state policy”
(Mantena, 2010: 86-7 emphasis mine).

Arendt’s Eurocentrism and persuasiveness in her presentation of this argument has been extensively critiqued, mostly on two related counts. One, how she depicted anti-Black dehumanization in the ‘encounter with Africa’ on its own terms and separated racism from “race-thinking” (Arendt, 1973: 158-84)\(^\text{22}\); Two, her insistence that the violence of late 19\(^\text{th}\) century imperialism was unprecedented and in discontinuity with ‘earlier’ slavery, colonialism and genocide (or “empire-building and conquest” in Arendt’s phrasing). I do think a view that racialized-ethnocultural and bureaucratic rationality combined in the 19\(^\text{th}\) century to produce a distinctively Euro-Modern “instrumentality of rule” has cache as per my discussion in Chapters Two and Three.\(^\text{23}\) Yet the critiques of her argument maintain and I would agree with Mantena that its limitations stem from how her critical interest in imperialist exceptionalism toward subject-object peoples was primarily “as an episode of and for European history” (Mantena, 2010: 103). However as mentioned in Chapter Four, Arendt saw the ‘discovery of America’ as a threshold event of Euro-Modernity that was precedential, that while inexplicable “by any chain of causality, because no event can, they are still happening in an unbroken continuity, in which

\(^{22}\) Benhabib contests that Arendt’s depiction of the dissonant experience of otherness experienced by the mob of European fortune hunters in the so-called ‘scramble for Africa’ (Arendt, 1973: 185-221) should be read as sympathetic or in her own voice (Benhabib, 2003: 85). However Arendt’s reliance on established stereotypes to describe this dissonance as allowing Black dehumanization that incited violent domination, comes across as both somewhat excusatory and paradoxical to her argument (Mantena, 2010: 106, 110). It is notable that Arendt described European incomprehension as centred in ‘African’ practices as being outside the realm of humanitas. That “what made them different from other human beings was not at all the color of their skin but the fact that they behaved like a part of nature,” as “natural human beings who lacked the specifically human character, the specifically human reality” as the Europeans understood it (Arendt, 1973: 192; Mantena, 2010: 106). This ‘behaviour’ is also temporalized as expected, in that it is perceived as ‘primitive’ or ‘prehistoric’ by Europeans, who are then tempted to regress themselves. From my reading Arendt’s main problem is falling into ethnological reason and Eurocentrism in her sphere of concerns. Most notably, in her focus on the effects of imperialism for its perpetrators and typological thinking in regard to action as encapsulating human agency (praxis) against the behavioural necessities of work and labour. I agree that where this becomes dangerous is in minimizing their connection to racism in the ‘Western’ intellectual tradition, as Robert Bernasconi has argued (Bernasconi, 2007). One commentator has called this ‘antiprimitivism’ (Klausen, 2010). See also King & Stone, 2007: 10-11 and R. King, 2010 on the divide among commentators regarding racism versus culturalism in Arendt.

\(^{23}\) On the avoidance of the boomerang effect in England, Arendt evokes observations make by Cole Harris in regard to the “so-called hypocrisy” of British policy on the edge of Empire I discussed in Chapter Three, that this was “was the result of the good sense of English statesmen who drew a sharp line between colonial methods and normal domestic policies” (1973: 155). She also distinguishes between “continental” and “overseas” imperialism in terms of “geographic distance” not allowing “for any geographic distance between the methods and institutions of colony and of nation” (223), which as I discussed in Chapters Two and Three does not pertain in settler-colonies. See above note on the ‘rise of the social’ and Benhabib’s suggestion that Weber on rationalization and Foucault on governmentality can augment Arendt. For a consideration of Arendt as possibly mediating Weber on legitimate sovereignty and Foucault on social discipline see Kemple, 2011.
precedents exist and predecessors can be named” (Arendt, 1998: 248). Nevertheless, Black anticolonial thinkers’ versions of the boomerang thesis from perspective of the colonized speak more to Indigenous peoples’ experience since 1492. The distinction as Mantena discusses, is exemplified in a comparison with Arendt’s contemporary and Fanon’s mentor Aimé Césaire (Discourse on Colonialism, 1955) who unlike Arendt, saw totalitarianism as absolutely immanent in the foundationally degenerative hypocrisy of Western humanism and that as such “the concentration camps signaled nothing less than the end of the idea of Europe, of Europe as the apotheosis of civilization” (Mantena, 2010: 101; Césaire, 2000: 36-7).

Nor for the anticolonial thinkers did the ‘New World’ of ‘America’ fulfill the political potential of Europe (which Arendt believed it may, at least for Jews) - its foundations in colonialism and slavery were thoroughly rotten.

Unlike the anticolonial thinkers such as Césaire, Arendt’s bias toward the dignity of a Western tradition perhaps kept her from accounting for “when the real crime began” (Bernasconi, 2007) and prevented her consideration of alternative models of relationality for worlds-in-common and politics by fully recognizing the dignity of the West’s outsiders. Indeed there is radical possibility in not only being an outsider but ostracized, a pariah. To be a pariah is to be excluded and avoided because one’s ways of being and doing are strange, transgressive, queer and indeed dangerous to dominant categorical boundaries. Though this comes at expense of the subaltern’s unintelligibility to the dominant as discussed in Chapter Two and Four. While this position engenders oppressive violence and is a target for elimination it can also be one of

On the “surprise” of Nazism to Europeans, Césaire wrote:
“[B]efore they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples; that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they were responsible for it, and that before engulfing the whole edifice of Western, Christian civilization in its reddened waters, it oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack” (2000: 36).

Mantena makes an important rejoinder to views that Arendt did not provide a clear connection between European imperialism and specifically German totalitarianism in Nazism – which is that this aligns with her broader views on narrative explanation. Presenting imperialism as setting conditions of possibility or precedent in thinking rather than inevitability, relates to her critique of causal determinism in history influenced by Walter Benjamin’s “Thesis on the Philosophy of History” (Benjamin, 2007: 253-64). Despite the eventual title recommended for her work, she did not actually seek to identify origins of totalitarianism but “the contingent, conjunctural, and unintended crystallization of political forces and events that, only in retrospect, could be seen to have contained the kernels of the catastrophes to come” (Mantena, 2010: 91). Here Arendt viewed that claiming continuity rather than rupture works “in the case of antisemitism and racism, to insulate observers from recognizing the unprecedented nature of the dangers they came to pose” and thus from an impetus to resist them (Mantena, 2010: 107). Unfortunately stressing discontinuity can prevent seeing the rotten foundations of thought anticolonial critics and more recently the Modernity/Coloniality School point to (as in the German Enlightenment tradition Arendt had a love/gate relationship with). See also note below on Benjamin’s metaphor of the Pearl Diver.
strength and transformative disruption through the pariah’s stubborn persistence of difference – their resilience and dignity over mere survival (Feldman, 2010: 201-2), or survivance in Vizenor’s phrase.

As I previously touched on, Arendt herself held a liminal position in her life-story, by both birth as a woman and Jew, and action through her Jewish writings, controversial Zionist arguments and refusals of definition. She spoke to its transformative potential in a 1944 article called “The Jew as Pariah: a Hidden Tradition.” In it she described the pariah as an effectively “traditional” concept in Jewish thought, assessing four variations represented by four writers and artists. The variation she discusses of note here is the one Arendt seems to have the most personal affinity with: the non-conformism of a “conscious pariah” who has managed to appear in the European public-political world but takes up their position in it unapologetically as a Jew “fight[ing] for freedom” (Arendt, 1944: 108). While they reject assimilation, their ultimate pursuit is emancipation for their people, the ability to appear and participate in a common world, as equal but distinctive. As Arendt put it, this is the “admission of Jews as Jews to the ranks of humanity” against the condition “that the Jew might only become a man when he ceased to be a Jew” (Arendt, 1944: 100, 107). This pursuit may come at the cost of becoming marginal in the meantime, an insider/outsider to both the dominant world as it is and to their own people.

For Arendt, conscious pariah thinkers are afforded the ability to gauge and expose the existing systems of inequality and “reality of the social order” as vulnerable constructs that are changeable (104). The most crucial point Arendt makes here is that “when the Pariah enters politics, she becomes a rebel” – a rebel by and to the terms of inclusion and exclusionary foundations of that politics (Feldman, 2010: 200; Arendt, 1944). Yet she did not account for the full implications of this rebellion in terms of denouncing assimilation. If the dominant world and its notion of humanity is built on your exception as a Jew (or Indigenous), if exclusion or

26 As Feldman notes, while Arendt had been at times labelled self-hating, “[loyal] criticism is not self-hatred” – loyal because she is concerned with the question of what is best for Jews as a Jew (Feldman, 2010: 204). On this basis, she criticized both ethno-nationalists and those she characterized as “parvenus,” social climbers who wanted to escape pariah status and effectively collaborated in Jewish oppression (Arendt, 1944: 108-9). He suggests that Arendt’s secularism and interest in Zionism reflected her politicization as a Jew first and foremost, in response to Nazism (which he also links to the minimization of her identity as a woman with ‘public-political’ implications in her work) (Feldman, 2010: 198-9). I think there are parallels here with some Indigenous women thinkers and activists who consider their experience as Indigenous in the struggle against colonialism encapsulates or even supersedes their experience as women and so do not identify with Indigenous feminism. To be both Indigenous and feminist (which may involve engagement with the settler legal-political order to address violence) has resulted in an experience of pariah status for some.
discrimination based on who you are is integral (Bernasconi, 2010: 58), then integration and a shedding of pariah status without assimilation and loss of who you are is not an option. As the anticolonial thinkers asserted, to initiate a common yet diverse world of freedom and equality between oppressors and oppressed or colonizers and colonized, the existing order would have to be utterly refuged. Yet, Arendt’s holding out for the possibility of subversion against the totalization of apprehensive power still for me is encouraging, for Indigenous politics and political scholarship.

The “conscious pariah” as a conceptual and political position, to “make a conscious virtue” out of this status (Jackson, 2002: 265), speaks to what I suggested at the close of Chapter Four, that perhaps we should embrace damnation by Euro-Modernity, as carriers of alternative forms of life so anathema to it, but also see our subversive power. As an embrace of our difference, with a love for our homes that can absolutely be ferocious, this does not however need to match the violence of its attempted destruction (conflicting violence with power). Fanon saw an opportunity to build a new, shared human world only after the dialectical upheaval of decolonization, that would expel any internalized idealizations of Western models and could not be a restoration of insular worlds that for him had been lost. But what both Fanon and even Arendt did not entirely appreciate is that a decolonial world of social-political relations between peoples must be deeply pluralistic and not uniform or unitary; nor has the ascendance and oppressiveness of the dominant Euro-Modern model necessarily foreclosed or destroyed a multiplicity of other worlds that provide other models of relationality. The very existence of pariahs to its normative order indicates apprehensiveness in the presence of alternative forms of life.

The necessary revolutionary newness of a refuged and decolonial shared world may then be overstated by Fanon and even Arendt, who both proceeded from what are actually vested typological characterizations of colonized and oppressed peoples as worldless/non-political always or at least since the ‘break in continuity’ of colonization. But we are not worldless we are

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27 While Arendt advocated for the formation of a Jewish army during the Second World War to defend Jews from those who hate them on this ground, she was concerned about the effects of attaching this imperative to statehood. Arendt saw any expectation for emancipated Jews to behave as “pure human beings outside the range of peoples and nations” to be unreasonable (Arendt, 1944: 107). Arendt’s student Leon Botstein recalls this point in regard to her disappointment with the development of Israeli militarism, asking whether a people’s experience as outsiders should induce them to behave nobly when they become ‘normalized’ by the dominant (ignoble) standard of politics including chauvinism and militarism (Botstein, 2010: 174). See notes to Chapter One on Arendt and Fanon on violence.
worldly. Colonialism and imperialism may have bolstered the universalizing pretensions of Euro-Modern definitions of the political, inhibiting our ability to ‘appear’ as we should among others and damaging our own spaces and practices of freedom but they were not extinguished. To again both pluralize and layer Arendt’s terminology with lenses on power and context, while displaced from territories and ‘domesticated’ to states, Indigenous worlds have been sustained as home worlds. While Indigenous political-cultural-social practices may not be wholly discernable within colonized common but not shared worlds, resurgence can be said to make unsettling incursions like the conscious pariah-as-rebel. And the transformative potential in this rebellion cannot be overstated.

To return to story, in recalling his grandfather, a Polish survivor of the Shoah, Arendt’s American student Leon Botstein suggested that the world he was driven from though “no longer visible...could be remembered only through the telling of tales” (Botstein, 2010: 162). We might ask were they ever without worlds, without homes when they have always carried stories with them, even if they were not visible or audible to many in the common world they moved through? While Arendt’s diaspora Jewish context is of course different than those of Indigenous nations who have also experienced forms of exile, in these traditions is affirmed that though “the world we used to live in” may be in many ways beyond us (Deloria Jr., 2006), it is through the collective memory carried by stories that we are anchored and “can find our place in the world,” that we can come home (McLeod, 2007: 68).

Asserting Critical Understanding in Dark Times

As I have suggested, Arendt’s depiction of the crisis of authority, judgment and understanding in Euro-Modern thought and the power/knowledge dynamics under totalitarianism has resonance with conditions of colonial apprehension for Indigenous peoples and the challenge to giving accounts of Indigenous resurgence due to the epistemic and discursive reorientations resurgence involves. In one register this resonance is in how totalitarianism’s test to sensibility and intelligibility draws attention to the limits of causal explanation and definition. For Arendt a desire for “reconciliation” with the experiential reality of the human condition (plurality/diversity, natality/creativity, mortality and the ephemerality of action, living in the present etc.), relates to the practice of storytelling and establishment of traditions in the effort at continuity, to maintain a sense of stability and meaning through time for
our collective existences. What she challenges is the Euro-Modern manifestations of this desire
that are authoritarian, leading to thingifying, homogenizing and immobilizing theories of politics
and history, that understanding can be “unequivocal” with the reliability of facts and produce
“final results” (Arendt, 1994: 307-8, 311). What Arendt saw as frightening about totalitarianism
was not, contrary to the anticolonial critiques mentioned above, its newness or “horrible
originality” - which she did assert for its practical applications, rather than its ideas - but that it
“brought to light the ruin of our categories of thought and standards of judgment” (309-10, 318).
Arendt’s discussion of these “dark times” (Berkowitz, 2010)28 can speak to recounting political
action or events in non-authoritarian ways that forward a critical understanding in other contexts
of the incomprehension of ‘flashpoint events’ or transformations. That is, not only those of
horrific phenomena but their opposite, such as decolonial movement in the settler-colonial
theatre of apprehension, in which shared categories and standards of judgment may have never
pertained, and in which their character of domination and dispossession is experienced as a
struggle against totalizing power.

In her thinking on history and story, Arendt was highly influenced by fellow German-Jewish
writer Walter Benjamin (1892-1940). In describing his work and arguably her own
(Herzog, 2001: 189; Buckler, 2011a: 46) she eloquently used the metaphor of “pearl diving” to
collect crystallized fragments and “bring them up into the world of the living,” set against
“excavation” of the past aimed to “resuscitate it the way it was and to contribute to the renewal
of extinct ages” (Arendt, 1968e: 205-6).29 It is through Benjamin that Arendt indicates how

28 Brown suggests Arendt borrowed the phrase from playwright Bertolt Brecht who she thinks borrowed it from the
ancient Greeks (Brown, 2005: 9).
29 Benhabib suggests Arendt gets the thread of seeking origins, recovering lost meanings or essences in her work
(e.g. of politics, from the polis) from Martin Heidegger, but from Benjamin she gets her notion of “fragmentary
historiography” as collecting fragments of tradition to produce new meanings in a time of rupture (Benhabib, 2003:
x-xi). Arendt attempted to take this approach to describe the “crystallization” of forces and events into
totalitarianism, a term which also appears in the pearl diving metaphor (from a passage in Shakespeare’s Tempest) in
reference to the fragments as treasures, here worth quoting in full:

“Like a pearl diver who descends to the bottom of the sea, not to excavate the bottom and bring it to
light but to pry loose the rich and the strange, the pearls and the coral in the depths and to carry them
to the surface, this thinking delves into the depths of the past-but not in order to resuscitate it the way
it was and to contribute to the renewal of extinct ages. What guides this thinking is the conviction that
although the living is subject to the ruin of the time, the process of decay is at the same time a process
of crystallization, that in the depth of the sea, into which sinks and is dissolved what once was alive,
some things "suffer a sea-change" and survive in new crystallized forms and shapes that remain
immune to the elements, as though they waited only for the pearl diver who one day will come down
to them and bring them up into the world of the living..." (Arendt, 1968e: 205-6 emphasis mine)
storytelling can avoid “explanations that seek to provide a causal or systematic connection” between events that seem to be historical ruptures, which when “great enough” can “illuminate its own past” to become history meaningful to the present but “never be deduced by it” (Arendt, 2007: 48; 1994: 319). For Arendt, totalitarianism’s “explosion” of established moral principles and norms of political-historical explanation and analysis impeded the condemnation of and intervention in atrocities because it laid bare that understanding could never be definitive. She was nevertheless interested in the restitution of a capacity for judgement in a pluralistic, changeable world-in-common and the importance of asserting critical understandings or meaningfulness, not just factual information or knowledge, if resisting such processes as totalitarianism is to be “more than a mere fight for survival” (1994: 310). Yet she saw any shared principles as having to be reconstituted anew more than recovered whole as they were, and that this could be part of the political theorist’s role as a storyteller in dark times.

Arendt characterized her Euro-Modern present as a dark time not only in the sense of struggle or oppression but as a period in which people have become disconnected from foundational principles and sources of authority that helped guide their conduct and thinking, and where “the public realm has been obscured and the world become...dubious” in which “people have ceased to ask any more of politics than that it show due consideration for their vital interests and personal liberty” (Arendt, 1968c: 11). This metaphorical darkness corresponds to a gap of meaning and continuity in the human experience of existing in a gap “between past and future” that is usually bridged by tradition (and conveyed through storytelling): “insofar as the past has been transmitted as tradition, it possesses authority; insofar as authority presents itself historically, it becomes tradition” (Arendt, 2007: 38). While tradition had already been eroded in Europe, totalitarianism collapsed this bridge utterly, turning the gap into an abyss that was no longer a matter of intellectual preoccupation for philosophers but had become “a tangible reality and perplexity for all; that is, it became a fact of political relevance” (Arendt, 2006: 13).

In Arendt’s view, Nazi Germany’s “unprecedented” atrocities and the “banality” of their facilitation by ordinary citizens amplified longstanding failures of the Western traditions of philosophy and history to grapple with the experience of active life, to the point that Western thought had become incapable of “asking adequate, meaningful questions, let alone of giving

Aligned to crystallization, Wendy Brown calls attention to Benjamin’s emphasis on finding “stillness” in the present to open possibility, in contrast to other historical materialists who emphasize progressivism and “unfolding laws of history” (2005: 11-12).
answers to its own perplexities” (Arendt, 2006: 8).30 This is why she saw polemical attempts to discredit the Nazi regime at its apex of power by persuading people with truth against its ‘lies’ as inadequate because its “fabrication of reality” forced acknowledgement that power “can make facts in the image of its own hypotheses” simply through “consistent action” (Disch, 1993: 671-2).31 As Arendt put it, a hypothesis or “assumption which underlies consistent action can be as mad as it pleases; it will always end in producing facts which are then “objectively” true” (Arendt, 2006: 87-88).

Arendt was concerned in general with the relationship of truth and politics, particularly the effect of domination on the “factual truths” of collective experiences, those public and so common events, actions and circumstances that are the “invariable outcome” of living together (Arendt, 2006: 227).32 Crucially factual truths are “established by witnesses and depend[d] upon testimony” (233), though the experience of them may be diverse. While subject to interpretation, factual truths have a way of asserting their validity detached from opinion and are therefore “hated by tyrants, who rightly fear the competition of a coercive force they cannot monopolize” (Arendt, 2006: 235-6). Yet the ability to lie about these experiences becomes dangerous when lying is systematically and/or deliberately organized by dominant power to promote and

30 Her views on personal culpability and the “banality of evil” in Nazi Germany have frequently been misrepresented. Complicity in its fabricated reality by all those who “simply exchanged one system of values against another” makes the evil acts done in this regime banal – that is conventional, rather than criminal as those ‘ordinary’ individuals including bureaucrats like Eichmann were operating in the realm of the normalcy and legality established by the regime without questioning its morality (Arendt, 2003: 44). Benhabib suggests a better term than banality may have been “routinization” to indicate how the acquiescence to atrocities was attained (Benhabib, 2003: 90), which aligns with her view of Euro-Modern mass society and its “anti-politics” (Buckler, 2011a), with totalitarianism an assault on human plurality and natality (Herzog, 2001).

31 Arendt’s observations on this have gained currency of late in an analysis of U.S. politics and media in a time of ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts,’ with Origins of Totalitarianism making it back on bestseller lists in 2017 (Williams, 2017). My own reengagement with Arendt was certainly influenced by renewed interest in her work as a public intellectual for “dark times.” Audra Simpson has also recently reflected on “the imagination of the political under conditions of falsehood” and a “present whose significance is yet to be determined” in this regard (2017: 1-2).

32 Buckler suggests critique of Arendt as presenting a foundational rather than politically necessary distinction of “analytical and synthetic” truth is incorrect (Buckler, 2011a: 49). Arendt’s characterization of factual truths is as follows:

“Factual truth...is always related to other people: it concerns events and circumstances in which many are involved; it is established by witnesses and depends upon testimony; it exists only to the extent that it is spoken about, even if it occurs in the domain of privacy. It is political by nature. Facts and opinions, though they must be kept apart, are not antagonistic to each other; they belong to the same realm. Facts inform opinions, and opinions, inspired by different interests and passions, can differ widely and still be legitimate as long as they respect factual truth” (Arendt, 2006: 233-4).

33 Arendt traces the relationship of truth and politics as a theme in Western philosophy, that set up an antagonism between truth as transcendent, universal or absolute (purview of the philosopher) and opinion as perspectival and limited (purview of the citizen) persisting from Plato onward, and disassociating ‘opinion’ from the production of validity (See Section II in “Truth and Politics” Arendt, 2006: 227-235).
legitimize one interpretation of facts’ meaning, or indeed refute that they happened at all as a matter of public record, and so dismiss contrary accounts as mere opinion or ideological rhetoric. Arendt’s caution here is resonant with Indigenous experience in a settler-colonial theatre of apprehension, former Prime Minister Harper’s amnesia and pundit Rex Murphy’s derision discussed in Chapter Three comes to mind:

“When such factual truths concern issues of immediate political relevance, there is more at stake here than the perhaps inevitable tension between two ways of life within the framework of a common and commonly recognized reality. What is at stake here is this common and factual reality itself, and this is indeed a political problem of the first order” (Arendt, 2006: 232).

What does this imply for the collective memory of differently experienced factual truths? Nazism posed dilemmas to narrativizing norms of historiographical accounting and writing on politics retrospectively, forms of recollection as explanation that faltered or only served to further obfuscate, reproduce or corroborate Nazi fabrications by plotting them to established patterns (Luban, 1983: 218). Benhabib summarizes these norms as 1) causal narration from an imperative to preserve and justify what is described 2) the aim of a full understanding, which requires empathy (assuming the perspective of actors described) 3) the establishment of logical continuity by analogizing different cases as instances of general rules or laws 4) a dispassionate tone in style and language (Benhabib, 2003: 87-90). Rather than effectual to repudiate Nazism, these norms imply the need to comprehend unfathomable actions, where attempting to establish their continuity can accept their normalization and then justify them as a necessary step in the course of History writ large.

For Arendt Euro-Modern philosophers of history, like political philosophers on sovereignty, sought an escape from the uncertainties of active life and vulnerability of politics\(^\text{34}\) for the control and predictability of fabrication. This involves looking for objectively meaningful processes of actors ‘making History’ and narrativizing them as the product of a kind of

\[^{34}\text{For an in-depth discussion of the Euro-Modern avoidance of the vulnerability of a life in common through the concept of sovereignty, see Joëlle-Alice Michaud-Ouellet’s forthcoming PhD Dissertation (University of Victoria).}\]
In this attempt to ‘make sense’ of reality, politics and History are directed toward the gradual resolution of contradictions as the end of human emancipation:

“History - based on the manifest assumption that no matter how haphazard single actions may appear in the present and in their singularity, they inevitably lead to a sequence of events forming a story that can be rendered through intelligible narrative the moment the events are removed into the past - became the great dimension in which men could become “reconciled” with reality (Hegel), the reality of human affairs...” (Arendt, 2006: 85 emphasis mine).

Totalitarianism showed the pretences of such attempts at reconciliation and where it might collude in the rationalization of atrocity. Imperialism and coloniality can also be seen as deriving in part from an authorial tendency to apprehend the Other - where the shared etymological root of authority/authorization and authorship with authoritarian gains significance. Yet we must recall, account for and judge these actions and events despite that we may not want or be able to explain them definitively, to make them sensible by narrativizing them - although the anti-colonial rebuke is that totalitarianism is entirely sensible within the dominant Euro-Modern system of thought and it is critically crucial to establish this.

The need to make account of the meaningfulness of externally unintelligible actions and the intangible or invisibilized connections between them and through time (if not their linear continuity) applies to those that must be condemned, which was Arendt’s concern. But this need also applies to ‘unexpected’ phenomena, events and action directed to “freedom or equality” (in Arendt’s lexicon) that must be storied and committed to and held up in collective memory and consciousness of the past, present and future, such as Indigenous practices of resistance, resurgence and decolonial transformation. Conventional political-historical narration has counter-hegemonic rhetorical force in recounting and accounting for processes of domination and dispossession, themselves bound up with a narrativizing imperative. Yet it is ambivalent as a

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35 Stone-Mediatore also summarizes the assumptions of narrative logic as construing ““actors” as discrete units, “actions” as the clear expression of an actor’s will in the so-called public realm, and “events” as phenomena of the public sphere that are marked by a definite beginning and resolution” (Stone-Mediatore, 2003: 7).

36 The limited engagement with Arendt for the settler-colonial context in Canada centres on reframing reconciliation discourse toward living and continuously negotiated coexistence and away from solving the Indian Problem by another name, a final resolution of Indigenous presence with Settler sovereignty - what Jim Tully calls a finality orientation in efforts at understanding, for example in treaty interpretation. Strakosch employs Arendt’s concerns with a notion of “completion” as the “end of politics” in this way (Strakosch, 2016). See also Bohle, 2017: 259 on narrative completionism and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
way of recounting/accounting for practices that are in contradiction to authoritarian explanation and ascription of meaning.

My story here is motivated by the view that we must make account of the meaningfulness of Indigenous resurgence where it ‘publicly’ addresses the decolonization of Canada, though Western political theory has much to answer for and theorists are not positioned to ascribe meanings and explanation to its practices, especially those of internal regeneration (to which the principle of self-determination is paramount). However Arendt indicates that storytelling’s conscientious exercise by theorists and public intellectuals could provide a critical function in dark times, in ways that do not seek to narrativize political action in ways potentially reconciliatory to a fabricated colonial reality that should be repudiated, not settled. This conscientious exercise a way of stimulating judgment in contexts of world dubiousness, discontinuity, obscurity or loss without colluding in replicating the ascription of continuously unfolding meanings and experiences of common factual truths in coercive and deterministic ways. This can also pertain in contexts of multiple worlds of experience with their own spaces of appearance and enunciative domains in colonial or imperial relation – different “ways of life” coexisting in a common sphere of interaction and factual truths but not a “commonly recognized reality” as Arendt put it. In such contexts demands for explanation, understanding or intelligible disclosure by the standards of the dominant world may operate to eliminate, repress, deform or extract from those marginalized. Indeed for Simpson it is “cognizance of differing social and historical facts” – and by this I interpret her to refer to a recognized reality and shared understanding of such facts in the Arendtian sense - “that make for the posture of refusal” – a posture that is generative (A. Simpson, 2016: 330).

Thinker Wendy Brown has reflected on the role of critical political theory in dark times not only brought on by seeming temporal ruptures but those in a dominant political imagination, a disorientation that comes with the awareness of uncertainty and its dangers (Brown, 2005: 7). This evokes questions and challenges on scholarly storytelling in decolonial struggles - of refusal, materiality, enactment, action - that prompted my inquiry in this dissertation and I will return to in Chapter Eight. Here, Brown is helpful by way of transition to a discussion of methodological principles in Arendt that can inform an ethic. She considers reproaches that a dark now is “not the time” for theory, against theory’s (un) timeliness as irrelevant or damaging for reasons of either strategic efficacy and efficiency, the constraints of urgency or crisis, or
appropriateness in terms of our manner and conduct of theoretical inquiry - “when, how and where one raises certain issues or mentions certain problems” – with appeals to temperateness, civility, maturity and propriety (4). Brown suggests the label of dark times itself to actually be “counterphobic” in the implication that darkness is finite and passing, a temporary absence of light. The fears of her own present (2005) Brown describes, the incalculable and unpredictable specter of terrorism and the linked illegitimacy of “Empire” which mobilizes fear en masse for its justification (10), could speak, with adjustments, to the unsettling of colonial power’s totalization I discussed in Chapter Three, both in revealing settler apprehensiveness and the tactical imperative to overcome our own fears to tell stories of our present otherwise.

Rejecting the conservatism of reproaches to critical political theory in dark times, Brown argues that it creates openings “crucial to keeping the times from closing in on us” (4). In giving a “different sense of the times” by “thinking against the times,” it is part of a struggle for interpreting the past and affirming life and potential in the present and future (2005: 4, 13, 15). She suggests that “untimely critique insists on alternative possibilities and perspectives in a seemingly closed political and epistemological universe,” and so it “becomes a nonviolent mode of exploding the present” (14). For Brown this explosion is to conceive critical political theory as unbound by “political exigency,” nor is this a removal from the specificity of the ‘now’ as in utopian intellectual exercises, but in being affirmative must also necessarily uphold “contestable and contingent values” and so be of the times in its reclamation of the times “for something other than darkness” (16).

Yet not all unintelligibility (or all peoples’ disorientation) should be equated to darkness, an Enlightenment juxtaposition with illumination that dominantly referenced the unknowing and unknown Other to be apprehended by the light of universal Reason. And not all stories and traditions that bridge our experiences through time have been broken. Yet Brown’s untimely critique still aligns with my conception of the project of Indigenous resurgence discourse at this juncture, to story against a settling of the still-colonial present or terminal creeds and assert critical understandings that also might contribute to a repair, renewal or regeneration of continuities and decolonial transformations or refigurations. To the admonishment ‘not yet’

37 In her discussion of her mentor Karl Jaspers as paragon of a theorist in the realm of politics as a vocation, she evokes this Enlightenment metaphor for knowledge as a bringing to light, “clarifying the obscure, in illuminating the darkness” (Arendt, 1968b: 75). But this ‘light’ is the light of scrutiny and accountability to fellow people, not about establishing universal truth. See also note on heroism below.
Indigenous and other colonized peoples are often met with; the answer is now: Now to decolonization but also now to theory and now to storytelling - of the past, in the present, for the future. Yet the risks of telling in self-disclosure and the challenge of refusal to circumvent apprehension make principles for scholarly accounting and recounting the events of our time to carry through time, necessary to consider. Here is where Arendt can contribute to a methodological ethic for Indigenous storytelling in political theory. Like Brown on “untimely critique,” this might be construed as an ethic not in the sense of strict guidelines for action with positive content, but rather (following Max Weber) “a caution about what may not be discounted in acting” (Brown, 2005: 14-15). 38

Political Storytelling

“[S]torytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it”

– Hannah Arendt, from Men in Dark Times (Arendt, 1968a)

In considering “what may not be discounted” in the approach to telling of politics, a brief consideration of Arendt’s stance on the critical positioning of the theorist-storyteller and issues of a common conceptual “political language” that condition our telling is merited before turning to her methodological “modal immanence” as per Buckler’s reading. Lisa Disch considers political storytelling’s critical force derives from its form as praxis, a mode of knowledge (re)production capable of enunciating critical understanding from experience that is neither objectivist nor relativist, nor tied to the explanatory preoccupations of Euro-Modern historiographical norms. She suggests Arendt presented the storyteller’s “situated impartiality” that disavows claims of privileged knowledge from either a standpoint of reasoned detachment or from within an experience of oppression. 39 Rather this impartiality involves telling “the story of an event or situation from the plurality of perspectives that constitute it as a public phenomenon” while retaining one’s identity and role as its teller, but not author, as with a narrative (Disch 1993: 666). Rather than attempting to “impel assent” to a truth that is not

38 Another thinker that could be enriching to bring into a conversation on ethics and the risks of storytelling is Emmanuel Levinas, as a recent work I have encountered, Levinas, Storytelling and Anti-Storytelling (2013) by Will Buckingham. I will consider this for any future manuscript.

39 Disch discusses Arendt in relation to these two strains of standpoint theory here and Donna Haraway’s concept of “situated knowledges” (Disch, 1993: 667). She also provides a concise overview of the debate on storytelling between ‘marginal voice’ theory and poststructuralists in her book (Disch, 1996: 6-10).
objective, story “stirs people to think about what they are doing” by exposing conflicting perspectives on the facts of an occurrence (Disch 1993: 671; 669). Such exposure is where appeals to Arendt’s neo-Kantianism, in theories of agonistic democracy that centre the virtues of stimulating ongoing public debate, are generally made. Polemics, as expressing “explicit value judgments” (Benhabib in Disch 1993: 674) may be effective to build consensus within a society grounded in a shared normativity and episteme, but storytelling prompts critical thinking where this no longer or has never pertained.

The un-decidedness of story generates responsibility in the teller but more importantly in the listener/receiver/interlocutor, by inviting judgement rather than impelling assent to their own interpretation. The teller’s role in story is not to absorb others to their perspective nor in indicating a plurality of possible perspectives, to absorb theirs. That is, situated impartiality as Disch paints it does not involve “empathizing” as attempting to assume the position of someone you are not in a way that negates difference and particularity, but to “visit” them as yourself - a “being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not” (Arendt, 2006: 237; Disch, 1996: 13). Buckler also emphasizes the avoidance of homogenizing and normalizing categorization, that a storytelling approach

“This resists the tendency of explanatory accounts to assimilate cases, rendering them suitable for inclusion under ossified categories, marginalising their specific meaning and obviating the invitation to reflective judgment on the basis of the particular case…[it also] replaces ex post facto explanatory categorisations of agents and events with accounts that incorporate a sense of the contingency of phenomena; in doing so, it also reflects more fully the sense of spontaneity that Arendt associates with the concept of public action, where agents can, as it were, bring something new to the table and can make a difference to the world in unpredictable ways” (Buckler, 2011a: 52-3).

As an account of experiences (always pluralistic, occurring in worlds we always occupy with others), a political story’s integrity is not predicated on whether it is an exact replication of the “factual truths,” or whether it succeeds in conveying the aims of actions accurately.’ These cannot be explained absolutely as they are not reducible to the “motives, goals and intents of those who carry them out,” and the identities disclosed in action do not necessarily equate to
whom actors “intend, aspire or even agree to be” (Disch, 1996: xi; Arendt, 2006: 84). Story can however provide “metaphorical approximation to what actually happened in the minds of men” despite that this does not equate to causation in the affects and effects of their actions (Arendt, 2006: 9). The storyteller’s situated impartiality treats their interlocutors as capable of judging a story’s events and actors by their actions as they appear, though drawing correspondences between these to convey meaningfulness without defining that meaning. Yet storytelling is also inevitably representative to an extent, and for Arendt the theorist as storyteller can be judged by the breadth of perspectives considered and how “disinterested” the retelling is in terms of a distancing from individual and group (as “private”) interests in “re-creating the plural and perspectival quality” of the phenomena they describe (Arendt, 2006: 237; Benhabib, 2003: 89; Buckler, 2011a: 50). And it is here I am cautious and diverge lest we reproduce (albeit in a roundabout way) a notion of the privileged position of the theorist as storyteller to see the invisible web of relationality spread out before them better than others.

To always consider oneself in universal interdependence - as a linking point in the web where we can sometimes sense its vibrant connective threads - has an ethical force and aligns with Indigenous theory on “relational accountability” (Wilson, 2008: 97-122) and wholism, as I will discuss in Chapter Six. Yet I contest a suggestion that this “oneness” in plurality indicates I “can make myself the representative of everybody else” (Arendt, 2006: 237). Rather, that it can make us not discount the effects and affects of our actions and respect a principle of self-determination. Further, how is “impartiality” in the storyteller’s recounting of the multi-perspectival experience of political events and actions (what was said, done) itself critical or ethical? Arendt advocated an awareness of our individual and necessary perspectival situatedness despite the ability to represent others. Yet for me it is precisely critical partiality (not as ‘private opinion’) in dark times that is crucial to proceed with though values are always discursively contestable as Brown suggests. Rather than impartial, are better terms for the theorist-storier’s position avoiding apprehension as I am interested in it, non-prescriptive, non-coercive, non-authoritarian, non-assimilative?

Arendt never explicitly presented a methodological statement on her approach to theory as she found them to be “self-indulgent” and as Disch concedes, “by failing to explain how storytelling creates a vantage point that is both critical and experiential she left herself open to charges of subjectivism” (Disch 1993: 666 emphasis mine). Indeed she has been said to depict
the standpoints of perpetrators of atrocity like Eichmann and the Boers more successfully than their victims (Benhabib, 2003: 89). This charge as Buckler points out relates to a balance of analytical attention on the substance of her arguments rather than their form, but it still holds. Disch maintains that Arendt’s storyteller does “take a stand” specifically by stimulating critical accountability in their interlocutors, by engaging with plurality and the “complexity and ambiguity of the real situations in which judgments are made” (Disch 1993: 688). Arendt was certainly not subjectivist when it came to concepts relevant to making distinctions important to judgment in our public political lives, in which asserting a common lexicon was of concern to her.

Like Eve Tuck and Wayne K. Yang on the term decolonization as I will discuss in Chapter Eight, Arendt expressed outright frustration at the dangers of a relativist and analogizing approach to “key words of political language such as freedom and justice” (Arendt, 2006: 14), the notion that we can “proceed on the assumption that everything can eventually be called anything else.” For Arendt this implies distinctions are only important insofar as “we grant each other the right to retreat into our own worlds of meaning, and demand only that each of us remain consistent within his own private terminology” (95). She drives home the point that makes mutual intelligibility a problem in contexts of oppression where substance and not only form must be attended to, such as liberal regimes that emphasize proceduralist measures of equality:

“If, in these circumstances, we assure ourselves that we still understand each other, we do not mean that together we understand a world common to us all, but that we understand the consistency of arguing and reasoning, of the process of argumentation in its sheer formality” (Arendt, 2006: 95-6).

Arendt was not suggesting logocentrism but the importance of a recognizable meaningfulness, if not inherent definition, of certain concepts for the sake of making distinctions crucial to asserting critical understandings of power relations. Nevertheless she was convinced that despite any rupture or discontinuity in traditions, it is in language that the “past is contained ineradicably” and that it is here the theorist as storyteller might look toward the retrieval and critical reconstitution of original meanings for the present, to “distill from them anew” (as in the word politics containing the ancient Greek meaning of polis) (Arendt, 2006: 14).
As I have discussed in previous chapters in regard to the term *sovereignty* for example, I like many Indigenous scholars are very sensitive to questions of the baggage of a language not your own. In settler dominated ‘public’ or common spaces of engagement and appearance, critical understanding of events and action needs to be asserted, accountability stimulated and relations of mutual respect cultivated. Yet to accept potentially deforming transliterations of Indigenous ways of being-doing-knowing into hegemonic languages seems defeatist and dismissive of thefigurative power of our own languages. Indigenous “retreat to our own worlds of meaning” is anything but arbitrary in a theatre of settler-colonial apprehension. As to situated impartiality, it might be argued that a critical thinking that can eventually lead to decolonial transformation of common spaces may necessitate “visiting” different standpoints in stories of Indigenous-settler engagements, like those during the winter we danced, and so also some transliteration in our theory-storying. Yet I remain sceptical of the effectiveness of ambiguous repetitions of the current plurality of perspectives on these engagements in the face of the dominant power’s structural capacity for fact making in its own image as Arendt put it and the intransigence of Canadian settler-colonial common sense/ability regarding Indigenous peoples. We must in this context emphasize how storytelling “affirms collective ideals in the face of disparate experiences” (Jackson, 2006: 18) but can still communicate meaningfulness and critical distinctions without imposing definition. This non-dominating capacity is what cues conscientious storytelling of occurrences and action as a non-assimilative and non-appropriative mode of theory and inquiry that can responsibly recall and recount the difference of Indigenous political practices and events in a still settler-colonial present. This is a present in which the refusal of full intelligibility or disclosure of shared *internal* meanings for these practices and events is protective rather than unjustifiably exclusionary by some appeal to ideal conditions of discourse.

Here I can turn back to Arendt’s distinction of storytelling from narrative explanation, with storytelling seen as modelling the political life it describes while also facilitating critical understandings of experience and judgment. The rhetorical distinction of narrative from story that I also employ is crucial for Arendt, as Disch and Annabel Herzog both emphasize though many other commentators on her work have not observed.40 This distinction can be traced (at

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40 This includes Benhabib who at one point even says “narrative, or in Arendt’s term storytelling” (Benhabib, 2003: 92). For other examples see Stone-Mediatare, 2003 and Kristeva, 2001. It should be noted that the etymology of the
least in part) to the influence of Benjamin’s depiction of the storyteller appearing in a collection of his essays that Arendt assembled and edited, which she called *Illuminations*. Benjamin suggested the storyteller’s role in knowledge production had declined in the West alongside oral tradition in favour of literacy, the author of written narratives (he focuses on the modern novel) and the related rise of empirical “information” as the dominant form of authoritative knowledge. His depiction of the storyteller and story is pedagogical and social in ways distinct from the solitary author and their narrative.

Storytelling’s pedagogical nature is in how it imparts knowledge as experiential *wisdom*, with all story containing “openly or covertly, something useful,” such as a moral or practical advice. Yet rather than instruction as the transmission of information deriving authority from an objective verifiability in which ‘correct’ answers to questions are embedded, the storyteller “gives counsel.” This counsel is open-ended and indeed situated, “less an answer to a question than a proposal concerning the continuation of a story which is just unfolding” (Benjamin, 2007: 86). The storyteller *always* necessarily *re* tells, recounting from their own experience or “that reported by others” and “in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to [their] tale” (Benjamin, 2007: 87). In this retelling a “psychological connection of the events is not forced” on the listeners and their own interpretation is invited. While the distinctive impressions and judgement of the teller as a counsellor is communicated, for Benjamin it is “half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it” (Benjamin, 2007: 89).

Unlike authorial historiographical accounts of political action or events that impose a systematic sensibility on them, the significance of their connections, affinities or *correspondences*, are drawn together and suggested by the storyteller as a *proposition*. Benjamin also highlights how stories are social, generated only in community as retellings of collective experiences and incorporative of listeners, who become part of the story.

As Jackson puts it, contrary to Euro-Modern views of stories as *either* normative repetitions (traditional), the “pure creations of autonomous individuals” or “unalloyed expressions of subjective views,” stories are “the result of ongoing dialogue and redaction within

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word narrative from the Latin *for knowing* and *telling* (Polletta, 2006: 11), does not necessarily implicitly cue the specific sense of narrative that Arendt distinguishes from story and I also employ as a rhetorical distinction. This is also not a distinction that many of the Indigenous thinkers on story I engage make either. Here I have not considered the distinction that Jacques Derrida also ostensibly makes between narrative as authoritarian or tending to the hegemonic and story as creating “ethical space” (as suggested by Boje & Jørgensen, 2008), the relation with Arendt’s distinction is certainly of interest.
fields of intersubjectivity” (Jackson, 2006: 22). It is out of this sociality that the accountability of the storyteller and I would extend the political theorist as storyteller/storier of politics arises. For Arendt, all actions that produce stories occur in a responsive “web of correspondences” and relationships that generate affect and responsibility by our exposure to the judgment of others, over which there is no control, in which action “almost never fulfills its original intention” (Herzog, 2001; Arendt, 2006: 84-5). That is, the “disclosure of the ‘who’ through speech, and the setting of a new beginning through action, always fall into an already existing web where their immediate consequences can be felt” (Arendt, 1998: 184). 41 In Arendt’s storytelling metaphor for the phenomenal unfolding of our lives among others, judgement is the risk of our disclosure that comes with action (words and deeds) in these intersubjective world(s), and gives it a “heroic” quality, especially when one conscientiously commits to a ‘public’ existence. 42 Theorists as storytellers representing perspectives, phenomena and the connections between them, themselves make judgments and will be held to account on them. Though the story is never only theirs, telling is a kind of self-revelation, “demonstrating who I am” to the question posed to those making public appearance, “who are you?” (Kristeva, 2011: 15-6). Yet as mentioned earlier in regard to issues of Arendt’s typological thinking that implicates colonial subjectifications of Nativeness, we will inevitably be judged according what we are deemed to demonstrate in common or difference with others, though in the process of judgment according to this, others also indicate “what kind of person” they are (Arendt, 2006: 220).

Exercising a Methodological Ethic?

As the “disclosure of disclosures” the concerted or conscientious practice of storytelling becomes for Arendt the most appropriate “form for the recounting of the political,” because as Herzog suggests, more than a medium, stories “are, in themselves, a kind of political revelation”

41 Arendt suggests that:
“Human action, projected into a web of relationships where many and opposing ends are pursued, almost never fulfills its original intention; no act can ever be recognized by its author as his own with the same happy certainty with which a piece of work of any kind can be recognized by its maker. Whoever begins to act must know that he has started something whose end he can never foretell, if only because his own deed has already changed everything and made it even more un-predictable” (Arendt, 2006: 84).

42 This indicates what she calls the particularly “heroic” quality of a life specifically dedicated to disclosure through action and also of a public intellectual (Arendt, 2006: 156). In her praise of friend Karl Jaspers Arendt wrote “to take it upon oneself to answer before mankind for every thought means to live in that luminosity in which oneself and everything one thinks is tested” (Arendt, 1968b: 75).
Arendt held that theory should involve “exercises in political thinking,” reflexive and accepting the risks and uncertainties of action and speech in life unfolding as story. On this she modelled techniques rather than explicitly elucidated a methodology. Buckler suggests Arendt demonstrated several “mediations” in her work that give a sense of the “style and purpose of political theory” as she “goes about it” (Buckler, 2011a: 48), which conveyed a circumspect or tentative quality that comes across as inconsistency in commentators’ attempts to “normalize” it within established ideological fields. One mediation Buckler discusses is an epistemological one, discernable in the “dialogic modulation” of her voice against conceptual and analytic closures. The other is temporal and discernable in what he calls her “narrational” modulation against historical closure, conveying politics as “undetermined with respect to the past and unpredictable with respect to the future” (8-9). This temporal modulation is to employ as Arendt put it “neither history nor coercive logic as crutches” in an effort to explain, reconcile and resolve ‘unexpected’ events or action, rather than retain and reflect on the “shock of experience” and to assert “contingent meaning rather than absolute truth” (Arendt quoted in Buckler, 2011a: 8, 12, 40).

For Arendt undertaking exercises in political thought are about “illuminating” echoing elements between actions, occurrences, phenomena; drawing correspondences especially for where a single tradition can no longer ‘bridge the gap’ between past and future and provide shared meanings, or an ‘unexpected’ event or action reveals this has never pertained. Such exercises keep “the problem of truth...in abeyance; the concern is solely with how to move in this gap” and while these exercises “contain criticism as well as experiment” they “do not attempt to design some sort of Utopian future, and the critique of the past, of traditional concepts, does not intend to “debunk” ” (Arendt, 2006: 14).

I agree with Buckler’s assertion that Arendt’s “political ethics is grounded in the specific and distinctive experience of political agency itself, rather than being derived from any set of principles or reference points outside that mode of experience” (Buckler, 2011b: 117). So

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43 Herzog emphasizes a literate tradition of theory and storytelling here (the “writing of politics” and the “appearance on paper of political lives”). This can be contested as per my discussion in Chapter Six.

44 In chapter seven of his book, Buckler addresses this critique as apt if by this dimension is meant an abstract and so “pre-political” and universal “blueprint” of foundational precepts for judgement, and ideals for a just political order or constraints to “guide the conduct and organisation of political life in the light of an image of the best kind of polity.” This requires the support of a “corresponding social plan” that negates politics (165). Though she refers to the virtues in the model of the Greek polis and the ‘self-regulating’ judgement we are subject to in the public realm (Buckler, 2011a: 127), these suggest principles for emulation not replication.
leaving aside critiques on the absence of an otherwise *substantively articulated* ethical dimension in her work, I am interested in what she has modelled in terms of a methodological ethic and role for the political theorist. Buckler suggests that a number of broad concerns can be considered to animate Arendt’s specific critical standpoint, including the reductive marginalization of plurality by ideological positions (oppositional as much as status-quo); the prevailing rhetorical character of political discourse aligned to ideology (while resisting over-simplification and “casuistry,” upholding the importance of rhetoric against the view it is always “mendacious”); and the ascendance of social managerialism (Buckler, 2011a: 155-6).  

Buckler emphasizes her challenge to philosophy’s conventions of proximity, that political theory has a responsibility to be closer to the “experiential grounds of its object” (10) while critically engaging these grounds in ways that do not prevent the theorist from making judgments and claims on what *should* be as also a participant in political life. He points out Arendt’s issues with the notion of engaged or tactical scholarship that I am committed to, but also how she considered the interruptive quality of *conspicuous* thinking-through as an activity in dark times that seems to demand the expediency and pragmatism of other forms of action as Brown does. Asserting we are not bound *by* dark times in reflexive exercises of political thought *in/during* them, is itself a crucial intercession. This comes with an inevitable tension between the pull to a life of the mind with its “ineradicable element” of *some* withdrawal, and the “realization...that they can no longer be a bystander,” the burden of a reluctant public intellectual she herself felt, and with which I also strongly identify (160-2).

Exposure to the contingencies and judgments of others that comes with acting in speech or deed - as agents but not authors of “our [own] always unfinished story” – misunderstanding, misrepresentation or I would add appropriation, are the risks of exposure experienced by the theorist as a storier of politics (Buckler, 2011a: 154; 164). This publicity unfolds in a condition of plurality and another unresolvable tension I am attentive to is in what Buckler calls her appeal to the maintenance of a “common world that provides us with grounds of common sense and terms within which we can interact coherently” (49); where with “multi-vocality,” meaning depends on a commitment to “authentic communication” (165). Yet such an appeal to commonality can itself be colonizing and assimilative, mobilized against some particularly

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45 Paul Ricoeur assessed that aside from providing a lens to understand her contemporary situation Arendt’s work *does* contain a “normative principle by which to *judge* the eclipse of politics as the supreme expression of free action and to *condemn* all the attempts to dissolve politics into human engineering” (Ricoeur, 1990: 158).
where there is no such commitment to communication across difference. It is then a regard for the risks of disclosure that Arendt indicates an ethic in terms of “what may not be discounted in acting,” and so the commitment of the theorist to reflect on political experiences and convey their meaningfulness in a way that itself simulates (and stimulates) political thinking and not complete definition, solution or “unitary resolution” of the lone thinker (168).

There are several aspects of Buckler’s reading of Arendt that suggest issues of alignment with my own reading ‘with, contra’ and specific concerns on telling of Indigenous resurgence. He suggests that Arendt’s temporal mediation in her emphasis on situatededness in the present is an opposition to tradition and its function of continuity in general, due to her view of the ruin of dominant Euro-Modern categories, and that this tradition “cannot be repaired by spurious reinventions” (44), which contradicts my interpretation of her notion of distilling originary concepts in and for the present and future. The pearl diver does not quite wrench from the past as excavators would, contrary to Buckler’s reading, though the instrumentalizing de-contextualization of fragments and distillations Arendt describes can be contrasted with Indigenous perspectives on story I discuss in Chapter Six. In all however, I would dispute Arendt is “anti-tradition” (47) because she challenges her received traditions and their shattered pretences to determinism. In Arendt’s ‘wandering’ and ‘travelling’ theory, linked to her biography, was always the sense of a desire for a sense of some stability in rootedness, a shared world, a polis to which one belongs, to return to like a home-coming. This irresolvable pull like that between publicity and privacy in her work cannot be overlooked.

Buckler’s associated conception of Arendt’s critique of cultural foundationalism also relies on a concept of culture like tradition, as “an appeal to something beyond the political as a guarantee, in theory, of a political settlement, and so carries its own form of completion” (167). Here Buckler sees her turn to what he terms “pre-modern” storytelling practices as a way to remember and affirm, sustain meanings and link action and events through time, but deems this “ancient model” as limited in application to current times, an indication of the limit of his own scope in conceiving tradition, culture and story to his own Euro-Western location. More at issue is the interpretation of her methodological commitment to what he calls the “narrative form,” which he does not distinguish from story in the “pre-modern” traditions, so that he suggests she interrupts this form’s “impulse to capture” and reconciliation, citing the experience of
totalitarianism as “permanently resistant to settled meaning and absorption into a finished narrative” (45-46).

Buckler argues against Disch that while her storytelling “may place Arendt outside the contemporary mainstream (or much of it),” that storytelling “constitutes a definitive formal characterization of Arendt’s method is unconvincing” as she also uses “more familiar theoretical devices: she analyses concepts, draws distinctions, makes claims and draws inferences” (38). However this implicates a narrow conception of what constitutes story as narrative in the Arendtian sense and as separate from these “devices,” which does not attend to the distinction she makes. Pointing out that she does not only engage in what is dominantly recognized as story (the overtly intentional narrative form he refers to) misses that she also disrupts what is conventionally recognized as theorizing. Associating what good storytellers do with what political theorists should, includes acknowledgement that they tell stories, albeit tending to the Euro-Modern determinist, causal, completionist, authoritarian narrative mode of story that she critiques in application to understanding politics. In suggesting Arendt’s storytelling as making linkages between actions and events “for purposes of exemplifications that provoke and provide matter for ongoing reflection” (46), Buckler does not appreciate that this may align with storytelling principles in “pre-modern” (non Euro-Modern) traditions such as those she gestures to appreciatively, as I will discuss in Chapter Six.

Telling to Remember and Relate

In closing I can make several connected reiterations on my engagement with Arendt. One is to suggest storytelling, in the Arendtian sense contrasted with narrative, may help articulate a methodological ethic for political theorists in the Western mode engaging the challenge of Indigenous refusal to tell of resurgence. An ethic in the sense of cautions on action, but also perhaps positive guidance, a leading by example. As Disch puts it, “relative to abstract argument, testimonial, and illustration, the advantage of a story is that it can be both ambiguous and meaningful at once” (Disch 1993: 687-8). The political theorist as storier can recount (some) stories of actions, practices, occurrences or events associated with Indigenous resurgence and convey their meaningfulness and correspondences as such for a decolonial tactical imperative to communicate these. That is, without defining or explicating them nor prescriptively assessing
them in an authoritarian way that makes them *more* susceptible to harmful appropriations, though these may be impossible to prevent.

Against the determinism of a diagnostic and “characterological” drive Audra Simpson describes that I cited at the outset, storytelling can be non-definitive and pluralistic in the depiction of an event or action. This non-authorial approach is not to tell people *what* to think of politics but perhaps to model *how to think politically* - in emphasizing not *what* as an answer to *why*, but the specificities of *who*, to convey meaningfulness and encourage judgment based on context. This approach is not to discredit or disqualify other storying practices or modes of political communication like polemics, which *are* directive and explicit in forwarding the judgments of the teller who aims to convince. Nor especially witness testimonials to collective experiences, which Arendt viewed as crucial to establish shared “factual truths” (Arendt, 2006: 234) and Million described as paradigmatic since the Shoah. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, witnessing could be reconsidered in its relation with engaged scholarship and Indigenous experiences, not only in attesting to truths of colonial trauma and resiliency as Million focuses on, but resistance, resurgence and decoloniality.

Also, the Western mode of political theory is but one form of storying practice, written or oral exposition of words and deeds only one form of carrying and telling story. There is undeniable appeal in the notion of the intermediary and modulating capacity of the theorist as Buckler describes Arendt’s exemplifications (39), and this may also apply to storytellers of other kinds as traversers of emplacements and perspectives, between past and future, theory and praxis, thinking and action, critique and aspiration, experience and imagination, being and becoming. This despite my misgivings on still insinuating the theorist’s ability for un-situated and privileged understanding or their particular attunement to sensing patterns along vibrant threads in the web of relationality, though this may indeed be ascribed to the gifted storyteller. However while I do not engage Arendt on troubling but ultimately retaining the thinking/acting dichotomy as Buckler does, I am not suggesting theorizing as *substitution* for direct action in dark times as I will return to in my reflections in Chapter Eight. Political theory storying of events and action *is* distinct from the decolonial and refrigurative praxis itself undertaken by Indigenous activists/protectors/transformers ‘on the ground.’ However it can work in congruence with theirs and this is where scholarship in its still privileged positioning has a responsibility.
By way of transition I would like to reiterate the important rhetorical and theory-storying concept of *correspondences* that is taken up by Arendt and has parallels in Indigenous storytelling principles I discuss in Chapter Six, as I will frequently gesture to the transitive nature of stories providing relational linkages between phenomena, action, events, people and not least through time and memory. While I maintain distinctions as critical, engaging Arendt and Indigenous thinkers on story including Maracle initiated a shift in my emphasis from the boundary holding aspects of refusal, interventions *against* making connections such as analogizing the incommensurable as much as extraction. Stories’ ambiguous “dual potentiality to both reinforce or degrade” boundaries, to guide by mapping the lines of itineraries and also suggest how they can be transgressed (Jackson, 2002: 25-5) may not be discounted in telling. Yet telling requires we draw lines of correspondence and not only limit.

Arendt derives the term correspondences from the title of a poem by Baudelaire to describe poetic and sometimes metaphorical or *figurative* associations or affinities between phenomena and signs, felt experiences, occurrences, events, actions, processes (Arendt, 2007: 14) which the theorist as a storier engages in. However she raised questions on the tracing of determining continuums, particularly when those previously established are punctuated with unexpected instances or occurrences that appear as interruptions and defy their dominant sensibility – explanatorily, causally, morally. While preoccupied with what she deemed unprecedented phenomena like totalitarianism in this regard, Arendt also argued against the automations in mass society, of behaviourism and laws of History that count difference as *deviation*. She suggested that the “meaningfulness of everyday relationships is disclosed not in everyday life but in rare deeds, just as the significance of a historical period shows itself only in the few events that illuminate it” (Arendt, 1998: 42). She emphasizes attentiveness to this, though not to commemorate them as immovable and reifying monuments to a particular deed or moment (Herzog, 2001: 189).

For me, pluralistic and (re) creative flashpoints such as *Idle No More* as encapsulating both the defiance and illumination Arendt describes, raises questions on the part theorist-storiers play in committing them to collective memory for the present and future by linking them in a non-determinist continuity, and also marking their singularity as exemplars of patterns or in their uniqueness. In a settler-colonial theatre of apprehension, asserting and repeating a critical understanding of that winter’s meaningfulness and significance takes on a tactical imperative.
Actions are indeed ephemeral and only persist in the stories of “those who perform them” and those who recall them (Benhabib, 2003: 92). Indigenous political theorists in the Western mode might be understood as some of those tasked with such recollection, though we often also “perform” – that is, participate in - the actions we commit to memory. In an apprehensive colonial context this may require that we bear witness and testify not merely to the common “factual truths” of those actions and events but for the Indigenous experiences of their realities and potentialities, which may be censored or denied. For Arendt, rare deeds are only remembered as “exemplary moments” and storied as heroic following them (Kristeva, 2001: 17).

As I will suggest in the following two chapters, theorist-storiers can help to recount actions such as those of INM as in a way heroic albeit not individuated. That is, by contrast to colonial remembrance that may cast that winter in 2012-13 as failed movement or lost momentum, another narrative of victimhood. That is, to draw correspondences not as plots to complete a narrative closure, but perspectival story lines of which many are possible; and not in a role as removed thinking spectators but in acting as witnesses for decolonial transformation, to story for resurgence as critical for our present and possible futures.

In our telling to remember and relate we must consider any “characterological” labels such as resistance, regeneration, self-determination and indeed now resurgence to ultimately be undeterminable. That is, not beholden on which have and may, coalesce into dominating and over-determined discourse through persistent use and not remain liberatory, a concern with vanguardism and of Indigenous feminist perspectives I have touched on previously in Chapters Two and Three. Yet as Arendt worried on the malleability of a common political lexicon and the importance of making distinctions where factual truths were at stake in conditions of oppression, we might come to agree resurgence can still be considered to carry a particular meaningfulness articulated by those initiating resurgence thinkers described in Chapter One, though they are not the authors and in control of its discourse as it is engaged and interpreted by others. As theorist-storiers, we can choose our language self-consciously and carefully, without being logocentric or absolutist and unchanging in our commitment to certain characterizations of an action or movement for all future tellings or recollections.46

46 Indeed it is notable that Leanne Simpson considered not even using the word resurgence in her most recent book, but that she decided this is currently politically important (L. Simpson, 2017: 47).
As structural colonial power seeks to stifle action and speech, coloniality in knowledge acquisition and consumption operates not only to eliminate but also assimilate or deform our stories into inert narratives and classifications. But stories keep us alive as peoples and polities, sustain our worlds, stories communicate who we are. Indigenous refusal is responsive to the vulnerability of this disclosure and the imperative to tell despite the risks. This is not a refusal to disclose our selves through action in deed or speech that can be interpreted and judged by anyone, as they will, nor a refusal to publically tell any stories in colonized common spaces of appearance and enunciation. Rather it is refusal to retell all stories or elements of stories in these cohabitated but unhomely - unshared and asymmetrical, dominated spaces and realms imposed over Indigenous places; and also to concede to any demand to explain or define action or stories as things under unjust scrutiny, unequal terms of disclosure or otherwise narrativize them in ways amenable to terminal histories or settling discourses of politics. The deferral to movement or mobility instead is not to reject the existence of Indigenous alternative foundations or ‘homes’ in culture, tradition, polities and peoples that have never been immobile, never idle, however.

In this chapter I have sought to think with, and contra Arendt. With her articulation of political theory as a kind of storytelling and potentially of a form that avoids thingifying dynamism, contingency and plurality in the experience of political action and its unexpected events, contra her typological thinking that cannot quite escape Eurocentrism and depoliticizes activities associated with Nativness, despite her own non-conformism and refusals of categorization. So Arendt is for me a politically and intellectually compelling and sometimes infuriating figure in her exemplifications of struggles in and with Western philosophy and political theory, an insider-outsider, a liminal thinker who does not give easy answers. In this perhaps as she described Walter Benjamin, she too is ultimately one of “the unclassifiable ones, that is, those whose work neither fits the existing order nor introduces a new genre that lends itself to future classification” (Arendt, 2007: 3). And for this, with her reluctance to disclose herself but willingness to risk this for the love of her world in dark times, I will always consider her role model and kindred. I will always relate to and with, Arendt.
CHAPTER SIX

Weaving An Indigenous Storytelling Ethic for Political Theory

“The weaver’s hands move, and the basket takes form so that the story can be known. And the baskets keep talking...”

– Greg Sarris, from *Keeping Slug Woman Alive* (Sarris, 1993: 61)

Warp and Weft

*Hannah finds herself in an unfamiliar landscape. From beyond the horizon, a woman approaches carrying a cedar basket in her arms.*

Lisa Disch has suggested that although appeals to storytelling in social theory scholarship has been commonplace since the 1980s following the “narrative turn” (Lessard, Johnson & Webber, 2011: 7; Czarniawska, 2004: 1-3) and even an “almost obligatory gesture” for those defying academic impartiality and detachment, Arendt can be credited with bringing storytelling into Western political theory discourse three decades earlier (Disch, 1996: 1). Indeed as Jackson suggests “given the academic industry that has been devoted to the subject of knowledge and narrative since Hannah Arendt’s death in 1975,” it is tempting to consider that she set an “agenda that we have unwittingly yet faithfully followed for the last thirty years, and that, moreover, the numerous authors who have contributed to this industry share a single genealogy, traceable to her” (Jackson, 2001: 252). Chapter Five can be read as an engagement with a theorist whose work can absolutely be acknowledged for bringing a conception of storytelling that had been sublimated in Euro-Modern thought back to its surface. Yet storytelling has always and continues to be a vital and present form of knowledge (re)production in Indigenous societies, in which there was never a “narrative turn” or a turn away from story. The understanding of stories’ reflection and negotiation of what Arendt calls active life and being in the world(s) with others (the field of politics) is also not novel within Indigenous oral traditions.

This chapter is intended as facilitating a meeting of sorts for Indigenous thinkers on story and Arendt as a liminal figure in Euro-Modern political theory who reached beyond its confines for ways to critically address atrocity and the seemingly inexplicable, without seeking to solve
the contingencies and uncertainties of life together. Yet the final sections of Chapter Five considered how Arendt gestured to a methodological ethic that might mitigate the problem of colonial apprehension (its risks and the fears it promulgates), and so can be read in dialogical relation with Indigenous perspectives here. That is, Arendt showed Western political theory to be a form of storytelling and how it could be self-consciously undertaken as such, the Indigenous philosophers and intellectuals I engage here show storytelling to be theory - offering principles and processes of inquiry to perceive correspondences and forward critical understandings of common worlds, public words and deeds, events, phenomena. As Dian Million puts it, “Story is Indigenous theory.” While she does not employ the Arendtian rhetorical distinction between non-authorial story and narrative as I do, the work story does as she describes could speak directly with Arendt:

“Narratives seek inclusion; they seek the nooks and crannies of experiences filling cracks and restoring order. Narratives lay boundaries. Narratives give orphans homes. Narratives both make links and are the links that have been made. Narratives are our desire to link one paradigmatic will to knowledge to discursive and material projects that have consequences. Narratives serve the same function as any theory, in that they are practical vision. Not least, Indigenous narratives are also emotionally empowered. They are informed with the affective content of our experience. The felt experience of Indigenous experience in these Americas is in our narratives and that has made them almost unrecognizable to a Western scholarship that imagines itself objective” (Million, 2014: 35 emphasis mine).

As Sarah Hunt has suggested, in looking to get “beyond the ontological limits” of Indigeneity’s legibility and legitimacy within Western scholarship, “a number of Indigenous scholars have pointed to stories, art, and metaphor as important transmitters of Indigenous knowledge,” with stories and storytelling “widely acknowledged as culturally nuanced ways of knowing, produced within networks of relational meaning-making” (Hunt, 2014: 27). Though as Hunt indicates, there are multitudinous Indigenous resources on story and a number on storytelling in scholarly methodology, I will ground this chapter in Stó:lō educator Q’um Q’um Xiiem Jo-Ann Archibald’s articulation of principles of “Indigenous storywork” from a Coast
Salish perspective. I have chosen to do so for a few reasons. While forming part of the contextual backdrop for all Indigenous methodologists, not all centre story and storytelling as the structuring concept of their work as Archibald does. A Coast Salish perspective is also relevant to the emplacement of the stories of Idle No More I experienced and the learning on story I am engaged in where I do my work here in Lekwungen and W’SÁNEĆ territories. More, Archibald’s emphasis on principles moves toward articulating a storytelling or storying methodological ethic for political theory in recounting Indigenous stories, in a positive and more contextually specific sense I could only gesture toward in the second half of Chapter Five. I will sketch these principles through Archibald as she articulates them in her Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit (2008), elaborating with the great Stó:lō orator and theorist-storier Lee Maracle from her confluent collection of textualized oratories Memory Serves (2015), in which she names Archibald’s Storywork as complementary.

I will also draw on other Indigenous thinkers on story from across Turtle Island in this elaboration, many that Archibald also engages such as Greg Sarris (Pomo) who are scholarly interlocutors of Elder storytellers and philosophers of the oral tradition. Some exceptions from an Indigenous (net) work on story are made, including a helpful piece Archibald cites by her colleague, educator Joe Sheridan and work by other settler-Canadian literary and media theorists where storytelling in a common and colonized public is concerned. I proceed here as I do throughout, with the view that citation and quotation do not necessarily reveal an acquisitive collector’s approach to knowledge in fragments (which Arendt spoke to of Benjamin’s penchant for quotation) that creates a fetishized pastiche; but in drawing correspondences and highlighting affinities, expresses a collaborative way of telling that reflects and does not seek to obscure how we learn through the storying of and with others. This is why I call the knowledge production of diverse Indigenous thinkers a (net) work with linkages in principles and patterns rather than a body of work as though this were contiguous and interchangeable. Indeed the individualist authorial and authoritative citational practices of literate Western scholarship might be

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1 The Stó:lō comprise nineteen Coast Salish First Nations governments and communities in the Fraser River region who speak Halq’eméylem and are members of two tribal councils, The Stó:lō Nation and Stó:lō Tribal Council as well as six First Nations who are not members. They have relations with a number of downriver and estuary Coast Salish First Nations including the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Tsawwassen in the present Greater-Vancouver area who speak other dialects of Halkomelem.
considered as part of a causal, linear narrative-historicizing tendency in Euro-Modernity as a means to validate knowledge and ‘factual information’ – to authorize them.  

To briefly summarize, I will begin with Archibald’s discussion of what she calls storywork principles from oral tradition and some relational and pedagogical patterns of Indigenous storytelling across contexts they reflect. I will then turn to the challenge of applying these principles and patterns to a literate Euro-Modern scholarly tradition of theory that has disavowed itself as conveying and making meaning bystorying. This will be followed with an extended consideration of the tactical imperative to tell certain stories of Indigenous political action and movement in certain ways in Western theory, drawing specifically on questions of witnessing and storying for decolonial transformation. The Salish practice of witnessing at gatherings will be considered here for guidance, though I must defer to those who know from within this practice if this is an apt link I am making. While Indigenous storytelling epistemologies are increasingly considered in thinking through truth and reconciliation processes and testimonials to colonial violence and traumas, I am interested in recalling, recounting and remembering experiences of resistance, regeneration and resurgence, though reflections on the risks of the former are helpful to consider those that concern me.

I will then consider how a wholistic sensing of Indigenous oral or storied tradition is necessary to appreciate the extent of Indigenous resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations’ challenge to Western political theory scholarship. This sensing disrupts ethno-logical divisions between activities of storytelling, theoretical knowledge (re) production, artistic, making and subsistence or economic practices and political action. This can be articulated with reference to Nuu-chah-nulth law scholar Johnny Mack’s discussion of the

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2 As Neal McLeod (Nêhiyaw) has suggested while this tradition has bibliography and footnotes, his documents how ideas are obtained “by acknowledging how one came to know a story” (2007: 16). I think that identifying and locating our interlocutors as such is not necessarily a deference to authorship (as ‘originary’ sources) as much as respectful and responsible acknowledgment of who they are against an anonymity often ascribed to ‘Indigenous knowledges’ to render these as resources up for grabs while retaining a genealogical privilege for the ‘Western canon’ and the naturalizing anonymity of the Euro-Modern episteme as ‘common sense.’ Māori scholar Carl Mika offers an insightful observation that is worth quoting in full below regarding citational practice:

“I speculate that indigenous philosophy, as it appears in the literature, does not draw heavily on particular individuals so vehemently as Western philosophy does. Written indigenous philosophy engages instead more with, and drills deeply into, a fundamental cultural phenomenon - not through the lens of another individual, but with the writer bringing together the spheres of lived experience, intellect, and the unknown. Whilst this difference between the two could just be the result of a cultural nuance, to the indigenous thinker it may also signal a divergence in focus, where dominant (not all) Western scholarship defaults to the prized and comfortable zone of previous thinkers. If my suspicions here are credible, then thought in this vein is barred from entering into the endless possibilities that a thing offers. One just draws on the same paradigm to tell another story” (Mika, 2015: 1140).
refiguring power of “storied practices” and *storying praxis*. In all, I do not purport to synopsise Indigenous oral or storytelling tradition here presented as monolithic and singular nor engage in detailed ethnographic exposition of specific traditions. As Sarris suggests any oral tradition is impossible to summate, as its territory is as vast as the lifeworlds “which it gives life to and from which in turn it takes life,” and cannot be generalized, as each tradition is specific to and inseparable from particular peoples and places (Sarris, 1993: 47). However we might begin to weave a storytelling ethic for political theory from patterns in their diverse strands and possibly some in Western traditions such as Arendt’s, as wefts in the warp of story through which these distinct but in many ways parallel perspectives are woven.

**Indigenous Storywork Principles and Patterns**

For Archibald the term Indigenous *storywork* signifies that stories and storytelling are “to be taken seriously.” This signification comes from the sense of how the English word *work* is taken up in Stó:lō gatherings to refer to the gravity of the ceremonial practices and relational processes undertaken by all those present as attentive and full participants, not mere spectators. Archibald conveys that at such gatherings “usually, the cultural work is witnessed by the guests through the oral tradition, which includes speech, story and song” (Archibald, 2008: 4). Formal witnessing is one way in which this work is organized by the protocols associated with the tradition as it is in Stó:lō and also shared across Salish communities: at a gathering or major event the host’s designated speaker calls on distinguished guests to carefully watch and remember proceedings, to be able to disseminate the stories through the territories and as memory keepers they may help settle disputes between different accounts in future (R. Thomas, 2005: 243-4; Carlson, 1997: 184; Boiselle, 2017: 176). It is pertinent to clarify here that what is called the oral tradition only at its most surface sense refers to a body of customary “speech, story and song” and is still limited when extended to “all aspects of spoken...society” (Carlson,
1997: 182) including all “speech categories” like “talk” (Sarris, 1993: 18) and speech acts, including silences. As I will consider further, a more expansive or wholistic view of what constitutes Indigenous orality, story and storytelling and not just their direct articulations or “verbal-vocal manifestations” (Ortiz, 1992: 7) is important.  

For now it suffices to say that while Archibald evokes this wholistic understanding in Indigenous Storywork, she focuses on principles pertaining to storytelling exchanges in their most direct sense and sense-ability. The principles around storytelling exchanges inform protocols like honorary witnessing, which I will return to in its possible pertinence to Western scholarly theory recounting Indigenous political movement in a settler-colonial theatre of apprehension. These protocols establish responsibilities and affirm the ability and authority to tell, hear, or access and make meaning from stories. Those associated with telling particular stories and what venue or audience is appropriate to it, shifts with the story’s context, its setting and form, some having guardians and requiring a social or ceremonial initiation to establish a relationship that can lead to permission for re-telling.

Archibald describes two forms of story that provide an important distinction for my discussion of Indigenous storywork principles for Euro-Western mode political theory. These are traditional and experiential stories, which she relates to a Stó:lō distinction between sxwōxwiyám and sqwélqwel. Sxwōxwiyám stories are set in mythic time “when the world was different, its people...like both humans and animals of the present age,” and often tell how things came to be now (Suttles quoted in Carlson, 1997: 185). Some of these stories are sacred and tend to be formalist in their requirements for telling. Sqwélqwel stories describe a people’s living histories, personal life experiences and anecdotes of specific incidents and events or “news” (Archibald, 2008: 84). These are not generally exchanged in a prescribed or formal manner in specific settings but most often in everyday talk, though they have included what can be termed

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5 I struggled with the appropriate words here because for example literal and its synonyms connote as actual, non-figurative/non-metaphorical – which suggest any other senses are the converse. See Chapter Eight.

6 Archibald uses “ownership” of stories as is common but I prefer guardianship as cueing the relational conception of knowledge that is implicated in Indigenous storytelling practice around stories of broader collective or ‘public’ significance (see also Wilson, 2008: 114; McLeod, 2007). Emberley reads four forms in Archibald, as sacred, historical, “those dealing with cultural traditions” and life experiences/testimonials and considers the different conception of ownership and circulation in terms of kinship and gift economies (2013: 152-3).

7 That is these are set before and with the arrival of the Transformers, beings that “set things in order for people of the present age” (Suttles quoted in Carson, 1997). Carlson et al stress that these accounts of origins are not creation stories in that they assume the existence of prior worlds, reflecting an awareness that “their lifetime experiences are only a few of the many which have come before, those which will come after, and those which are continually occurring around them” (Carson, 1997: 186). Please note for these citations that the Carlson edited text was a collaborative composition commissioned by the Stó:lō Heritage Trust guided by the nation’s knowledge keepers.
testimonials in relation to witnessing, as I will consider further (see Emberley, 2013: 152).\(^8\) The possible perception of the relative currency or ‘realness’ of sqwèlqwel is an example of how these descriptions are a simplification of a distinction that is really “complex and subtle,” as the realities that each describe can exist simultaneously and tend to intermingle, the boundaries being variable and porous (Carlson, 1997: 185, 193-4).

Arguing political theory as a kind of storytelling that should be made conscientious of course already disrupts the Euro-Modern division of history (as objective archive of previously experienced “factual truths” in Arendt’s phrase) and myth (as creative remembrance derived from human imagination), which certainly is not rigid in Indigenous theory-story traditions (Sarris, 1993: 32). This is especially so in the linear temporality implied by perceiving their purview as ‘the past’ in the causal search for origins and signs of ‘progress’ in which much Indigenous lived memory is classified as myth by those prescribing to dominant Western historicist and secular terms (McLeod, 2007: 18). So distinguishing traditional and experiential genres here is not to essentialize their divisions or ‘fundamental structures’ and otherwise delimit and isolate them in actuality nor is it to identify them as solely Indigenous story forms. Rather it is to cue a broad conceptual grouping of differences in terms of form or genre (subject matter and style) but most crucially contexts of generation and interpretation. Like the Arendtian distinction of the Euro-Modern narrative form of story from others, this distinction is rhetorically helpful to establishing premises for an Indigenous storytelling/storying ethic for political theory. I will consider this distinction further but am setting it out here to one, disrupt any notion that ‘Indigenous stories’ only refer to the traditional forms which have been rendered ethno-culturally folkloric in the popular Euro-Modern imaginary and two, to signal that both traditional and experiential stories be kept in mind with the following discussion of storywork principles and patterns, that “most of the guidelines apply equally” (Carlson, 1997: 193).

\(^8\) Margaret Kovach (Nêhiyâw, Saulteaux) suggests a similar broad distinction between two story forms among diverse Indigenous traditions (Kovach, 2009: 95). Leanne Simpson indicates one in Anishnaabeg oral tradition between Aadizookaanag (sacred and animate) and Dbaajimowinan (histories, news, personal experiences and animal tales) though they are “interrelated forces” (Simpson, 2013; Doerfler, Sinclair & Stark, 2013: xvii-xviii). Cree Elder Jerry Saddleback refers to three levels of story in his own tradition, sacred stories that depend on initiation, legendary stories that carry a lesson which storytellers adapt to their own and their listeners’ experience and those that relate personal or others’ experiences (Saddleback discussed by Wilson, 2008: 98 see also Cree Elder Wâpaskwan Louis Sunchild in Lightning, 1990: 229).
Archibald names seven principles of Indigenous storywork: respect, responsibility,
reciprocity, reverence, wholism, interrelatedness and synergy.9 Rather than defining storywork as
a set of ‘rules’ and expounding on each principle as though they could be isolated as with the
inclinations of Western literary theory, they animate her discussion, overlapping like strands of
cedar bark, she weaves them into a unique “storybasket,” bringing patterns forward against the
rich background of her situation and life stories (Archibald, 2008: 153; Emberley, 2013: 147).
Some of the guidance her basket offers around these principles is to have respect for the
teachings embedded in stories and for cultural protocols that honour the “authority and expertise
of Elder teachers” (36; 41); to take responsibility for the effect of stories on others as medicine,
that may heal or harm when made public (19; 27), for keeping the teachings contained in stories
alive (29; 80) and for “the limits of permission” (44); to see the need for balance and engage
reciprocity, to receive and return what you learn from stories (28); to measure one’s speech and
not be wasteful with but revere words and language as they carry a people’s “accumulated
knowledge,” values and vision (Maracle, 2015: 161, also 37-8; Archibald, 2008: 19, 26) - and
once uttered they cannot be taken back (Armstrong quoted in Archibald, 2008: 27). Appreciating
that interrelatedness constitutes our existence and wellness hinges on a wholistic vision of the
integrality of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical dimensions of experience (10-11).
This provides a context for storywork, making us mindful of the “synergistic interaction between
story teller, listener and story” (33), where a story is told, the way it is told and how one listens
or receives the story (84).
Archibald gave her storybasket woven of these seven principles away in the Stó:lō
tradition, to those who may find it useful. I receive it gratefully here. I will now briefly outline
some connective patterns I discern in Archibald’s storybasket that trace an Indigenous
conceptualization of storytelling. These patterns speak to a methodological ethic for Western
political theory in recounting experiential stories of resistance and resurgence, and align with the
weft laid by Arendt I traced in the previous chapter. I will thicken the strands of these wefting
patterns in the following section, which engages some pertinent distinctions of oral from literate
traditions of storytelling.
The first pattern of Indigenous storytelling is pedagogical, how storytelling (re) produces
knowledge or makes meaning. Stories transmit a people’s teachings - their “values, beliefs,
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Archibald uses the spelling holism but I prefer wholism (see Absolon, 2011).

282


lessons and understandings...from generation to generation” (Archibald, 2008: 1), offering guidance on how to live a good life (12). Through transmission between people and generations (past, present and future) traditional stories change, are recreated continuously but also have a continuity or stability in retaining the core teachings that they carry (Urion, 1991; Archibald, 2008: 18; Kovach, 2009: 94; McLeod: 2007: 15-16). These stories have a life or vital spirit of their own that emanates from these teachings and this is kept alive by their retelling or repetition (Archibald, 2008: 97, 149). Anishnaabeg storyteller Leanne Simpson describes them as seeds and inheritance or kipimoojikewin (what “we carry with us” Simpson, 2013). Good storytellers relate stories in a way that they “become a teacher” for their listeners to make meaning with, rather than the teller themselves giving direction as Snuneymuxw Elder Ellen White suggests (quoted Archibald, 2008: 138; 17). These teacher stories prompt listeners to self-examination, to reflect on and take action (85, 94; Corntassel et al., 2009: 139) but do not necessarily didactically instruct explicitly nor convey a perspective of the storyteller unequivocally explicitly (17). Commenting on the storytelling of Elder Alfred Manitopeyes, Linda Akan makes a similar point of Salteaux pedagogy wherein some things are left out or unsaid, that “a “good talk” will not always give answers, but will invite students to do their own work” (Akan, 1999: 29). The guidance offered by teachings in a story for a good life and mind must still be interpreted by the listener and not only with the immediacy of the first exchange. As Archibald relates of learning in oral traditions, “since stories can be heard again and again, the meanings that one makes or doesn’t make from them can happen at any time. One does not have to give meaning right after hearing a story, as with the question-and-answer pedagogical approach” (24-25; see also Turner, 2006: 51). However a “need to explicate meaning” to varying degrees depends on the readiness and capacity of listeners to make their own from stories and a good storyteller must gauge this (Archibald, 2008: 77, also 90). This may correspond to the listener’s experiences or life stage (Boiselle, 2017: 193). Pomo medicine woman and basket weaver Mabel McKay’s admonishment of her nephew and biographer Greg Sarris conveys this beautifully: “Don’t ask me what it means, the story. Life will teach you about it, the way it teaches you about life” (McKay quoted in Sarris, 1993: 5 also Archibald, 2008: 153).

10 Lee Maracle, also Stó:lō prefers not to use the word teachings as she sees it as a “diminished” word assigned to Indigenous knowledge as wisdom and instead uses “co-equivalents to how Europe names itself” such as the Halokomelem term si’yam for knowledge keepers rather than elders (Maracle, 2015: xiii). I have chosen to follow Archibald’s phrasing here.
The second pattern of Indigenous storytelling I discern in Archibald’s basket is closely wrapped about the pedagogical pattern, and this is relationality. Storytelling is a knowledge practice that is predicated in and mediated by interdependence, and is reciprocal, communal or collaborative between story, tellers and listeners or audience. This interdependence is not anthropocentric but corresponds to a sociality and kinship that extends (to varied degrees of proximity) between the self, family, communities, nation, ancestors and descendants, human and non-human peoples and beings, animate and inanimate matter, lands and waters of a living earth and the spirit or incorporeal realms. Storytelling transmits knowledge of our relatedness, showing us who we are by drawing connections between us, and passing on the teachings of how to carry out our subsequent responsibilities. And stories are not only generated and conveyed between living human people but all our relations. Tsalagi storyteller Thomas King advises this common exhortation of “All My Relations” is not only a reminder of kinship, locating who we are in the world(s) with others but an “encouragement for us to accept the responsibilities we have within this universal family by living our lives in a harmonious and moral manner” (King quoted in Archibald, 2008: 42).

The interdependencies in which story unfolds is not assimilative but upholds our distinctiveness, as it is our responsibility to enact and ensure respect, reciprocity and continuous renewal of good relations. Cree methodologist Shawn Wilson calls this “relational accountability,” forwarding relationality as a shared aspect of Indigenous conceptions of both being and knowing (ontology and epistemology), which are inextricable (Wilson, 2008: 73-6). Relational accountability is then a kindred aspect of Indigenous ethics and ways of doing (axiology and methodology) across different traditions (Wilson, 2008: 7, 97-122). We are accountable for our actions and our words as they reverberate through the web of relationship for

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11 For example, Little Bear and Archibald speaks of radiant concentric circles of relationality nation-community-family-oneself (Little Bear, 2000: 79; Archibald, 2008: 11). On interdependence see for example the Nuu-chah-nulth theory of tsawalk (one) articulated by Umeek E. Richard Atleo (Umeek, 2007) and Gregory Cajete in his Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence (2000).

12 This is not to say that this conveyance of story is in verbal language or otherwise works like the predominant modes of human communication. Nor does all communication involve or pertain to human beings. Sarris recounts a humorous exchange between Elder Mabel McKay and a student in a basket weaving demonstration at Stanford University who asked if she spoke to plants. Mabel answered - “yes, if I have to use them.” The student then asked “do plants talk to one another?” to which she replied “I suppose.” “What do they say?” the student responded. Mabel laughs. “How do I know? Why would I be listening?” (McKay quoted in Sarris, 1993: 23-24; also 1994: 1-3).

13 Wilson points out that this is reflected in the verb-predominance of Indigenous languages (indicating relationships) as I note elsewhere, rather than nouns as thingifying, implicating an inherent nature as though these things may not have different relationships with others than us (Wilson, 2008: 73).
good or ill, and we must strive toward actions and words that promote balance. Relational accountability can then be considered a key concept for a scholarly theory-storying ethic that aligns with what Arendt suggests must be accounted for in the risks and imperative of disclosure of the self by action in speech and deed.

**Orality and Literacy: Mismatched Patterns?**

I would here like to turn to issues in joining patterns of Indigenous storytelling from an oral tradition I have introduced with those of the genres in a literate tradition engaged in Euro-Western scholarship, as Archibald outlines them. These make meaning or produce knowledge - and so derive authority and make judgement - in distinct ways linked to their expressive form (or “discourse pattern” as Shawn Wilson calls it). Archibald begins her storywork weaving by considering the conflicts of these patterns through a traditional story of the Trickster Coyote who through misadventure loses his eyes and must find replacements, which through repeated attempts at gathering those of others, are invariably mismatched (Archibald, 2008: 8-10 also Archibald, 1990 & Urion, 1999). These mismatched eyes become a metaphor for the search for balance between Indigenous oral and Western literate traditions, among other things (13). As settler-Canadian educator Joe Sheridan puts it, the oral and literate distinction is not meant to suggest a “cultural determinist” stance that Indigenous peoples are strictly and uniformly oral and settlers, literate. Like that between traditional and experiential stories, this distinction is meant as a rhetorical “shorthand reference” important to establish context for the connected concerns of “history and legitimacy” in their matching (Sheridan, 1991: 23). That is the historical associations of orality with Indigenous societies and literacy with settler society and their hierarchical valuation in terms of knowledge and authority.\(^{14}\) The common conflicts Archibald and diverse Indigenous thinkers sketch are not unlike the issues Benjamin and Arendt saw with the authorial/authoritarian narrative form or pattern of storytelling they associate with Euro-Modernity.

The first issue I can unpack further in matching patterns is in regard to relationality. Relational accountability is not an abstract or immaterial philosophic proposition for Indigenous

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\(^{14}\) I am aware here that I am presenting generalities in regard to Euro-Modern literate traditions from the experiences of Indigenous theorist. For a comprehensive treatment of the role that privileging the norms of these traditions played in the colonization of the New World see Walter Mignolo’s *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* (1995).
peoples. In Kiowa storyteller N. Scott Momaday’s words, it is a “moral act of imagination” that constitutes an understanding of our reality conveyed through sensory perceptions of our relationship with the “physical world” (Momaday, 1976: 80; see also Maracle, 2015: 241). A close interdependence with the land is perceived, which then suggests what are “appropriate” or “natural” actions in this relationship (Momaday, 1976: 83). Sheridan suggests a distinction of oral from literate ways of making meaning, involves the level of sensorial and embodied awareness or mediation of, felt experience of the physical environment. Despite valuing the legible, materially representable and say-able as knowledge, literate traditions privilege “conception over perception” while oral traditions “recognize abstraction for what it is: abstraction” (26). Indigenous oral peoples absolutely also have a conceptual or symbolic imagination but are “able to silence the mind to hear the territory” rather than map it (30). The moral judgments on responsibilities and conduct Momaday refers to are conceptualized but grounded in relationship with the land, whose names carry a people’s stories, with implications for our action or movements. This sense is implied when Coulthard and Simpson use the phrase “grounded normativity” to refer to Indigenous ways of being-doing-knowing in the non-divisive sense suggested by Wilson, an “onto-epistemology” (Martineau, 2015) as will emerge further in Chapter Seven. The perception of relationality with the non-human and land leading to an ethical awareness is crucial to Indigenous storywork principles from an oral tradition (for a beautiful description of this see Maracle, 2015: 25, 236). Sheridan speaks to the resulting appreciation of balance and “economy of expression” (Sheridan, 1991: 30), quoting Lakota Chief Luther Standing Bear that Elders’ increased attachment to the earth in aging “allows [them] to know when to talk, and further to know when to listen and when another person is ready for these lessons” (Sheridan, 1991: 27).

15 Anthropologist Michael Jackson notes of emplaced Indigenous epistemologies that “patterns of bodily movement to and fro within a humanized environment inform patterns of thought,” citing Michael de Certeau on the “spatial syntax” of stories “partly because they encode the correct itineraries and protocols governing movement within a social environment, partly because they provide ‘delinquent’ and tactical clues as to how boundaries may be infringed, gulf crossed, and movement varied” (Jackson, 2002: 32). Keith Basso considers how Apache people know to embody by “word and deed” the “moral reality” carried in their place-names that recall particular stories from the past (quoted in Brooks, 2002: 182):

“Compressed into dynamic metaphors, Apache toponyms prescribe specific behavioral solutions for individuals in moral crisis. Yet in summoning one moment from the past while letting others lie unspoken, Apache place-names are themselves acts of voice and silence, of narrative assertion and omission, of inclusion or exclusion in the interest of Indigenous identity maintenance” (Brooks, 2002: 182).
Another issue of matching Indigenous oral and Euro-Modern literate traditions is in regard to the pedagogical pattern of Indigenous storytelling I sketched, especially pertinent to political theory’s possible replication of colonial apprehension. This is the demand for explicitness and the expectation of the storyteller to declaratively instruct from their own interpretation or analysis, to be directive to listeners in meaning making from stories. Archibald associates this with the “essayist form” of scholarly writing, where this demand and expectation is associated with rigor, coherence and credibility (Archibald, 2008: 7). Yet asking questions of the teller or story’s intent is considered “invasive” in Salish oral tradition (Maracle, 2015: 229). Such questioning marks how disrespectful “academic outsiders” attempt to assess, extract and order authoritative narratives from Indigenous storytellers (56), treating them as ethnographic informants tasked with answering their questions - as Mabel McKay had been for over 40 years.¹⁶ Carl Urion (Dearborn River Métis) suggests an “explicit statement of positions” in storytelling is considered shallow or “elementary” in Indigenous oral traditions and is not how a knowledge keeper’s authority in a learning relationship is gauged (Urion, 1999: 10). Respect in a teaching storytelling exchange involves the storyteller assessing listeners’ readiness for certain stories and levels of understanding, as Standing Bear indicated, acknowledging their capacity for and inevitable interpretation from their own distinct standpoint and experience. For their part the learner/listener must trust the storyteller’s authority in this assessment and be willing to actively participate in the process of meaning making. As Maracle sets out with relevance to witnessing, the work of listening is not passive or objective but a “huge emotional commitment...to sort, to imagine the intent, to evaluate, to process and to seek the connection to the words offered so that remembering can be fair and just” (Maracle, 2015: 21). Story is directional in the guidance offered but not directive as Maracle consistently reminds. As I will further discuss below, the storyteller and listener can be wrong and do harm in their judgements and remembering but accepting this possibility and so vulnerability is central to relational accountability – a risk of disclosure that Arendt also speaks to.

Indigenous cyclical and (re) iterative (circular repetitions), wholistic and cumulative but open-ended ways of making meaning through story is reflected in the style of their telling. This includes the wandering around and through a subject, pauses, digressions and punctuations by

¹⁶ Though according to Sarris she always “fought typification” and so was “inscrutable to them and maddening in her replies,” pleasingly being described by one such anthropologist as “impossible to crack” (Sarris, 1993: 32; 52; 26 also 45; also Sarris, 1994).
jokes, song, drum and poetry and an emotive expressiveness of the oral storyteller, a style that can only be evoked rather than replicated when textualized (Maracle, 2015: xii) – as with extensive footnotes! This style can conflict with a linear narrative exposition and explanation that Western causal logic may demand (Akan, 1999: 39). As Laguna Pueblo orator and storyteller Leslie Marmon Silko has related to her listeners, rather than being taken from point a to b to c “Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider’s web – with many little threads radiating from the centre, crisscrossing one another. As with the web, the structure emerges as it is made, and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made” (Silko, 1981: 54). The origin of a story is not locatable in the teller alone as its sole author and one story is always the “beginning of many” and so will never truly end. Indigenous storytelling according to Marmon Silko is an opening rather than a closure and also has the “dynamic of bringing things together, of interrelating things” rather than “fragmenting” stories and experiences to find meaning (Silko, 1981: 63-64). In emphasizing its facilitation of social cohesion and relationship between communities, Maracle has called this “concatenation” – a linking together like a chain (often evoked in treaty discourse) or web of kinship, which has affinity with Benjamin and Arendt’s view of poetic correspondence and the temporal opening this can also effect in drawing relationship between past, present and future.

Linking is crucial to stories carrying intergenerational collective memory, to histories. In his Cree Narrative Memory (2007), Neal McLeod describes how in his Nêhiyaw oral tradition the past is considered brought into the present through story, it “links grandparents with their grandchildren” and puts “our singular lives into a larger context,” with homeland and kinship (wâhkôhtowin) grounding responsibilities for transmission. In this tellers express humility as conduits rather than owners of story with “power over” them, acknowledging their limitations of understanding and interpretation, as these are open-ended (McLeod, 2007: 11, 16). Though stable this tradition and so memory are also dynamic, the conception of their “reliability” not understood as a record replicated the same way on every “occasion of telling,” and so there is no possibility for a “‘complete’ authoritative performance” (17). This frustrates the causal determinism Arendt also critiqued of dominant Euro-Modern narativity and indicates the challenge to political theory’s engagement with Indigenous historical consciousness.

17 This is contrary to an “Aristotelian” story structure with clear beginning, middle and end (Carlson, 1997: 186-7; Maracle, 2015: 230).
James Sákéj Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw) cautions against the scholarly mining of Indigenous oral tradition and “popular” memory for evidence as in Gerald Vizenor’s words a “euphemism for [their] linguistic colonization,” “shattering” wholsitic processes into component parts. Regarding traditional stories, he suggests that these not only “transmit validated experiences, but they also renew, awaken and honour life forces” and so “are not generally explanations but focus instead on the processes of knowledge. They discuss how to acquire these relationships on every level, how properly to use them, how to lose them, and the consequences attendant on the relationships” but that it is “[o]nly in the past century of contact with modern consciousness have these stories become explanations” (Henderson, 2000: 266-7). The dominant Euro-Modern impulse to narrativize and establish causation – the why of an event or action - is (perhaps contradicting Arendt), also one to first fragment and then (re)order, to compartmentalize, typologize, and deconstruct in order to make sense or explain, to seek knowledge as “quantifiable generalizations” (Kovach, 2009: 102). As Wilson puts it, “analysis from a Western perspective breaks everything down to look at it...[and] if you are breaking everything down into its smallest pieces, you are destroying all of the relationships around it” (Wilson, 2008: 119). Cree scholar Winona Stevenson evokes the violence of an extractive approach to stories when they are understood through the metaphor of medicine bundles: “the bundle is plundered, the voice silenced, bits are extracted to meet empirical academic needs, and the story dies” (Stevenson quoted in Kovach, 2009: 101).18

One of the crucial ways that relational linkages, concatenations or correspondences are made in an Indigenous storytelling pattern is through the use of metaphor, which is not simply a straightforward rhetorical device or flourish (Akan, 1992: 33) nor about making one thing represent another (substitution) as I will return to in Chapter Eight. In a discussion of Canadian political scientist Alan Cairns’ representation of the Guswentha (Two-Row Wampum), Dale Turner highlights the major role of symbolism and metaphor for making meaning in Indigenous

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18 McLeod also cites this passage, suggesting the metaphor of stories as bundles of memory one carries, the contents of which change over time (McLeod, 2007: 9). A modern chemistry metaphor for the extractive approach to stories is an appropriate contrast: it seeks an extract, the distillation of story into a purified substance out of a compound, which troubles Arendt’s metaphor of pearl diving to pluck fragments from their contexts and distil for the present. Leanne Simpson has identified colonialism with “extractivism” and like Wilson suggests that “The act of extraction removes all of the relationships that give whatever is being extracted meaning. Extracting is taking. Actually, extracting is stealing - it is taking without consent, without thought, care or even knowledge of the impacts that extraction has on the other living things in that environment” (S. Simpson quoted in Klein, 2013).
political practices such as treaty making. Haudenosaunee oratory projects “words about familiar objects and relations onto the fields of politics and diplomacy” which do not easily translate into non-Iroquois equivalents, as in kinship metaphors \(^{19}\) and the “sanctity of words” uttered that obligate certain behaviours (Turner, 2006: 51-2). Urion suggests that metaphor in storytelling’s knowledge transmission and reproduction by “implicature” is powerful as “an apt metaphor can carry a huge information load with it because it can be interpreted at many different levels and in many different contexts” (Urion, 1999: 11 also Lightning, 1990: 230).\(^{20}\) Yet as Turner indicates, contextual initiation is important to how meaning is made with metaphor. Late Cree Elder Wâpaskwan (Louis Sunchild) gave these insights on metaphor in the Cree oral tradition and the intricate levels of meaning making available with different levels of initiation:

“The way to interpret those stories has never been clear to the literate, academic community until recently. The stories are not just “texts,” or narratives that deal with sequences of events in a linear progression...There is a “surface” story: the text, and the things one has to know about the performance of it for others. The stories are metaphoric, but there are several levels of metaphor involved... A hearer isn’t meant to understand the story at all levels, immediately. It is as if it unfolds” (Wâpaskwan quoted in Lightning, 1992: 229-30).\(^{21}\)

What Wâpaskwan calls the surface “text” of a story contains direction for accessing other distinct “embedded or implicit” stories within it and those implicit stories also contain direction for their interpretation. He highlights the importance of relational contextualization in oral storytelling to bridge the levels of meaning in a story and grasp implication, which is difficult to transmit to literate form.

In this regard Wâpaskwan’s interlocutor Walter Lightning articulates a set of assumptions and principles that pertain to the way a listener/hearer relates with an Elder storyteller in an oral

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\(^{19}\) The Haudenosaunee kinship metaphor of the brother relation as political equality with ultimate matriarchal authority did not square with the patriarchal family dynamic familiar to Europeans (see Asch, 2014 on the brother kinship term in treaty relations). Turner also discusses the Great Law of Peace’s association with the Peacemaker’s tree, an example of the ‘non-abstract,’ sensed and land-based symbolic imaginary from which a concept of relational accountability in Indigenous philosophy is derived, as discussed above with reference to Momaday.

\(^{20}\) Shawn Wilson’s friend Lewis made a similar observation and connected this to language: “I think we need to talk in metaphor. Cause our language is built like metaphor. One word is like a zip file, zip disk that crunches all this information into it” (Wilson, 2008: 112).

\(^{21}\) The example he gives is that a sequence in a story on the surface “textual” level may describe a specific stretch of river but on another contain “a very precise set of principles for relationships between specific kin” (Wâpaskwan quoted in Lightning, 1992: 230).
exchange. The contextualization most challenging to apply to the writer-reader relation gleaned from the principles and assumptions Lightning lays out, pertain to location and presence. The specific time and place of an interaction in person (its spatio-temporal situatedness) and its physical immediacy more broadly, allows the hearer to take their bearings, to “feel that they know where they are, or ought to be, in relationship to the earth” (Lightning, 1992: 231 emphasis mine). The setting also provides details for the storyteller important in carrying out their responsibility to authoritatively assess the appropriate level of knowledge transmission. Location and presence facilitates the ability for teller and listener to “think mutually” (have a “meeting of minds,” 230) and the humility and respect required to proceed in this hinges on knowing where and also who each other are, relationships that are intimately associated. How Indigenous storytelling is emplaced rather than temporally emplotted is crucial (Jackson, 2002: 31), emplacement indicating not just a “spatial anchoring” of stories to “points on the land” (Basso quoted in Sarris, 1993: 31) but a relational anchoring that makes physical spaces into meaning-full places. Orality also shows storytelling to be an act that has reverberations of affect and effect beyond its immediate context and in “other domains,” as “spoken words physically vibrate the air, vibrate the eardrum” they also “resonate meaning” (Lightning, 1992: 232). This description implies the ethical concept of relational accountability and demonstrates how the metaphorical thinking fundamental to Indigenous storytelling is inseparable from the material or sensed perception of relationality that shapes Indigenous ontology-epistemology as ‘non-abstract’ but still imaginative.

In terms of the issue of decontextualization, Sarris emphasizes that when an oral story is recounted by a writer, they “select and shape” it from what they subjectively experienced of the storytelling exchange and this generally effects a closure or “capture.” The story as isolated from one perspective is fixed into permanence and becomes objectified, a text independent of the interaction that it unfolded in, recreating a story’s structure but not necessarily its texture (Sarris, 1993: 38).22 Such a text is what Sunchild might call a “surface story,”23 yet story is not just what

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22 For an example see Carlson’s description of a -Stó:lo story interpreted by Franz Boas (Carlson, 1997: 191-2). As Sarris points out, many non-Indigenous literary theorists and anthropologists have sought to grapple with the implications of contextualization in their engagement with oral traditions as literate speakers and writers (Sarris, 1993: 39). He cites Keith Basso (see Wisdom Sits In Places, 1996) and Dennis Tedlock (The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation, 1983) among others (27).

23 On this Sarris echoes Sunchild when he relates a lesson anthropologist Barre Toelken learned from Diné storytellers, that stories generate meaning through both structure and “texture,” acting “like ‘surface structure’ in
was said, but *how* (Maracle, 2015: 218). What we look at, hear or ignore is not accidental, our “blinders, masks and filters” are established by our positioning (Maracle, 2015: 234-5). Sarris emphasizes that we will always have incomplete access to the immense and ever-widening context that make up the ‘world’ of a story, including the “personal territories” of all those involved in a story exchange, and so cannot ever convey this wholly in retelling a story (in which its exchanges and occasions are a part). There is much beyond our “perceptual range” as listeners or readers (Sarris, 1993: 40), and this limited perceptual range is not just conceptual but also sensory. The performativity of an oral storytelling exchange indicates how not all experienced of the interaction is externalized, spoken or recordable. For example performativity contributes much to the process of making meaning through “implicature” in the non-verbalized and embodied interpretive cues of the oral storyteller’s physical gesture, rhythm, cadence or pause. Such cues help a teller to improvise and enmesh the listener in the story, transforming it into their story and a story of the exchange itself (Sarris, 1993: 43). The solitary and dislocated

language: by their articulation they touch off a Navajo’s deeper accumulated sense of reality” (Toelken quoted in Sarris, 1993: 39).

24 Sarris draws on French philosopher Paul Ricoeur to describe the challenge of textualization. Ricoeur suggested that the contingencies and “absolute here and now” of the relational dynamic of discursive exchanges like storytelling (its “we”) is “shattered by writing” (Sarris, 1993: 27). He also forwarded that interpreting discursive acts was to imaginatively explore their worlds of context but that in so doing there will always be a “surplus of meaning” that cannot be grasped (see also McLeod, 2007: 16). Ricoeur is known for his work on discourse, the narrative constitution of Self-knowledge and identity as well as linking phenomenology and hermeneutics, the latter work exploring the mutuality of experience and interpretation. He saw interpretation as about making sense of the embodied experience of the self always in existence with others - in the present, predecessors, and those to come (having ethical implications). I am interested in Arendt’s influence on Ricoeur, as a number of Indigenous thinkers on story like Sarris and McLeod take up his work, as it is better known in narrative studies.

25 Archibald also points to the literate inclination to “fix up” the grammar and structure when transcribing traditional storytellers, losing their personality and changing the tone of the story (Archibald, 2008: 110, also Sarris, 1993: 41). While retelling a story is always to reinterpret it, this constitutes a projection of perspective that will encourage expansion of discussion from the projection and so “spin” the story “further and further away” from the Indigenous teller (Sarris, 1993: 45). This is part of the impetus to ‘correct’ stories into linear narratives by perceiving “missing pieces,” flaws or gaps (Carlson, 1997: 187).

26 Sarris sees this implication in Mabel McKay’s way of telling him a Pomo story of the coming of white settlers being foretold by a medicine man, which also suggests the disjuncture of historical consciousness and explanation I discuss above. Though foretold, the settlers’ eventual arrival caused panic. When Sarris expresses incredulity at this reaction in the people if they had been expected, Mabel asked him “you ever know white people with four legs and two heads?” (McKay quoted in Sarris, 1993: 42). He is positioned to interpret Mabel as demonstrating (through the way she tells the story to him specifically), the disjuncture of their situated perspectives that he struggled with in gathering her stories the previous six months for his book project of her biography. He also assumed a “literal and linear” relation between the prophecy and a “so-called empirical reality...which posits a kind of fundamental difference between the two states that Mabel may not share” (44). Indeed he had told her in this time that her stories “go all over the place” and that “people want to know about things in your life in a way they can understand. You know, how you got to be who you are,” that their needed to be a theme that “connects all the dots, ties up all the stories.” She responded, “That’s funny. Tying up all the stories. Why somebody want to do that?” (in Sarris, 1994: 4-5).
reader will not see or hear what the writer recounting an oral exchange has of the storyteller’s presence, which as Maracle describes, is always part of the story and its remembering and retelling where “[v]oice, choice of words, sound, tone, diction, style and rhythm characterize the attitude attached to the speaker’s memory.” In this a “huge array of physical metaphors, developed out of the experience of the collective and its relationship to its environment, is transmitted to us” (Maracle, 2015: 40). The interpretation of these depends on the “personal territory” of the listener, yet the listener in turn cannot see or hear everything, such as what Sarris calls the “internal dialogue” the storyteller has with the story (being an interpreter themselves).

This brings up the literate emphasis on what can be communicated, represented or recorded lexically in text or visualized in images, a perceptual limitation of Euro-Western academia’s preferred media in engaging an Indigenous oral pattern of storytelling. An irony in terms of transferring story from an oral tradition to the page especially is the literate bias toward the *aural* to the minimization or exclusion of other senses, to what can be said and heard, human sound and speech (verbalization) in particular. Sheridan points out that the privileging of the aural and human voice has been equated with evidence of thought, knowledge and meaning where saying nothing is “having nothing to say” (Sheridan, 1991: 30) yet

“[I]t is vital to recognize the veneration in which silence is esteemed in oral cultures...[L]iterate people regard silence as time unrepresentable in print or writing, and as an absence of meaningful sound...However, not making sounds does not imply absence of thought...Unfortunately silence in [Euro-Modern] education is conceived of primarily as the absence of words, rather than as a belonging to realms of stillness and the unsayable” (Sheridan, 1991: 24-25).

The role of meaning-full silence and what Vizenor calls the unsaid in “heard stories” or unrepresentable “animate shadows” of affective experience that may exceed language or description, indicates how not all of experience nor story is sayable or representable, either inherently or responsibly (Vizenor, 1999: 72-3; Blaeser, 1996: 22). Yet as Sheridan puts it “[a]lphabetized minds are not inclined to hold their tongues and pens and keyboards, and to say...”

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27 Sheridan continues: “In the realm of the unsayable, and in the silence of the human voice, oral culture still hears, smells, touches and tastes the wind, waves, and rain. Thought is not constrained to be lexically referential” (Sheridan, 1993: 25). He relates an impactful story of Oglala Lakota medicine man Heháka Sápa (Black Elk) as told by John Neihardt regarding a vision he had as a child which speaks to an Indigenous ontolo-epistemology that acknowledges felt experiences that exceed language and the sayable (Black Elk quoted in Sheridan, 1991: 31).

28 In her work on Vizenor, Writing in the Oral Tradition (1996) Kimberly Blaeser discusses his modeling of techniques of “literary restraint or silence” and “non-linguistic sound” (22).
nothing” (Sheridan, 1991: 30). It is telling ethically that is ultimately the challenge in applying oral storywork principles to a literate scholarly tradition in an effort to avoid or subvert colonial apprehension and model refusal, as I am interested in here with political theory engaging Indigenous resistance resurgence stories.

The challenge for Western mode political theorists is to engage with Indigenous stories and storied practices at the boundaries of their silences and refusals where there may be a tactical imperative to disclose. I myself nearly conceded to the challenge as insurmountable before seeing it for the invitation it is, an invitation to take up my responsibility as a witness to decolonially transformative movement the winter we danced. Yet we need to judge when and where to be silent or not, and when we must tell, which stories and how. To be good tellers requires we be good listeners – to sound and especially silence without attempting to fill it, as it is already full. Indigenous storywork principles from the oral tradition offers guidance to political theorists on accepting relational accountability in this judgment to recall and tell while attempting to avoid apprehending living, active, story that may exceeds a literate narrative sensibility.

Which Stories and When to Tell?

In *Indigenous Storywork*, Archibald shared that she initially saw Euro-Western traditions of literacy like one of Coyote’s enlarged eyes, entirely dichotomous with and overpowering a diminished Indigenous orality, the value of which then had to be defended in literate terms which had claimed superiority (Archibald, 2008: 15-6). She came to view this supposed necessity as colonial and inversely that principles from oral traditions could and should provide the framework for engaging Indigenous stories in settings hitherto regarded as predominantly literate (20, 93). Archibald like a number of other thinkers on Indigenous methodological ethics are concerned foremost with primary qualitative research processes with Indigenous communities (see for example Kovach, 2009: 98-100). In regard to storytelling exchanges more specifically, the interest is mostly in making meaning with traditional for or genre stories (that carry what Archibald might call the core teachings and knowledges of specific peoples) and particularly in Euro-Western, institutionalized systems of ordering knowledge that have been imposed on Indigenous societies, and are still bound up with the prerogatives of the settler-colonial State.
are the most prominent systems focused on in this regard. Here I am interested in how principles of Indigenous storywork most associated with traditional stories might inform the telling of experiential stories in the literate Western mode of political theory.

To paraphrase Archibald, not everyone who knows stories becomes a storyteller (Archibald, 2008: 69). In the traditional form particularly, this is dependent on personal gift and intuition for oratory (Archibald, 2008: 77, 94) and most crucially training from Elders and other knowledge keepers, not simply to learn stories and the structure of their performance but those contextualizing principles for their conveyance, engagement and interpretation. The same principles can also apply to scholars who are engaged in recounting and linking experiential stories of Indigenous peoples’ decolonial and resurgent action and practices, which may attempt to narrativize or historicize them as ‘politically meaningful’ and in isolation from the principles applicable to a perceived ‘nonpolitical’ (ethnocultural) oral tradition as a body of texts with different protocols of telling.

As I indicated at the outset of my discussion of storywork principles, the distinction of story forms or genres into traditional and experiential has a function to provide a rhetorical and conceptual boundary (however porous) with implications for a methodological ethic. Yet identifying ‘experiential stories’ as a genre of the oral tradition is to point out that doing political theory and political science scholarship of or ‘on’ Indigenous politics is still to retell Indigenous stories. This despite that its representational and analytical accounts of Indigenous action and practices may not be viewed similarly to the principled retelling of traditional genre stories which anthropology especially has had to come to grips with. So while I want to stress that the boundary between story genres in this sense serves as a vital connection point, it also functions as a threshold, with access to the passage between them varying according to the positioning and permissions of the teller and listener. That is, there is also a claim here on which genre of Indigenous story is most appropriate and indeed possible to make meaning with in political theory scholarship by outsiders to the community it pertains to and to what extent correspondences between genres are appropriate to draw or disclose publicly, even with initiation to the relevant traditional stories. There is a threshold of intelligibility and refusal here.

Carlson et al evocatively employed the metaphor of a house with several rooms to describe the connected and layered realities in which the Stó:lō story genres take place, with stairs and hallways as “grey areas” in which beings from different rooms can meet, sometimes floors and ceiling disappear to intermingle realities, but passages that allow access between rooms are never static (Carlson, 1997: 194).
The experiential stories that mainstream political theory tends to engage include recounting public practices that the scholar experienced first hand, which have the multi-perspectival, cross-territorial contextual qualities of any oral storytelling exchange. They may also recount stories of others’ such experiences conveyed to the scholar directly in conversation or interview or they may engage literature with retellings of experiences first-hand, second-hand, many-handed. Usually there is some combination thereof.

To take my own engagement of *Idle No More* stories and commentator narratives or storylines that link them as an example, I relied on my own affective experiences as a participant in some, as well as published secondary and textualized accounts and commentaries, which I read through the perspectival prism of my experiences and critical judgement. I did not seek permissions to gather first-hand stories or retellings through a primary research process such as interviews, as a concern of my project here involves the acquisitiveness of Euro-Western style scholarship in regard to Indigenous stories. Thus I centred my discussion in what had already been told to me and in public, though many levels of meaning in these stories inevitably have been left inaccessible, by the limitations of my own perception and also authority. Indigenous storywork principles encourage us to approach literate exchanges like this as we do between speakers and listeners in oral exchanges, in a spirit of relational accountability. At present I have judged that I can tell only those experiential stories that reflect both my own and I believe a general and diverse political theory audience’s positioning. Possibly with more learning over time and with patience I will come to a place of responsibly retelling in public and telling well some traditional stories of my own people or those I am in relationship with through my scholarship but here and now I am now prepared mostly to refer to them. So, this is not to say that it is not appropriate for other Indigenous scholars in political theory who are prepared to retell traditional stories at depth in their textual work or draw deeper correspondences between the genres than I do in the next chapter on *Idle No More*. The metaphors in traditional stories in particular can convey layers of meaningfulness and possible interpretations in such connections for members of the community to whom they are familiar and Indigenous readers more generally in ways that are not accessible to others.

While experiential stories can be considered the primary genre of engagement for political theory, this still leaves the decision to tell them an open question when there is increased susceptibility to colonial apprehension. The practices and actions they relate can be
considered as implicitly resistant to colonial power by their very existence but some are directly understood to be part of a resistance or decolonization movement and as such are particularly targeted for suppression. In such cases the repercussions of retelling are tangible in state surveillance, policing and crackdowns. In this way the judgement required on when to recount or disclose experiential Indigenous stories of political action or movement can be related to the contextualization required for telling some traditional stories, either always secreted or protected from outsiders since colonization. The debate among Indigenous academics and communities on the imperative to tell and especially ‘record’ (in literate ways) certain sacred stories, stories of sacred practices and traditional genre stories in general outside communities or in a settler-dominated public setting, often references their duress under colonialism. Many traditional and sacred stories have been “put to sleep,” suppressed or otherwise censored along with the principles on how to make meaning from them that sustains their power (Archibald, 2008: 78, 81). To wake or tell them is then an imperative to keep them alive and potentially activate their medicine, a power to shape reality either for healing or harm. For example Marmon Silko emphasizes this activation of relational effect and affect by sharing and telling story throughout her work, and maintains that some stories should not be told (Schorcht, 2011: 101).

Greg Sarris also discusses the particular difficulty in gauging the tactical imperative to tell with practices that are both sacred and also reflect survivance and resistance or are otherwise significant to an Indigenous decolonial imaginary, practices that have layers of meaningfulness with different levels of accessibility between insiders and outsiders. Sarris describes the conversation among his family and Pomo people in telling of the healing ceremonies of their Bole Maru (Dream Dance) religion, where even mentioning the existence of some practices to the uninitiated has been taboo. As to outsiders, Sarris suggests that “[r]epresentatives from the dominant culture exploring the resistance of a subjugated people are likely to see little more than what those people choose or can afford to show them” but cautions that “the method and the narrative format of any such study or account...written or not, will compromise the experience of the movement in given ways” (Sarris, 1993: 68). This equally applies to insider Indigenous scholars’ recounting of practices. Despite this risk, Sarris acknowledged the danger of

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30 Marmon Silko suggests of her own people’s traditional stories, that as they cannot be separated from their locations – their “actual physical locations in the land,” it would be “almost impossible” for them to be lost, her people being fortunate to have not been relocated (Silko, 1981: 69). Many Indigenous peoples have been displaced and their lands violently transformed, yet as Leanne Simpson suggests, we can still hear the voice of the land and waters though changed, diminished or quieted (L. Simpson, 2017b).
maintaining these practices’ “alienation” as weakening their capacity for resistance and was responsive to his Elders’ view that the time had come to speak about their importance to outsiders. And so he asks a series of questions of his own intent in discussing them: in creating narratives for others of these practices in formats that are “accessible and intelligible” to them and generally not similar to the people’s experiences of the practices, in what ways are we compromising them? Is this “distort[i]on and reinvent[i]on” assurance enough that their internal meaningfulness and the decolonial movement of which they may be a part will not be jeopardized, or could one’s insider perspective as depicted in these distorted narratives “be appropriated by outsiders for their purposes, political or otherwise” (69)?

Sarris’ questions are in a sense those of my own story, prompted by apprehensiveness around the storying of *Idle No More*. In the next two sections I would like to turn to the practice of witnessing and the storywork principles this encapsulates, as giving some guidance in the remembrance and recounting of Indigenous political action and events. Particularly perceived momentous or “rare deeds” and “unexpected events” that might illuminate everyday power relations or historical correspondences, to invoke the Arendtian language from the last chapter. This can contribute to a storytelling ethic for political theory scholarship when perceived requirements for intelligibility and understanding (for example couched as the “educational needs” of settler-Canadians, Simon, 2013:133-4) may be colonially apprehensive.

**On Witnessing Beyond Testifying to Colonialism**

“[T]here is a danger in allowing colonization to be the only story of Indigenous lives. It must be recognized that colonialism is a narrative in which the Settler’s power is the fundamental reference and assumption, inherently limiting Indigenous freedom and imposing a view of the world that is but an outcome or perspective on that power” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 601). 31

31 In a 2009 article Corntassel, Chaw-win-is (Nuu-chah-nulth) and T’lakwadzi (Kwakwaka’wakw) consider the limitations of the TRC mandate and the role of Indigenous community conceptions of truth-telling and justice grounded in homelands. They forward the need for stories of lived experience of resistance, resilience and resurgence to counter the prevalence of narratives of colonization not just to address the past but for “struggles for restorying Indigenous futures” (153), citing the infamous Harper denial of Canada’s “history of colonialism” I discussed in Chapter Three, that a “restorying process for Indigenous peoples entails questioning the imposition of colonial histories on our communities” (139-40).
The concept of witnessing as important to efforts at decolonial political theory has stayed with me from my experiences as a participant in the movement of INM, with my attention drawn to the responsibilities of bearing witness when evoked by Tsali scholar Jeff Corntassel during the same conference at which I spoke in the spring after the winter we danced in 2012-13. He suggested that all present (not only those directly and formally called as witnesses) might consider the solemnity and responsibilities implied of their presence at such gatherings, that stories of what happened there (word and deed) would be carried with us and could contribute to the proliferation of actions toward decolonization. That though their affect and effect may have indeterminable reverberations the power of their transformations could be channeled or guided for good, if we witness respectfully. Corntassel’s reminder is an important extension of relational accountability in the listener/observer/sensor to those who may consider themselves as mere spectators whose engagement with what they experience is confined to and circumscribed by a setting and a passing moment that asks nothing from them but audience.

Certainly, this particular gathering’s location of publicity in an Indigenous place on a university campus (First Peoples’ House Ceremonial Hall at the University of Victoria) and the wakefulness of those present to resurgence’s epistemic and discursive shifts at that time was hospitable to Corntassel’s request, if not necessarily understood in the same way by all present. This was already a relational setting with intentioned participants including non-Indigenous people that had been unsettled more than others living outside what might be deemed an enclave of decoloniality. Nevertheless, for me this still raised the possibility of extending a call to witness to other occasions (modes, times and settings) of scholarly exchange and engagement with Indigenous experiential stories unfolding in a common if unequal, unshared and still-colonial public space of appearance. Particularly, to consider the role of political theorists as scholars who also experience and participate in such unfolding and then feel compelled, from decolonial commitments, to re-tell and theorize them – to make linkages between them and others through time as part of broader story lines demonstrating survivance, regeneration or resurgence. When the events these stories describe are perceived as momentous, unexpected or rare, and so may be exemplary flashpoints that illuminate everyday relations or relational patterns, there is an imperative to intercede in how they will be remembered. As living memory,

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32 During the roundtable “Settler Colonialisms: Solidarities, Territorialities and Embodiment” as part of the workshop “Anti-Racist and Indigenous Politics in Canada: Divergence and Convergence,” Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Victoria, June 4th, 2013.
how such stories are taken up or made to do work can be pivotal to the direction of change, and here theory-storying has a part to play.

Before proceeding to a consideration of witnessing in a storytelling ethic for decolonial political theory scholarship, it is pertinent to address a context in which witness and the public disclosure, circulation and remembrance of Indigenous experiential stories in Canada has been considered extensively in recent years: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Indian Residential Schools (IRS). Established in 2008 as required by the 2006 IRS Settlement Agreement between the federal government and 86,000 survivors, its mandate was to document the nearly 120 year system through the gathering of survivor statements and records. Its seven goals included acknowledgement of IRS “experiences, impacts and consequences”; to “promote awareness and public education of Canadians” about these; to “identify sources and create as complete an historical record as possible” of the system to produce an archive that will be accessible to all in perpetuity; to support ongoing commemoration practices and to “witness, support, promote and facilitate truth and reconciliation events,” the first in accordance with “the Aboriginal principle of “witnessing” as a foundation for oral histories (TRC, 2015a). The TRC spanned six years and heard the testimonies of approximately 6,000 people across present Canada until its closure in 2015, the release of 94 Calls to Action and transfer of materials to a permanent National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba.

Set within an ascendant paradigm or era of testimonial following the Shoah, as per Million’s assertion mentioned in Chapter Five (also Kennedy et al., 2009: 1), the TRC has been subject to many critiques including around its mobilization of the conception of reconciliation itself contributing to settler-colonial mythologies. That is, as a return to previously conciliatory relations and an effort to “put the events of the past behind us,” though its final reporting rejects this interpretation (TRC, 2015a). Here I am interested in how considerations on the risks and potentialities of telling stories of suffering and trauma, particularly with the perceived need to expose and redress colonial power relations, might be of relevance to other stories of survivance.

33 The TRC describes witnessing in this way in an endnote in the report What We Have Learned:
“Generally speaking, witnesses are called to be the keepers of history when an event of historic significance occurs. Through witnessing, the event or work that is undertaken is validated and provided legitimacy. The work could not take place without honoured and respected guests to witness it. Witnesses are asked to store and care for the history they witness and to share it with their own people when they return home. For Aboriginal peoples, the act of witnessing these events comes with a great responsibility to remember all the details and be able to recount them accurately as the foundation of oral histories” (TRC, 2015b: 192).
and resistance, where Indigenous resurgence discourse advocates a shift to focus on story lines of regeneration and self-determination. There are a number of commentaries by settler-Canadian scholars on the aims and methods of the TRC that make observations on witnessing and these risks and potentialities that are helpful to draw this out. These also demonstrate some issues of aligning Indigenous and Euro-Modern storying patterns and suggest the necessity for engagement with an Indigenous protocol of witnessing beyond the TRC trauma testimonial paradigm to consider its incorporation in an Indigenous storytelling ethic for political theory.

In his discussion of the TRC’s educational mandate prior to the beginning of hearings, late Jewish scholar of witness and collective memory Roger I. Simon critically considered the assumptions of an emphasis on “testamentary-based pedagogy” in public histories aimed at learning from not just about past experiences. One assumption is that when “speaking from the heart,” you will be listened to as though the “moral conclusions” of your story are inherent and self-evident and so “will be understood in a way that is respectful of the singularity of one’s narrative and affectively sensed as an opening to new thought about a different collective future.” In regard to the TRC, this assumption is that the uniqueness of each individual story is appreciated as a specific iteration of an agreed collective experience with colonial violence that will provoke positive change in the listener (Simon, 2013:131). Refuting this assumption on speaking from the heart, Simon cites the risks of disclosure in a settler-colonial theatre of apprehension: perceiving Indigenous life stories as interchangeable and over-determined by colonial subjection, with victimhood forwarded as a “historical thematic” and emphasis on the IRS system alone as a reductive “explanation” for marginalization that depoliticizes and individuates responsive concepts of healing in therapeutic terms. This has stories lose their “transitive force,” with exchanges emphasizing pathos, feeling another’s pain as enough or detached observance causing moral outrage and condemnation without reflection on how one is implicated by and has “psychic, social and economic investments” in, the ongoing power relations and conditions that generated that pain (Simon, 2013: 132-3; 135).

The commodification of stories as a form of appropriation that deflects responsibility and creates the conditions for an idea of the settler’s “justified refusal to give up any of the structural privileges accumulated over the last 250 years,” is another risk Simon speaks to when “stories of [Indigenous] survivance circulate in public domains beyond the immediate contexts of their
telling” (133). He suggests the educative aims of the TRC mandate at best could have been directed to mobilize non-Indigenous people in their responsibilities to act, to perceive Indigenous storytellers not speaking for settlers’ needs, concerns or passive affective consumption but still to them. This might then contribute to a reconstitution of the common but settler-dominated public that receives and circulates story and so a decolonial transformation of relations (137-9).

In the same volume as Simon, Julia Emberley describes a shift in “repositioning testimony as coextensive with Indigenous storytelling epistemologies” in ways that suggest how this public might begin to be transformed. She suggests this shift is effecting a “pluralisation” of testimonial practices and the subjectivities they presume away from the dominant assumptions Simon outlines. This involves recognition of speaking subjects as situated in a field of interdependencies “neither fully subjugated nor silenced by colonial power,” not victims though not necessarily “heroes” able to surpass its conditions individually either. This also involves considering Indigenous subjects as speaking from “multiple sites of knowing” and so positioned to “resist and reconfigure the polymorphous techniques” of this power (Emberley, 2013: 143-4). Emberley turns to Archibald as a resource for an ethic of engaging Indigenous experiential stories similarly to myself, but focusing on those testifying to the institutionalization of colonial violence in residential schools. She emphasizes the importance of such stories’ gaps and silences as opening conceptual space for the “ethical insertion” of storywork principles that allow meanings to unfold “over time and in relation to specifically contextualized needs,” as a kind of “work ethic” (152; 147).

Emberley discusses Wâpaskwan’s depiction of layers of metaphoric meaning with different levels of accessibility, suggesting the collective knowledge that stories are a part of is “more like a web of interconnected threads than a striated space demarcated by fixed lines.” Within “this web of meaning, spaces are constructed and provisionally framed by nodes of interpretation” which she suggests are the full not empty gaps and silences in storywork, “constituted by the corners of its intersecting threads” which extend “beyond the frame” and can

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34 In regard to the assumption of a shared historical consciousness between Indigenous peoples and settlers, Simon also makes an important distinction from Arendt’s attentiveness to a presumed common present, citing Ernst Bloch in relation to Nazism that “not all people exist in the same Now” with the same relationship to the past, only because they all might be seen to inhabit the same space (Simon, 2013: 134).

35 Arendt’s view of heroism in storytelling I mentioned in the last chapter as associated with rare deeds and the bravery of public disclosure and political life was often noted as individuated.

36 Arendt might instead call this ethic political as she distinguished the sense of work from politics, though this I feel is encompassed in Archibald’s sense of work I introduced at the outset in regard to witnessing.
shift and change through time (149-50).\textsuperscript{37} Emberley’s attention to the spaces between the threads in a web of knowledge is helpful to consider the methodological and ethical challenge of resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations, of outward refusals and toward inward regeneration. But in the perceived need for a dominant Other (settlers) to listen and comprehend when one witnesses and tells stories, especially with meaning-full silences, she draws attention to the vicissitudes of aligning storytelling patterns in a public that is is common but not shared, whose nested worlds and epistemes are increasingly acknowledged as pluralistic, though in asymmetrical relation (2013: 148; 151).

As settler theorist Darren Bohle put it recently in regard to Indigenous testimonial in the TRC, the dominant conception of “reconciliation presumes an already extant public space in which unsettling revelations publish an already extant plurality” within it (Bohle, 2017: 258). That is, a public established by colonial relations, forcefully and so “pre-politically” in Arendt’s sense. In quoting the depiction of witnessing by the TRC as keeping and crucially disseminating memory “when an event of historic significance occurs,” Bohle notes the necessity of preparation or “structural readiness of designated and assembled witnesses awaiting survivors’ stories” is unlike a Western juridical model of testimony that calls witnesses after the fact of an event to recall it accurately in an objective sense (the TRC called prominent people as honorary witnesses). He then poses the question of whether this protocol of witnessing can behave like a predictive narrative foreclosure on future iterations of story that also effaces diversity, rather than to see the future as remaining open, contingent and negotiable rather than fixed.\textsuperscript{38} Echoing Simon, Bohle also suggests that “[i]n Canada, as prominent figures re-tell stories there is the risk that these stories will be deployed in ways other than those intended by the survivors, or that they will be inscribed in narratives of healing or redress that discount the need for governments and settler society to act” (260). The common public in which Indigenous stories appear, are made known and mediated, remains dominated, a settler-colonial theatre of apprehension. The TRC in its effects for Bohle can either re-produce or re-make this public and its terms and terminology of visibility and enunciation, affirming or subverting its prevailing meta-narrativity of settlement.

\textsuperscript{37} Emberley terms these assemblages (2013: 152), aligning Indigenous web or (net) work with Deleuze and Guttari in ways I have elsewhere problematized.

\textsuperscript{38} This is an aspect of the problem of the ‘pre’ in an anticipatory politics of prefiguration, an issue of temporality I suggested Indigenous resurgence challenges in Chapter One. On residential schools as a truth-event predicting the present, the temporality of closure and bearing active, responsible witness to IRS survivor testimonies see Henderson and Wakeham, 2009: 6-7. They also speak to witnessing as symbolic versus substantive/redistributive.
As with Simon and Emberley, Bohle is interested in how stories can actually disclose the unsettled grounds of political engagement and so reconstitute an already pluralistic public in which reconciliation is not a unification, a “procedure governed by agreement” or final consensus. Here “survivors’ stories about colonial violence unsettle the singularity of a (national) public sphere and historical narrative both through their content and through the multiplicity of their re-tellings” (262-3). Yet Bohle is concerned with what he perceives to be the contradictory role of what he calls the TRC’s concept of respectful witnessing as both opening and restricting or circumscribing, to both “pre-empt” and so make space for “stories which might yet exceed hegemonic narratives” and to be dependent on the teller’s revelation of them and so “willingness to speak,” to then recollect and re-tell their stories, which then “re-presents those claims as part of the public discourse they come to shape” (264, 261).

Bohle does not engage Indigenous conceptions of story in oral traditions, out of which the TRC’s understanding of respectful witnessing comes, to address the seeming contradiction he perceives, including a non-linear temporality the role implies and that he frequently describes as “odd,” but rather turns to literary analogies. This seems to me an instance of the reluctance of Euro-Western scholars to contextualization with Indigenous theory, even to consider questions embedded in it, and so to more fully address the risks and potentialities of aligning patterns in their storying-theoretical traditions. Attention to Indigenous practices of witnessing outside colonial relations with settlers and beyond the context of truth and reconciliation processes and their emphasis on disclosing stories of trauma and suffering, with the dominant Euro-Modern conceptions of testimony that still inform them, is actually crucial to address the questions on respectful witnessing Bohle has. This is also key to an ethic for theorist-storiers as witnesses for, and not just of, Indigenous movements of resurgence and decolonial transformation. A return to Coast Salish witnessing protocol can bring us to this possibility for respectful, or as I will call it...

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39 Bohle’s commitment is to “agonistic reconciliation,” where Arendt’s conception of politics has been taken up in regard to settler-Indigenous relations in Canada as mentioned in the previous chapter. Similar to Bohle’s argument on the presumption of a common or shared public, Million has suggested that “[h]egemony is not prior to, but is a result of the process that seeks to reconcile the agon, all the divergent elements present when different claims are constituted as “truth” ” (Million, 2008: 267).

40 Rather Bohle considers the literate metaphor of the preface as a rhetorical device analogous to witnessing, and its function according to Derrida and Spivak as both demarcating and transgressing boundaries, with it and the book as texts with ever-differing repetitions or iterations (261-2). He also discusses Derrida’s conception of an “omnipotent author” in relation to the preface aligned to the inclinations of Western philosophy to mastery and predictability as Arendt also suggested. Here “three threads can be drawn together…prefaces make the future like the past, they disclose the essence of the (future) text, and they guarantee the author’s mastery over the text” (Bohle, 2017: 260).
in the following section, *faithful* witnessing in political theory scholarship taking up an Indigenous storytelling ethic.

In her project with Stó:lō communities to articulate their legal “sensibility,” settler law scholar Andrée Boiselle discusses the cultural work done at formal gatherings which articulates a conception of respectful witnessing. She highlights the appointed roles of speaker and witness as exemplifying relational self-determination, a “polyphonic” mutuality in concert with autonomy (personal, familial, community) in Stó:lō governance (Boiselle, 2017: 178). This involves an emphasis on both “holding open” a pluralistic space for the individual’s self-determining conduct, pathways, creativity, judgement and decision-making and also on “holding together” their distinctive threads in the fabric of kinship that makes them a polity. This collective life is understood as an interdependent, accountable coexistence in which individuals have responsibility to realize their unique gifts, potential and role, though within a social pedagogy as a “process of recognizing who a person “is”,” responsive to dynamic traditions, life stages and diverse paths of learning (168-9; 187-8).

In contradiction to Bohle, Boiselle indicates that witnesses are often called spontaneously though not randomly at formal gatherings. They may be chosen because they are identified as outsiders and unlike designated host speakers, without undergoing “specific training” or preparation for the role, though hospitality must first be shown them before a request made (179). *Who* is in attendance, their connections in and particular modulation of, the relational network of Stó:lō society or world and the varied knowledge or experience they may contribute in regard to the specific context and work being done at the gathering, are factors in being called (185, 203-4). *Where* they are in the longhouse, their vantage point during proceedings is also considered as a matter of perspective, they will all “see and hear things a bit differently” (208). Thus for the witnesses called it is “hoped that they will be inspired to respond to the work, that is, to share some wisdom or experience in connection to what they have witnessed” (176). The

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41 Boiselle’s work is ethnographic, rooted in primary research and so highly descriptive of Stó:lō cultural work, reproducing stories collected from interlocutors and informants with whom she has personal relationships. Here I am only attending to the principles relating to witnessing discussed rather than replicating or assessing the ethnography engaged. She does raise the issue of secrecy and the sacred in her discussion of the winter dance and concerns of “decontextualization, appropriation, trivialization or profanation” or anonymity especially when ceremonial experience is written about. She suggests these ethical considerations for her work acted as a “microcosm of the actual reflection on witnessing in connection with agency, responsibility and legitimacy: How do I know what I know? Is it appropriate for me to share it? And if so, how?” (225-6). This is the level of metaphoric comparison I am attending to in connecting the Coast Salish protocol to scholarship in general and non-explicit terms, reliant on interpretations already verified for public discussion by knowledge keepers and longhouse authorities.
witnesses generally only come to the fore when they are called at the outset and when responding at the close of an event if they choose to (207).

The duties of care the host speaker must attend to at gatherings manifest in their assumption of responsibilities for explicit and intentioned interactions with “other intentional human beings” present as guests. Yet this also involves an “attunement” to the implicit, such as the collective feelings of those gathered and the invisible, inaudible, intangible forces between them. What “lies outside of their conscious control, yet needs to be reckoned with,” includes the powers of affect and effect in all beings’ agency, including their own. Boiselle suggests this attunement is also a feature of the witnesses’ role and is a core aspect of the Stó:lō ethical mode of engagement: an approach to taking responsibility for one’s action and the direction of its outcomes, despite what must be accepted as uncontrollable in an irreducibly intersubjective life among others. And by this plurality is meant all relations human and non-human, in both physical and non-corporeal dimensions. She calls this “the witnessing stance” (199-200; 217).42

Boiselle discusses the responsibilities to a principle of self-determination and limits of intercession with the witnessing stance. While some occurrences would be preferable to avoid, in Stó:lō ethics they are approached as an opportunity to influence the course of normative changes they may bring about. These are opportunities for governance, for example by a family confronting a death, to “inflect its own transformation” through the exercise of protocols and guideposts for judgment in response to such an occurrence (205). The respectful witness of such work at a gathering does not contest it in an adversarial manner when responding to it, as there is a limit to their role’s authority to consciously influence or inflect the transformation another is experiencing. Rather as Boiselle puts it, “witnesses may be seen to lend scope and support to the decision that others make for themselves or to the strength they are already mustering by themselves, by speaking to the significance of the event, its promise, its implications, its potential pitfalls” (208). This view of the witnesses’ role is not as a “passive record-keeping duty” but acknowledgement of and “faith” in their capacity for assessment, if the work exceeds its authority for example, and to act as perspectival guides for the individual, family etc. to interpret the transformation they are experiencing and seeking to inflect, its relational affect and

42 Boiselle summates this as “to sit, listen, and feel what is going on,” from an interview with speaker Chqwó:qwet Willie Charlie (quoted in Boiselle, 2017: 180-1; 215).
effects, not least those perhaps unforeseen or imperceptible to them from their own standpoint (216).

Media theorist John Durham Peters has described how the word *witness* is a complex term as both a noun and verb used in Western law, history, social sciences, journalism etc.\(^{43}\) For its noun usage, a witness is a privileged observer or source for evidentiary information as the ‘facts’ of an occurrence (the juridical sense of testimony). It can be an actor who witnesses, the act of making a statement on what has been witnessed, the objectified text of a statement, or its authorizing incidence. As a verb it can describe a given and constant sensory experience, of simply “finding ourselves in places and times where things happen” or as an “act of stating one’s experience” for those who were not present at an event but must make a judgment about it (Peters, 2001: 709).\(^{44}\) Witnessing in Coast Salish oral traditions asks for mindful presence and reflection on proceedings at a gathering from the outset, acknowledges and values situated perspectives, *who and where we are*, while expecting a listening/seeing/sensing “so that remembering can be fair and just” as Maracle put it (Maracle, 2015: 2). Here a fair and just remembering of the truths of our experience is not simply to recount the facts of an event as information however, nor does this involve seeking to establish the neutrality/veracity/reliability/accuracy of our memories. There is no passive conception of witnessing as accidental or incidental, nor sense of objectivity in the response and recollection that comes from it. It is an active and consequential role, a mode of engagement, and while not being prescriptive it can offer advice or counsel. As Boiselle articulates:

> “witnesses are not just “eye” witnesses, describing what they have seen or heard.

They bear witness with their whole being to the visible and invisible forces at work

\(^{43}\) Among the sources of the “baggage” in the Euro-Modern senses of the term *witness*, Peters identifies three in law (as source of information or evidence for judicial decisions, testimony), theology (declamation confirming faith, especially Christian) and atrocity (as “survivor of hell,” truth-telling) (Peters, 2001: 708), all of which have weighed on Indigenous storytelling and knowledge (re)production in conditions of colonial apprehension and continue to do so. This is not to suggest that Indigenous peoples have not in many ways taken up and re-formed these dominant senses of witnessing for particular ‘audiences,’ as Maori methodologist Linda Tuhirai Smith has described of the intersecting projects of claiming and testimony/testimonio (Smith, 2012: 143-44). Both the baggage and Indigenous reformations of dominant senses of witnessing has been extensively considered across a number of fields: In law, on anthropologist ‘expert’ and Indigenous testimony in the courts, especially in cases on Aboriginal rights and title (see the precedential Delgamuukw decision in regard to oral histories). There is also a growing body of literature on survivor truth-telling in truth and reconciliation processes (which frequently mention Arendt), including the hearings of the TRC. Studies in Indigenous pedagogy, media, ecology and resource management have also examined these impacts. See for a few examples Day, 2005; Bohle, 2017; Reagan, 2010; Niezen, 2017; James, 2012; Kennedy, Bell & Emberely, 2009; Richardson, Carriere & Boldo, 2017.

\(^{44}\) Peters describes the first sense of witnessing as “passive” “seeing” and the latter as “active” “saying” but as I have attempted to indicate throughout, visibility is linked to enunciation, and the former is anything but passive.
in the life of the family. They do not only speak to what is, but to what can and should be” (216).

Boiselle describes aspects of the Coast Salish winter dance, the syúwél ceremony, as resurgent practice of freedom, and suggests Foucault’s lexicon and work on ethics (discussed in Chapter Two) points to a “congenial place for the intellectual and practical resources of the Coast Salish tradition to meet those of the “West” (251). By practice of freedom is meant individual and communal processes of self-constitution or those of “inflecting their own transformation” (self-subjectification, self-determination). It is in syúwél and the care for those in ceremony that she considers the witnessing stance as showing its scope and significance in supporting these processes, in which we are both subjects to and of power in the relational “world[s] in which we are embedded” (252). Boiselle describes the regenerative aspects of syúwél as medicine, for healing “social suffering” wrought by colonialism in therapeutic terms (224), but also as practices of reconnection with transformative power, linking where here has been severing or disconnection.

While I cannot know the experience of syúwél I feel this has metaphoric resonance with the winter dancing and its work that I experienced in 2012-13, not undertaken in a specific, closed and sacred Indigenous context but rather rupturing the public settler-colonial theatre. What if I act as a respectful witness for this transformative work, as a protocol of an avowedly decolonial Indigenous storytelling ethic for political theory scholarship? When responding I would need to assess what is required to support it within the limits of my authority and from my location to inflect inflect transformation. We cannot discount continued subjection to colonial power, nor other uncontrollable forces influencing the word and deed we witness and our responsive retellings. And because of this, magnifying and amplifying the self-determining power of those for whom we bear witness in and through their transformations in ways that do not re-instantiate external control, is imperative. The witnessing stance thus suggests openings to consider the refigurative role for political theorist-storiers, while also modelling a posture of refusal of colonial apprehension (both ethnographic and authorial subjection of Indigenous peoples) and respect for self-determination. It is here Darren Bohle’s questions on respectful witnessing might then be addressed.
Bearing Witness for Decolonial Transformation

Scholarly political theory can involve a protocol of respectful witnessing as a conscientious activity, especially for those of us who are situated in the midst of momentous events unfolding and whose perspective has been assigned some prominence or authority of perception and judgment, however unjustly as theorist-storiers in a public that privileges Euro-Modern literate and narrativizing patterns. In regard to recounting common if not shared experiences of those events, there is a need to be responsive not passive nor to simply corroborate factual truths as information or relay others’ witness (verbalized, written or embodied) - especially in which there are avoidances of representation, such as silences and perhaps refusals to relay the unspeakable (conscious or implicit). Respectful witnessing is not to presage and foreclose on the outcomes of experiential stories but to practice attunement, pay attention, listen and choose words with care, mindful of what cannot be discounted in acting as per Brown’s sense of an ethic in Chapter Five, aware of the pluralistic yet still colonially apprehensive public context in which Indigenous stories will be mediated. While not prescriptive or coercive, a theorist-storier as respectful witness supports those in transformation while offering not imposing, normative guidance from our situated perspectives.

Bearing witness for decolonial transformation also requires conviction. On this Argentinian feminist philosopher Maria Lugones speaks particularly to telling of resistance movement in her concept of faithful witnessing as “conveying meaning against the oppressive grain,” and can be aligned with the Coast Salish protocol of respectful witnessing. Faithful witnessing reinforces the intentionality and solidarity of diverse actions and people and so contributes to the refiguration of reality in the direction that we want to go (Lugones, 2003: 6). Like Maracle, Lugones considers it as a praxis of intercession in a “struggle to connect” both as an activist on the ground and also at the level of meaning-making, where resistance may not align with the representational and categorical logic attached to oppressed peoples (to both

45 Kainai Elder Leroy Little Bear has related that the Blackfoot word for story translates to “involvement in an event” and being asked to tell story is to be asked to tell of one’s involvement (Little Bear quoted in Kovach, 2009: 94). Kovach also suggests similarly that Cree storytellers indicate a commitment to convey the truth of their experience with the term tapwé (truth) (Kovach, 2009: 102-3). The related Anishbaabe term is debwe.

46 Discussing theorist Len Findlay’s consideration of Gayatri Spivak’s question ‘can the subaltern speak’ applied conversely to an elite voice as that of the institution of ‘the university (2009), Kennedy, Bell and Emberley ask: “How do we read testimony that seeks to elude the field of representation - for instance, the testimony of silence? The testimony of embodied acts that do not speak directly but bear witness to what is unspeakable, and must remain unspoken, in a given context?” (Kennedy, Bell & Emberley, 2009: 3).
separate and lump them together, 3). It is an intercession where this categorization aligned with power renders their action and resistance insensible/non sense-able/nonsensical and so must contend with the multiple connotations of the term *sense* (sensibility and sense-ability - as intelligibility, impression, comprehension, perception, feeling, awareness, practicality, responsiveness). As Lugones reflects, to “witness faithfully is difficult, given the manyness of worlds of sense related through power so that oppressive and fragmenting meanings saturate many worlds of sense in hard to detect ways” (6). She suggests that the intercession of faithful witnessing is in interpreting behavior as resistance even when dangerous and against “common sense.” It therefore involves being vulnerable and accepting uncertainty, as it “leads one away from a monosensical life” (7). The faithful witness then does not seek to explain or *make* sense out of plurality but pays attention to the “enormously variegated ways of connection among people,” the “movement of desires, beliefs, and signs” among them by being among them (6).

Maracle might be said to demonstrate Lugones’ concept of faithfulness in this regard. She suggests her positioning is not as an “expert on our people” but rather a learned *si’yam* and “foremost witness” of discussions among Indigenous people on a range of subjects from many perspectives, and so has responsibility to share what she has learned. She is distinguished as a foremost witness by her adeptness at relating “common thought” through her engagement and attunement (Maracle, 2015: xiv). Rejecting the Euro-Western “alienated notion that maintains that theory is separate from story” (Maracle, 2015: 161-2), Maracle provides counsel on taking up a faithful/respectful witnessing stance in academic engagement with Indigenous experiential stories. In her “Oratory on Oratory” (2015) she describes how storywork principles from the Stó:lō oral tradition are also discursive “study formations,” or strategies of inquiry. She describes in detail the “rounds” of a process of study or inquiry toward storying a phenomena or experiences informed by these principles. These reflect the relational and pedagogical patterns

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47 Michael Jackson rejects the concept of bearing witness to subalternized people as important because of a notion they have the most authentic insights as many Marxists like Sartre presented (Jackson, 2002: 266 note 22). He cites an interview with the materialist art theorist and writer John Berger on the notion of access to these insights from “living among” peasants. However, Berger reflected on his role as a storyteller involved being “open to other people” rather than having a sense of ownership over ones work and that he uses the phrase “being a witness” to convey this (Dyer, 1984: 38). Similarly commentator Monique Roelofs discusses how Lugones’ attention to her form of address reflects the view of a “collaborative project of meaning-making” (Roelofs, 2016: 371). Lugones seems echoed by Dakota thinker Kim TallBear who considers her work as “standing with and speaking as faith” – to speak and “co-constitute knowledge in concert with the acts and claims of those among who I inquire” and not “to be silenced by he inability for complete representation” (following Tadiar, TallBear, 2017: 82-3).

48 Maracle also discusses these study formations in “Dancing My Way to Orality”: 310
I discussed earlier and the witnessing stance as Boiselle discusses it. Theorist-storiers are present to witness their subject or interlocutors as “adjuncts” of the process of making meaning through each round of study and articulate what is learned and the conduct necessary to grow from it (Maracle, 2015: 232). Study is oriented toward “bending the light” toward what has been shadowed or masked, the unseen “hidden being” of phenomena or events and untangling “invisible threads” or concatenations between them and people, and across time and location (242). The witnessing theorist-storier looks for “patterned movement” in the hidden being they attune to through “many sets of eyes” or disparate points of view (242-3), then stories this movement as such (241). This theory-storying is an inherently social process which is nevertheless not aimed to “collectivize the thinking” of diverse people in linking them as expressing patterns (242). Rather the freedom and distance between beings is valued through commitment to peaceful coexistence in a “common journey” that is experienced differently (241, 243).

Though not prescriptive, this mode of responsive theory-storying is ethically intentioned toward inflecting conduct. Theorist-storiers encourage their audience or readers to see themselves in relationship with the story being told and so consider shifting the direction of their travelling accordingly, while not encroaching on their capacity to make their own meaning from story (Maracle, 2015: 220). It is still their responsibility to self-determine the appropriate conduct that will “explicitly direct them to the specifics of transformation” (245). As previously discussed, location and presence in an oral storytelling exchange helps us get our “bearings” to

“The first round articulates the direction from which the viewer perceives. The second round engages with what is seen of the physical behavior, the coming into being and the going out of being of the being/phenomenon. The third round articulates the being/phenomenon’s interaction, its relations with other beings (water, flora, fauna, human, stars, night, day, etc.). Next comes the articulation of its characteristics – its personalities, quirks, oddities – and of its difference from the human condition. Then follows a discussion about what was cherished and hidden, but is now seen in the light of our different perspectives, from our separate and now shared observations. Where do we intersect and connect? How do we commune with this being/phenomenon? How do we interact in the least obtrusive way possible?” (Maracle, 2015: 244).

Shawn Wilson’s own articulation of the obligation of the scholarly storyteller also emphasizes that it is not to “make conclusions” for their listeners as though they possesses more knowledge than others but rather “make connections with ideas,” aware and respectful of the audience’s “level of awareness” and readiness to make meaning with a story from their own positions in a web of relationships (Wilson, 2008: 133-4). Here the style of storytelling for engaging the audience through implicature is important. Maracle critiques the dispassionate and inaccessible language of much Euro-Western theory as a mere substitution of words for others, used to “persuade us that story is no longer the foundation of abstract thought” (Maracle, 2015: 162, also 164). While not all those who know stories are storytellers, not all storytellers are orators with the gift of communicating beautifully in “ordinary and entertaining language” (165). I have not used the word beautiful incidentally in this chapter when referring to the words of those si’yam orators like Maracle and Mabel McKay.
judge the appropriate level of explicitness or “degree of unfolding necessary” to guide a story’s interpretation by its audience (Lightning, 1990: 230). This sensing experience cannot be fully replicated in literate, published scholarship unable to predict who are reading and their interface with an account. The relationship between teller and listener becomes purely conceptual (Kovach, 2009: 1001-2). However we might consider ways to expand the respectful witnessing stance to written accounts in a “tertiary role” of “witnessing without testimony” (McNeill, 2015). We can also accept the uncertainty (or vulnerability as Lightning put it) that pervades all storytelling exchanges when we relinquish an individualist authorial approach. This uncertainty is in what exceeds the perceivable even for those with careful and practiced attunement to these forces, the ungraspable and ultimate inability to control how story resonates or may be taken up once told. Acceptance of a “principled uncertainty” (Thieme & Makmillen, 2017) can then be considered in how our scholarly theory-storying fits between the dynamic context of lived and living experiences and representational definition or explanation that tends to solidify and fix them in written accounts (Tafoya discussed in Wilson, 2009: 99, 123).

Like Arendt, Maracle also emphasizes storytelling’s function in producing historical consciousness in a way that speaks to the role of the theorist-storier recounting momentous events and the pedagogical responsiveness of respectful witnesses to transformation. Remembrance in storying for Maracle is not just to recall experience but is always a “re-membering” fed from the past (one’s own, ancestral, the earth’s, others’) to re-create our connections with it. This re-membering is also directional, memories are storied in such a way to “suit the direction we are moving in or the direction we want to move in if a shift is occurring” as we “may wish to achieve a new direction, secure an old direction, or mark the path travelled so that others may find the path easier to follow” (Maracle, 2015: 2, 14). This can then be considered a “means of intervention preventing humans from re-traversing dangerous and dehumanizing paths” (235).

Intervention, or my preferred term intercession is especially important when there is a “disaster” or “crisis” of “dis-membering,” as with colonization (Maracle, 2015: 225; Smith, 2012: 148). In such conditions a dominant conception of truth and sense might be imposed to shape collective memory of the facts of common public experiences in order to censor and oppress (as per the IRS system for example). Bearing witness is here not about proving an objective truth to settle disputed perspectives but responding with a critical understanding of our
experiences from our situated locations to support the inflection of transformation in a decolonial direction. This understanding does not discount the expansive existence of multiple collective worlds and personal, perspectival realms or territories of meaning among people in any storytelling exchange.\footnote{Greg Sarris discusses how all “cross-cultural” communication in particular involves multiple languages and voices, “heteroglossia” and “pluravocality” (Sarris, 1993: 4-6).} It does not aim to present a unifying definitional, homogenizing or counter-narrative sensibility to living relational interactions from any side but it can express solidarity with those whose public appearance and enunciation are structurally disadvantaged to support decolonial interpretations. In this way, respectful witnessing of the transformative work undertaken during the winter of 2012-13 involves attesting to sense-able movement of resistance and resurgence, of which a multiplicity of events and practices can be considered a part, storying some lines between them and through time, though invariably incomplete.\footnote{Neal McLeod emphasizes how Cree “narrative imagination” is a “quintessentially Indigenous conception and practice of theory” which is embodied, reflective, grounding and linking, in “constant play between present, past and future” and this includes subversive processes of “imagine another state of affairs” (94, 98). The theorization that all storytellers engage in both describing and critically reflecting on or analyzing the events of the stories they tell or retell, they are brought to life, offered as “traces of experience through which the listeners had to make sense of their own lives and experiences” (13). He emphasizes the importance of “remembering publicly,” that traditional storytellers felt a “moral duty” to tell. He goes on to suggest that “[a]nyone who attempts to link various pieces of stories together into a larger story is always limited” as our understanding and awareness of detail is always and invariable incomplete, with possible “perspectives and vantage points…unlimited as experience itself” (McLeod, 2007: 8).}

**Storied Practices and Storying Praxis**

Maracle’s view of storying as make links of kinship between phenomena, events, practices, words and deeds returns me to consider the principle of wholism in a conception of what constitutes Indigenous oral culture, traditions and storywork. As has been indicated, story and storytelling encompass much more than the intentioned or aurally discursive and is also embodied, multi-sensory and contextual. As Leslie Marmon Silko relates, storytelling in Indigenous oral traditions relates to a wide range of “telling activity” that is not limited to “old stories” and does “not differentiate or fragment stories and experiences” nor narrow settings or occasions for storytelling,\footnote{Archibald gives three examples of Coast Salish settings and occasions of storytelling in the more direct sense as the Longhouse in gatherings and ceremony (public of a kind), on the land during activities like medicine gathering (individuated of a kind) and in the home among more immediate family (private of a kind) (Archibald, 2008: 71-75).} but is rather understood as a “way of life” (Silko, 1981: 56; 59). Fellow distinguished Pueblo (Acoma) poet Simon Ortiz elaborates:
“Oral tradition is inclusive; it is the actions, behaviour, relationships, practices throughout the whole social, economic, and spiritual life process of a people. In this respect, the oral tradition is the consciousness of the people. I think at times ‘oral tradition’ is defined too strictly in terms of vocal-verbal manifestations in stories, songs, meditations, ceremonies, ritual, philosophies, and clan and tribal histories passed from older generations to the next” (Ortiz, 1992: 7).  

Non-Indigenous theory scholarship across disciplines has begun to catch up to Indigenous theory in decentering logocentric approaches to knowledge that attempt to read or decode relational and dynamic worlds like literate textual objects, to consider practice, embodied and ‘practical’ knowledge “inadequately represented or expressed by language” (Stahl, 2002). Yet this decentering still tends to involve an (anthropocentric) understanding of language and story as carriers of meaning associated with verbalization and aural articulation or visual representation.

Here I would like to turn to the concept of “storied practices” and storying praxis as I was first introduced to the phrase in a 2011 essay by Nuu-Chah-nulth law scholar Johnny Mack from his conversation around the current B.C. Treaty Process with his relation Wickaninnish (Cliff Atleo Sr.) an Elder and spokesperson of the Ahousaht. This brings the implications of a wholistic consideration of oral traditions into better focus with relevance to political theory engaging Indigenous resurgence.

Mack asks how relations with settler society and the approach to resolving conflict in these relations would change if “we took stories seriously” (Mack, 2011: 287). To consider the narrative foundations of settler claims to land and jurisdiction unceded by Indigenous peoples would require a reckoning with the injustice and illegality of those claims based largely on discredited ethno-logical justifications for their lack of equivalent rights and title (288). The

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53 Kathy Absolon cites Stl’atl’imx educator Peter Cole effectively on how orality as a label does not go far (Cole quoted in Absolon, 2011: 24). In his practice and writing style with poetic timbre and rhythms, Cole has ruptured Euro-Modern norms of academic writing and methodology such as “scholarly referencing” as I discuss in a note above, rejecting punctuation and structure that he asserts leads to imprisoning codification, classification, transliterations of Indigenous orality. His example might be a provocative injunction to address colonial apprehension and I am interested in considering it in further work on rhetorical strategies of refusal and refiguration (see Cole, 2002: 447-9).

54 Anthropologist Anne Stahl identifies thinkers in linguistics (Levi-Strauss, Saussure), semiotics (Barthes, Baudrillard), dialogical (Bakhtin) and discourse studies (Foucault and those inspired by him) as sources of logocentrism in 20th century theory. Contributions from phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), existentialist and Marxist thought (Sartre, Althusser) being made to theory (as with Bourdieu, Certeau, Giddens, Lefebvre) working “against the privileging of language by attending to the embodied practices of everyday life” (Stahl, 2002).
answer would seem to lead to the conclusion that settlers should pack up and leave but as Mack acknowledges, a full confrontation with the narrative foundations of settlement that would encourage this resolution is unlikely any time soon. As such a shift in settler society is not in Indigenous peoples’ control, Mack reformulates the question to what would change “if we took our stories seriously” (289). Mack sees the B.C. Treaty Process as one manifestation of an apprehensive “liberal imperialist” narrative predicated on consent but evolved from one of colonization built on plunder and force. This narrative and the narrativizing tradition it is embedded in has endeavored to subordinate and subsume Indigenous storied and storying traditions over the last 150 years and has become institutionalized and naturalized to a great degree (291-3). Rather than an uncontested and “essential set of stories,” here Mack suggests storied tradition refers to the complex, dynamic and contextual practices that constitute and orient a people’s way of life (290), as Ortiz described orality above. The effect of colonialism has not been the complete loss of pre-colonial stories but damage and erosion of their contexts in the practices that established the “perceptual orientation and responsibilities that flowed from those stories” (295).

Mack forwards the Nuu-chah-nulth metaphor of hoquotist as Wickaninnish uses it to poignantly describe this disorientation as having one’s canoe overturned. Where once there was a concerted effort to prevent Indigenous peoples from getting back into or rebuilding their canoes (eliminatory policies), this deliberate submergence has been (somewhat) alleviated. But Indigenous peoples’ energy remains focused on the struggle to simply stay afloat (physical survival) and so much of the knowledge around the canoe – how to paddle, how to carve - has been forgotten and many of the old-growth cedars lost (296). Mack discusses his own disorientation being raised largely outside his storied tradition and the language that gives its texture, as many of his generation and those younger have been (294-5). Having a literate, English, academic education he understands the effects of coming to share some of the settler narrative tradition, producing what Kainaiwa elder Leroy Little Bear calls a fractured or jagged worldview, or mismatched eyes like Coyote as Archibald describes (295-6; Little Bear, 2000).

Given the reality of ongoing asymmetrical dynamics in the Indigenous-settler relationship that cannot be utterly turned away from, Mack sees a reorientation within Indigenous storied traditions as a way to regain a subject position outside colonial and liberal-imperial narratives. This would give the perspective necessary to assess different approaches to reshaping this
relationship but also redirect focus away from seeking freedom through emancipatory frameworks that give the relationship with settler state and society precedence (like treaty, recognition and even reconciliation) (Mack, 2011: 293). Yet how to begin to effect this reorientation? Mack asks for guidance from Wickaninnish and his questions seem to reflect literate inclinations: whose rendition of a story should be taken as authoritative? Do they contain deliberative principles that can be used to resolve conflicts? (302). His Elder suggests this is unnecessarily complicating a simple suggestion, which is to begin engaging in the practices that give the stories life, and for their own people, the chiefly feasting process is a good starting point (Mack, 2011: 304-5).

Wickaninnish’s suggestion affirms how metaphor in Indigenous storywork is far from abstracting – *hoquotist* tells that we begin to regenerate or refigure Indigenous lifeworlds by paddling, by carving, by feasting, by dancing, by weaving - all storied practices and (re)storying praxis. Mack’s paraphrasing of his view that a shift in the decolonial project from primarily the relationship with Settler state and society to one of “resolving our relationship to ourselves and the stories that constitute us” through such practices (302) is one of the most resonant descriptions of Indigenous resurgence I have encountered – a reorientation to living more fully again from within our storied traditions as I described at the outset in Chapter One. As Mack came to learn at a greater depth from Wickaninnish (and worth quoting at length), Indigenous people

“tend to understand the world as a series of relationships between performative agents. We understand things through what they do rather than identifying any particular essences of their being...I am beginning to understand that what was lost was not an essence or a thing. Of course, we have lost a vast amount of knowledge, but that knowledge was acquired through practice… Thus, though we may not know how to build our canoes or paddle them now, we have reason to hope that this knowledge will return if we embed ourselves in the kind of practices that generated it…It is not a matter of returning to an old and almost lost story. It is a matter of looking back to those stories through practice. These practices will provide the inspiration and instruction as we move to rebuild a canoe that can help us navigate the currents we encounter in the present” (Mack, 2011: 304-5).
The editors of the collection Johnny Mack’s essay appears in – *Storied Communities: Narratives of Contact and Arrival in Constituting Political Community* - note how it speaks to the dilemma for critical scholars who want to make both political and epistemological space for Indigenous knowledges in settings like courtrooms and classrooms, which filter, deform or co-opt our stories (Lessard, Johnson & Webber, 2011: 17). They point out how he shifts the setting or occasions of storying/knowledge production to Indigenous communities at gatherings like feasts. But most crucial for political theory engaging resurgence is the emphasis on practice and process – storied practices and storying praxis as transformative action and relational process of meaning-making/knowledge (re) production. This emphasis presents storytelling as a regenerative *doing* not tied to a body of specific stories of a traditional ‘genre’ treated as objectified texts, or indeed perhaps even language. This emphasis has a twofold importance. One, it indicates how resurgence disrupts a colonial ethnological distinction between storytelling and customary ‘Native’ practices (of art, of making or subsistence laboring) and transformative political action. For example, the practices and events associated with *INM* that refused such distinction and so troubled their narrativization as a coherent and singular movement by Euro-Modern criteria. Two, it indicates how principles of storywork out of oral tradition suggest the potential of a methodological ethic for telling of such practices and their experiential stories in literate scholarship. This is an ethic that can facilitate faithful or respectful witness and response to them while modelling principles contributing to the regeneration of this tradition’s modes of knowledge (re) production. This theory-storying of Indigenous resistance or resurgence practices like those of *INM* that are already themselves storied and storying, is to support Indigenous

55 Sarah Hunt refers similarly to dancing during Potlach where the experience of doing-knowing-being is confluent – in dancing, Hunt “learned over and over what it is to perform our law, our business, our spiritual obligations and relationships” (Hunt, 2014).

56 Marmon Silko suggests that “even the use of a specific language is less important than the one thing – which is the ‘telling,’ or storytelling” (Marmon Silko, 1981: 55). In discussing Vine Deloria Jr., Navajo scholar Reid Gómez calls this a “process-oriented theorizing” that emphasizes experience rather than apprehensive explanation but rejects the dichotomous opposition of theory and experience and the subordination of one to the other. In this approach language is understood as transformative and not only representative of reality (Gómez, 2005: 152-3).

57 This is a categorical thinking Arendt fell into as discussed in the previous chapter, bringing the ancient Greek category of poiesis (making) as a distinction back into theoretical use. Métis poet and educator Warren Cariou considers the term as good a descriptor as any for how Indigenous poetics disrupts colonial boundaries and categories, but this is a decentered positive appropriation of the concept: “The more I think about it, the more I have come to believe that Aristotle’s dusty old Greek word is as good as any for what this particular kind of Indigenous expression tries to do. *Poesis* [*sic*]: to make, to create. To be all verb...is most appropriate to Indigenous ways of thinking, in which the entire world is always doing or relating rather than simply being” (Cariou, 2015: 31-2).
peoples’ self-determined efforts at inflecting their own transformations, while also offering interpretive guidance in decolonial directions.

As Emberley has described of Indigenous artists’ storytelling practices engaging colonial trauma and violence, the kinship connections they make between past and present, people and concepts etc. are likely to appear “uncanny” to established categories (of ‘Nativeness’ or the political for example) as they defamiliarize them, and so the “testimonies” they bear are unsettling to dominant perspectives of common experiences and narratives of the constitution of Canada’s pluralistic public (Emberley, 2014; 2013: 149). The storying links scholars make of these practices when taking up the methodological ethic I am proposing here may likewise be deemed uncanny and unsettling to dominant perspectives in political theory. Relatedly Bohle suggested that it is the respectful witness’ undecided “attentiveness to what might astonish and disrupt” the familiar with the unexpected, a “listening for exemplarity” that forgoes “deductive judgment through attentiveness to unprecedented stories that might illustrate exemplary ways of living differently” (263-4). These observations suggest how political theorists might approach momentous events of public Indigenous storywork in practices such as those during the winter we danced. Not as unprecedented however but as exemplars of patterns through time - of domination but more crucially, resistance, resurgence and survivant alternative lifeways. These can be considered flashpoints in Arendt’s sense, illuminating everyday realities of experience, multiple worlds of intelligibility, knowing-being-doing and feeling that have existed and do exist in present Canada simultaneously, and also decolonial possibilities for the future.

Here roles for Indigenous political theorists in particular as witnesses for and storiers of political movement can be addressed as also attending to refusal – judging the level of disclosure or explicit conveyance of meaning between what is appropriate to share in public toward decolonizing the relationship with settler state and society, and what is for Indigenous peoples’ own processes of internal refiguration. Here I can once again relate this to Dale Turner’s concept of “word warriors” that has been influential to my thinking on the roles of theory and theorists in Indigenous politics, though I am not entirely in agreement with its imperative as he lays it out. Like Mack, he suggests domesticating theories of Indigenous rights and title held up by liberal-imperialist narratives purport to emerge from and involve a “coherent philosophical vision of political justice,” but do not adequately address colonial legacies, respect the inherent or sui generis nature of these rights and title, do not question the legitimacy of the state’s claims to land
and jurisdiction nor acknowledge their hypocrisy without Indigenous participation in their formulation (Turner, 2006: 5-7). Nevertheless these theories and their narratives cannot be ignored. This leads to his argument for a “critical Indigenous philosophy” centered around three projects: understanding Indigenous philosophies as source of Indigenous difference/Indigeneity, engaging Euro-Western philosophy on its terms to articulate this difference as politically meaningful and engaging the Euro-Western history of ideas as both a philosophical and political activity to expose coloniality (94-121). The first project can be taken up by Indigenous philosophers with the authority to engage and articulate their intellectual tradition on its own terms and preserve distinctiveness, the Elders and si’yams. The other two projects are the purview of word warriors, Indigenous intellectuals educated in Euro-Western theory who are guided by Indigenous philosophers on how their ways of knowing can be talked and written about (109).

The projects and “intellectual division of labour” Turner organizes them along seem apt to ‘hold the line’ of disclosure in support of the epistemic and discursive shifts of Indigenous resurgence. However I do not agree with his framing of their imperative (which he agrees to be unjust, 10) as an uncontestable need to “reconcile” Indigenous ways of knowing with Euro-Western philosophy as expressed in the normative legal and political discourses of the normalized and naturalized (settler) state as the locus of politics. Turner suggests that once Indigenous ways of knowing are entered into these discourses to form theories of rights and title they will have to be explained and defended as “sound arguments” by dominant Euro-Modern standards of theoretical argument, as evolving from “a series of propositions that can be shown to be true” constructed to be “coherent and most of all convincing” (10). These standards are also involved in narrativizing or historicizing stories and storied practices and I appreciate the sense of this defensive necessity is powerful in the current settler-colonial context. However following the guidance of Elders in storywork like Archibald and Maracle, I submit we can weave a storytelling ethic from traditional principles capable of effective engagement with what is while also effecting refiguration and transformation to what could and should be. This is not to ignore current realities of unequal material and discursive conditions and knowledge loss but shifts the grounds of where and how we orient ourselves to start to address them. Wickaninnish

58 Coulthard also takes issue with Turner’s argument against a turn away from the state as assuming that settler-colonial domination is premised on an exclusion of Indigenous views and perspectives rather than their internalization (Coulthard, 2014: 45-7; 178-9).
suggests we begin by practice, we learn by engaging in practices and processes that generate knowledge and story by our own terms and apply what we learn to our thinking on navigating these conditions.

A Weaving Ethic

In her consideration of bringing storytelling practice from oral tradition into scholarly methodology, Coast Salish (Lyackson) educator Qwul’sih’yah’maht Robina Thomas has described the sense that among other stories, IRS survivors’ experiences must be told of as counter-stories of resistance to colonialism, though “there is always the fear of documenting our stories,” including the risk that they will be “edited to parallel the Canadian story” (R. Thomas, 2005: 242). In her thesis work with IRS survivors’ stories, questions of how to engage her scholarly storywork were paramount:

“How could I do this work with a good mind and a good heart or, to use the Hul’qumi’num word, uy’skwuluwun?...A part of ethics for me as a Lyackson woman relates to my responsibility to the storytellers. I was “witness” to their stories, and as such was responsible for ensuring that the work done respected uy’skwuluwun - that is, that I had paid attention to their words, their lives” (R. Thomas, 2005: 249). She attests that despite her sense of preparation and respectful attention she could not anticipate the challenges that would come from her witness, being a part of these stories as a community and family member as well as an academic (250). Thomas’ reflections are resonant with me though my location is different. I have in this chapter tried my hand at weaving a storytelling ethic for scholarly political theory to engage and connect Indigenous experiential stories, from some learned perspectives on some principles arguably kindred among many Indigenous peoples, in the process looking to align and link the principles and patterns I discern between them with those I discerned in Arendt’s work. I have proceeded with good heart and mind, mindful that my intent and attentiveness cannot anticipate or control the outcomes.

As I addressed in Chapter One, engaging Arendt at length is not meant to detract from the authority of Indigenous perspectives on story-theory, as though each thinker I engage here would not merit the same, to treat them as an addendum or ‘mere’ embroidery on a Euro-Western cloth. I come from a strong textile and embroidery tradition, my huipil is resplendent with flowers, animal life, spirit, and ancestors. Rather it is to indicate how Arendt’s perspective (especially
when de-centered, layered and pluralized) is not unique or itself prefigurative of an entirely new or unprecedented perspective but indeed itself refigurative. Arendt was bringing forth some frayed threads in her own received and claimed traditions that align with Indigenous understandings of story from oral traditions sustained outside the Euro-Modern imaginary. These intellectual resources are not destroyed or inert but survivant and vibrant, and we can engage with them to inform our scholarly practices to address colonial apprehension. Indigenous thinkers of course do not need to refer to Euro-Western theorists like Arendt in this at all. Like Métis scholar Zoe Todd has said of recent shifts in climate science and theory toward wholism and the integral, this is “what many an Indigenous thinker around the world could have told you for millennia” (Todd, 2016: 8). However like Mack, the warp of my huipil has been laid by my upbringing outside my own Indigenous ancestral storytelling tradition and my education in those of Western political theory. Whether a weft of patterns from diverse Indigenous storied traditions and storying praxis can be woven with it without harm has no guarantee.

I am also still uncertain as to the risks of sliding into an authorial narrativizing tendency in my efforts at theorizing - tracing story lines from and through many and diverse memories of events, words and deeds, the storied practices and storying praxis of Idle No More, as I take up in Chapter Seven. Yet I upheld the importance of this collectivizing ‘storying together’ and in this I think again on the imperative to do so with IRS experiences that Thomas speaks to. An example that materializes this in the metaphor of weaving is the Witness Blanket installation, a mixed-media quilt made of hundreds of reclaimed items from structures associated with the IRS system and its legacies, which was publically displayed in locations across present Canada for four years. The project asked us not to merely view it but to bear witness, as the blanket itself does. The carver, Ha-yalth-kingeme Carey Newman (Kwakwaka’wakw, Salish) described the importance of the blanket as symbol of protection and the role of the installation in connecting “pieces of history,” with “each fragment, a silent witness to some part of the story” that together make a formidable re-collection or in Maracle’s phrase, a re-membering of experiences for coming generations (Newman, 2015). I can return to Million here, who speaks similarly of the affect of TRC testimonies and her role in theorizing-storying them together despite the risks. For

59 Julia Emberley emphasizes the natality of Indigenous cultural knowledge production (in gendered terms), suggesting its attempted fragmentation and the crushing construction of “another epistemic edifice” on top. But evoking Foucault and Benjamin and in alignment with my emphasis on survivance, she suggests that contrary to the perceived need for an excavation or “archaeology” of knowledge to “dig up the remains of these other ways of knowing, such knowledges have not hardened into historic or prehistoric remains” (2013: 150).
me this encapsulates a sense I have come to of the decolonial imperative and responsibility as respectful witness of and for the winter we danced:

“Each testimony carried the emotionally laden affective force to transcend the individual’s experience. That affective force made it necessary that these stories become a collective story told across the lands...And because I am a scholar, and in particular an Indigenous scholar, I must act in the present to establish links” (Million, 2014: 32).

Both Archibald and Maracle metaphorize storywork as weaving, the arts of Stó:lō basket and blanket weaving respectively, emphasizing a relation with the physical knowledge practice it references. In Archibald’s gift of a storybasket I perceive a vessel woven of principles that can travel with scholars, hold and carry stories in an Indigenous way.60 Maracle’s blanket is the gift of a si’yam, woven of orality it wraps around and protects Indigenous ways of knowing-being-doing. This basket and blanket are testaments to survivance – they bear witness as storiers might. Weaving has not incidentally been devalued as a gendered form of ‘craftwork’ (among others) in Euro-Modern societies, considered apolitical and non-intellectual, the transmission of teachings in their making were not directly targeted by settler-colonial policymakers of the past as part of eliminatory campaigns that banned ceremony like Potlatch. That was their mistake because the gift, the knowledge, the story is in the making (Simpson, 2013). Maracle learned with her grandmother:

“I am a weaver. We must learn to physically weave our blankets before we can know how to weave story into the fabric of our lives. When the weaver’s threads get tangled, unraveling the knot depends upon which strand of the web we tug at. We are encouraged to sense it: “Don’t touch it yet, my Ta’ah says, wait, the key thread will show itself to you.” I wait, looking at the knot, and eventually the thread presents itself to me just as my Ta’ah said it would.” (Maracle, 2015: 17)

60 In her Kaandossiwin, Kathy Absolon takes up the metaphor of gathering the ripest blueberries in a basket to prepare and then gift a pie for her process in writing the book, which describes Anishnaabe ways of coming to know and (re) searching as research methodology (Absolon, 2011: 10-11). I once was pointedly told I may have engaged in ‘cherry picking’ and this stuck with me as a negative assertion, that has since given way to considering the ethical role of the Indigenous theory-storier in selectively gathering resources for their storywork to support decolonial transformations.
I am not a learned weaver in my own tradition that has physically made my *huipil* but I have received a similar lesson of untangling knots through my beadwork and crafting practice and have applied it to my theory scholarship. Indigenous oral and Euro-Modern literate ways of theory-storying may be ultimately mismatched patterns whose threads have become entwined beyond the ability to entirely unravel them - but knots like the ‘problem’ of colonial apprehension as I had initially considered it, derived from complex colonial entanglements (Thomas, 1991) may not be. I have worried at this knot that forms the subject of inquiry for this dissertation story for nearly a decade. Challenged by refusal, unable to start pulling on threads and drawing out others despite sensing along the relational web from my standpoint which ones I responsibly should or could, I was afraid of the accountability for my judgment this implies. My own tangled threads seemed to bind my hands. I have made mistakes when I have told stories and am certain to continue to make mistakes.\(^{61}\) Yet like Wickaninnish, Maracle also gives affirmation that “storiers are not required to wait until the end of our journey to start telling” (Maracle, 2015: 225). To become an adept or good weaver of storywork blankets or baskets – to sense, listen and tell *well* - we must “act in the present to establish links” – *we must weave*. And so, these are the strands of my *huipil* still being woven.

\(^{61}\) In my first publication I discussed *hoquotist* and both misspelled and somehow misinterpreted the phrase as referring to reorientation not disorientation. I am embarrassed and hope this did not offend or mislead anyone, but I cannot retract the mistake, only acknowledge and learn from it.
CHAPTER SEVEN
We Have Never Been Idle: Storying Resurgent Movement

“This narrative is not meant to be documentary. In fact it is meant to evade documents. It is meant for the reader to feel and to say I was there and indeed I saw”

Re-membering

there is no end
there is no end
there is no end
that is the story when we tell it.
there is no end
the flood
is always a beginning
a return.

- Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, from “Dancing in a Mall” (Sinclair, 2014a)

I am standing in view of the Golden Boy, still shining and clutching his wheat sheaf against the frost, memory of sweet hot sunshine deep beneath his gilded coating. I bet his little butt is frigid. Just like mine. There is a crowd of about 300 bundled up against the wind, which is whipping up a Mohawk Warrior Society flag. Eagle feather standards cut against the clear grey sky. The road-dirtied slush is slowly chilling my toes and seeping, creeping through layers of boot and sock until, with all the winter’s inevitability, it reaches skin. This is skin all too susceptible to freezing. “Oh well, this is where I need to be.” It’s December 10th, 2012 in Treaty I and Métis territories near the muddy forking of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, the floodplain now masked in white. Manitowapow. Where I was raised. This is the winter we are dancing, more than usual and in some unusual places. It’s December 21st, 2012.1 On another river to the

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1 Manitowapow is one name for Manitoba, land of water where the voice of Manitou is heard in the waves of the lakes (see Sinclair & Cariou, 2011: 4-5). December 10th was proclaimed National Day for Solidarity and
east of us, Theresa Spence, elected Chief of the Cree community of Attawapiskat is engaging in a ceremonial fast and is praying for her people in view of Parliament Hill in Omâmîwinini, Algonquin territory. Firekeepers from many nations are ensuring she is warm. An icy howling at the seams of her lodge continues unabated but it will not enter, not yet. The Federal Omnibus Budget Bill C-45 threatens the further erosion of Indigenous inherent, constitutional and treaty rights to protect homelands and water. This is the winter that many stories like rivers are coming to a confluence as *Idle No More*. This is a time that these rivers are raging over their banks, like an early thaw fed by a long season of heavy snowfall. They thunder across the lawns of legislatures, fill the floors of shopping malls crowded with holiday shoppers, dam the asphalt arteries of major highways, inundate the net-worked circuitry of social media and cascade from thousands of hearts beating, it seems, in unison, a unison that doesn’t submerge difference. There is *movement*. Movement, that ripples out in circles from many centres. It is May 8th, 2018. I am sitting in a bustling café in Lekwungen, another place of waters meeting to bring change. Where I have been raised up. The rivers have returned to their steady flowing, their own incessant motion carrying recollections, circulating meaning. Rivers are lines and circles. I am recalling that first afternoon over five years ago now, during the winter we danced and the hair stands up on my forearms. It’s just the spring breeze through the open door carrying the scent of returning life. Maybe it’s stirring the memory of cold, of winters past in my skin and perhaps something else, deeper and insistent like the rivers’ flowing. A transformation. Story still unfolding. This is the seasonal round. This is the revolution with no end.

**A Beginning, A Return**

It was that winter in 2012-13, that Indigenous resurgence’s refusals of colonial apprehension and reorientations’ challenge for scholarly theory-storying fully emerged to me. The incursions into settler space of the flash mob round dances was one practice that instantiated Resurgence. The temperature was about -38 with the wind chill that afternoon, as attested by Ryan McMahon who was also there freezing his buns (McMahon, 2014: 98). My memory of that day shifted and I was convinced the rally was on December 21st. I have decided it was both the 10th and the 21st. This winter did that to memory, to time and space. Similarly I realized at approximately 12:30am on May 23rd that I wrote of the PKOLS reclamation in this chapter exactly 5 years to the day it occurred on May 22nd, 2013. For this I have no explanation. For a short video report of the rally by CBC News see “Idle No More rally draws 300 to Manitoba legislature” (December 10, 2012; also Coates, 2015: 52-3). A rally to mark 5 years since that winter was held this past December (see “Idle No More Was A Huge Awakening,” December 23, 2017).

2 Here is the story of Camossung and her grandfather turned to stone by Haylas, the transformer at the place of the reversing falls on the presently named Gorge Waterway in Victoria. See Bryce, 2018 for a retelling.
this disruption. But it was the depiction in mainstream news of the ceremonial fast undertaken by Theresa Spence, as solely a *hunger strike* demanding audience with then Prime Minister Stephen Harper, that clarified for me the challenge of *retelling* in its dissonance with Indigenous understandings from ‘inside the movement’ (as on CBC radio, see Ghomeshi & Tunnaciffe, 2014). But particularly, in the medical opinion that she “was not suffering as expected” (Coates, 2015: 91), which prompted assertion of her liquid diet as incongruent with a strike in which the presumed end is death (A. Simpson, 2013 & 2016b). Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg artist and *INM* organizer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson who visited Spence, made an interpretive interjection at the time to this effect, locating her action in a present ‘crisis’ within a long struggle and tradition of survivance for all Indigenous peoples, and specifically to the practice of earlier generations of Simpson’s own people who engaged in fish broth fasts when facing genocidal conditions of scarcity (L. Simpson, 2014a & 2014b; also 2012). As an *Ogichidaakwe* (warrior woman and leader) in ceremony, her prerogative of self-determination over her body was to be upheld and respected. This was a (re)storying that repudiated the ascription of meaning amenable to the dominant political rationality, of the hunger strike as an individuated act of defiance confronting the Canadian state or seeking its ‘audience.’ It repudiated the intent and outcome this state expected and desired.

Simpson raised questions for me on when or whether we may offer too much documentation of our stories’ meanings and non-conformity to this rationality. Casting them within its language of dissent exposes them to easy appropriations or dismissals as failures, but describing them otherwise (even if intended or ‘encoded’ for *Indigenous* eyes and ears), may also render them amenable to capture by ethnological reason. That is, as Native customs outside the dominant realm of intelligibility, appearance and enunciation as effectual and productive political action, which Simpson herself has stressed as a struggle in regard to perceptual framing of Indigenous women’s and LGBTQ2S people’s in particular (Simpson, Nanibush & Williams, 2012: 1-2). This is even when these stories may unfold in public and so are oriented to a certain visibility, audibility or disclosure, in which an attempt at shared understanding of what Hannah Arendt called the factual truths of events and their record in Indigenous and settler collective memory, may be tactically imperative to decolonization.

Theorists ‘reading’ the discursive interjections of storytellers on the ground like Simpson in this context, must contend with the risks of attempts at relating the meaning of such storied
practices beyond only attending to their disruption of settler-colonial narratives and desires of and for Native elimination and pain. We must consider the ongoing limits of enunciation for Indigeneity by contending with an engrained division between categories of the political and ethnocultural that has served Indigenous dispossession and domination. For example, in conveying their unsettling of these narratives, desires and categories, should we explain the meaning of the ceremonial fast against the hunger strike (see MacDougall, 2012)? Must we always re-tell the ancestral “origin and significance” of the round-dance ceremony explicitly in our published accounts of INM (see Kino-nda-niimi, 2014: 24)? If we judge this to be necessary, we must accept the relational responsibilities in doing so. Against a reading as recognition politics and a depoliticizing culturalism, supportive commentators may describe practices in the ambit of INM as a post-structuralist dissent akin to contemporary horizontalist protest or social movements; or conversely as anti-colonial resistance, to argue its incommensurability with such an association as the former. Yet from hunger striking/fasting to blockading/protecting, marching/journeying to flash mob/round dances - shared by moccasin telegraph from word of mouth to Twitter – their interface of what is dominantly perceived as traditional with the modern communicates a stubborn non-conformity with classifications of politics and racialized ethnoculture that casts tradition as reactionary and retrograde being-ness, and modernity as creative and progressive becoming. That these associations underpin the dominant language of liberation and change with which both social justice/horizontalist and anti-colonial readings can be associated, exposes the problem of apprehension. Its rupture comes by storying INM’s practices as resurgence, with its epistemic and discursive reorientations through refusal and refiguration.

Some of the storied practices the winter we danced can be made intelligible to the dominant political rationality as oppositional displays responsive to and targeting antagonist state initiatives, holding the state’s sovereign authority to account, especially the linear protest events of blockades and marches against Bill C-45. Yet these practices also had what commentators saw as “Native cultural” elements or spiritual and ‘historic’ meaningfulness that broke these lines of force as such, like the Youth marches including the 1,600 km Journey of Nishiyuu from Whapmagoostui on James Bay to Ottawa (Coates, 2015: 115-127; MacDougall, 2012). This can be symbolically encompassed by the emblem of the raised “feather and the fist” (Kuttner, 2012) so effectually personified by Amanda Polchies when she left the line at Elispogtog to approach
200 RCMP armed with rifles, tear-gas, batons, rubber bullets.\(^3\) As commentators attempting to decipher and so make sense of the “meaning” of these practices’ non-conformity would suggest “a fast/hunger strike as part of Idle No More (along with the many prayer ceremonies, drumming, round dance flash mobs, etc. that have been happening) shows how the very Native culture that the people are standing up for is very much alive and experiencing a (re)surgence that can be a point of hope and solidarity in this country racked with so much present and historical pain and amnesia” (MacDougall, 2012).

Asserting the basis of INM in protecting and regenerating a homogenous ‘Native’ culture and ‘displaying’ its vitality in the public performance of practices associated with it, can bely their political deferral to the foundations of other authorities, and that in this they may “demarcate identity and seize tradition” in ways unintelligible to the settler eye and ear (to evoke Audra Simpson again, A. Simpson, 2000: 114). That is, in ways that evade ethnographic documentation and explication as “just an Indian thing,” but perhaps not only about a shared “search for meaning” and healing either (see Kinew, 2014).

Rather than blockades or marches, the inward moving and gazing revolutions of drum circles and round dancing perhaps express this limit to intelligibility best. The Wikipedia entry for “flash mob” describes this as a spontaneous assembly to engage in “unusual and seemingly pointless” acts and “generally not applied to events and performances organized for the purposes of politics” (“Flash mob,” 2018).\(^4\) If the intelligibility of politics is only as agonistic, conflict and state oriented confrontations around specific grievances. Participants like Anishnaabe comedian Ryan McMahon described the flash mob as a “new form of protest” that aligned with the round dance to give a “glimpse of who we are” (McMahon, 2014: 100), a glimpse “filled with meaning” and declaration of presence more than to “celebrate being Aboriginal” (as per Coates, 2015: 61; 69). They marked other political rationalities, socialities and lifeworlds but also self-determination and “collective self-recognition” (L. Simpson, 2015; see also Martineau, 2015: 232-5). INM organizer Dr. Alex Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree Nation) describes her view of the

\(^3\) The first ‘feather and fist’ design for INM media is attributed to Cree artist Dwayne Bird and was modified by Kwakwaka’wakw artist Andy Everson with West Coast flair. Everson suggested that the design being taken up globally and reworked to reflect Indigenous diversity is one of its strengths. On its significance that “I see the fist as a sign of defiance, unity and solidarity. To me, the feather not only represents the gathering of Indigenous peoples, but it also represents peace and healing. It is medicine” (Everson quoted in Rogers, 2013).

\(^4\) Coates echoes this, describing the first flash mob December 17, 2012 in Regina as perhaps seeming “meaningless and unfocused” to an outside casual observer (Coates, 2015: 60).
flash mob round dances, which while including non-Indigenous people still suggests many and different layers of meaning-fullness:

“The INM round dances bring Indigenous people and our allies together in malls, intersections, the grounds of government buildings and other public spaces. Our visible presence (not shopping, driving or legislating, but doing what we are not “supposed” to do – drumming, dancing and protesting) transforms these spaces into political spaces. They become sites of persistence (we are here today because we love and care for our people and our nations, and we will still be standing here tomorrow), resistance (we are here to put an end to the harm colonization inflicts on our people and our nations) and resurgence (we are here to repair that harm and reclaim the sovereignty of our bodies and our peoples)” (Wilson, 2015: 257).

It is in the failure of Indigenous people to ‘hold the line’ drawn between politics and ethnoculture, the new and the ancestral, to be “Good Indians,” ethnographic informants and predictable Natives in designated Native spaces (or rather, Native spacetime), that there is a colonial failure to apprehend but so too the right of refusing to explain.

**Story Lines as Connective Threads**

Yet we might still tell stories and indeed perhaps we must. At my opening to telling in Chapter One was a quote by Peter Kulchyski on the hope for a work of stories. I would like to return to his discussion of storytelling in his *Like the Sound of a Drum* following what I have so far learned in the previous chapters from other story-workers like Hannah Arendt, Jo-Ann Archibald and Lee Maracle. He considers lessons from Dene Elders on good listening, an active and careful engagement that gives guidance on what is needed to cultivate good relations between teller and audience, on how to speak, and particularly repeat stories given us. This involves attentiveness to the spoken word and visible speech-act, but also the unspoken and “implicit social knowledges” in silences or the unsaid. He considers the need for attempting to attune to the latter while respecting the diverse, specific and individual views of tellers as they are articulated, rather than taking them as emblematic of a sweeping narrative we wish to read-in to them (36-7 also 19-20). Though he does not unpack this naming explicitly, Kulchyski introduces the interpretive threads he traces on cultural politics in the North as *story lines*. He implicates that these lines are ones he draws through “gestures, structures, stories, talk, objects,
for what these may say or how they may point towards a radical alterity, an alterity that operates at the liminal margin of contemporary culture.” In this he suggests, to return to Foucault’s phrase, the tactical imperative in such work of attuning to and interpreting the implicit connections between them as pointing to survivant, “existing alternative modes of being,” ways of life adaptable to the totalizing capitalist, colonially apprehensive mode that has sought their eradication, and so the project of advancing the “specific struggles of particular Aboriginal peoples” (42). While Kulchyski is focused on engaging subversive and resistive story and gestures in everyday and commonplace practices, this chapter is focused on witnessing those that took on the spectacular when they suddenly appeared in unexpected places, as publically disclosing the resurgence of such alternatives. I have tried to listen well to stories those who have been part of INM’s movement chose to share in these places.

The story line as interpretive thread I will draw out, is a way to give accounts of the significance of INM’s movement of resistant and resurgent practices without seeking to apprehend them. Such lines, contingent, experiential and perspectival (as lines I have drawn, threads I have woven), can also disrupt the problems of a Euro-Modern linear historicism. That is, the impetus to establish the facts of events in a chronological timeline that can then be employed to judge the definite outcomes, the effects from the intentions, of a liberatory or revolutionary and unitary movement, as one that ostensibly aspires to be such. The story lines I will discuss are ones of correspondences between practices that describe them as traditions of struggle or resistance, and also traditional practices of regeneration, but without ethnographic definition. So, my aim for this chapter is to story INM as showing resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations, refusal of colonial apprehension and unsettling of settler-colonialism.

In storying here I mean to take responsibility to articulate my critical understanding from experience and memory as respectful witness (firsthand and through others’ telling) on this, as tactically imperative disclosure in a still settler-dominated public, as a telling for decolonial transformation. This is a storying that does not narrativize or explain events and dynamic action authorally or indeed authoritatively, but does judge, makes linkages and calls on you to also assess INM’s movement(s) for yourself. Storywork principles discussed in the previous two chapters offer a methodological ethic for discussing them that can assert critical understandings required, but can also trace the perimeter of refusals, in ways that respect the silences and interruptions, incompleteness and uncertainties and risks of disclosures. My own theory-storying
work here will be resolutely affirmative of resurgence and I take responsibility for this story line that I will draw, this thread to connect INM’s practices and link them with this broader movement.

I will begin by speaking to the challenge of bearing respectful witness to INM’s movement as continuous traditions of struggle and regeneration, and then outline two approaches to re-telling its (already disclosed) storied practices which have been taken up outside and inside this movement. Next I will draw two story lines from these approaches, which bring questions of the risks and possibilities of telling to the fore. The first relates to the leaders we hold up and I will call Strong Women Stories and the second relates to the places/forms of mediation through which our stories are publically shared and I will call Indians in Unexpected Places. These phrases have resonances in genealogies of Indigenous scholarship. The first is the title of a 2003 collection of essays edited by Bonita Lawrence (Mi’kmaq) and Kim Anderson (Cree/Métis) that span diverse women and (though to a lesser extent) LGBTQ2S experiences of how it was, is and could be in the complex challenges of ‘coming home,’ reconnecting with community, nation and tradition in conditions of displacement; the questions that must be asked when home is not hospitable to who we are; and in visioning and engaging the rebuilding of community, nation and tradition to be hospitable. When Indigenous women have chosen to speak out with their voices or stand up with their bodies against domesticating ‘internalizations’ of colonial and lateral violences, to declare “enough is enough,” audibly or in silences, these actions have been met with disciplinary dismissals or further violence. Accounts of INM even supportive may minimize Indigenous women’s refusals and replicate notions of what is properly or improperly political or cultural behaviour for women. As leaders their practices, which may be subversive or directly confrontational, are expressions of strength – in love and anger - and I will story these that way.

What I call the second story line’s name is taken from a 2004 book by Philip J. Deloria (Dakota), which considers the discursive and visibilizing frames used to explain and contain Indigenous people’s actions and materially reinforce what is then expected of them (Deloria, 2004: 7). Specifically, how a racialized ethnocultural Indianness is disrupted by Indigenous peoples’ engagement in ‘modern’ technological modes or forms of activity. Indians’ appearance outside designated Native spacetime (as I have discussed, considered non-political and archaic) then being considered anomalous and unexpected to non-Indigenous observers. Deloria suggests the anomaly, as an exceptional event named “in relation to accepted norms and
categories...simultaneously re-creates and reempowers” those that it escapes (5). Seeing a flash mob round dance in a shopping mall as a juxtaposition of Nativeness and (Euro) Modernity can have this effect, but it also defamiliarizes and so unsettles both dominant conceptions of Native subjecthood and the mall as settler space. This may have to do with their perceived performativity and scale in that space rather than their actual frequency in Indigenous places. As some Indigenous people like Stephanie Fitzgerald recall of their first experience of a flash mob round dance in the winter of 2012 that recalls Alex Wilson, they purchased an item beforehand to “prove that they had legitimate business” and soon realized they “had never seen so many Indians in a shopping mall at one time before” (Fitzgerald, 2014: 115).

Deloria asks “what would happen if we were to take a cue from Indigenous viewers and question every instance in which Indians are named as anomalies?” (6). Particularly, to story for frequency and the unexpected. INM as itself narrated as an anomalous and unexpected event, a moment of exceptional collective action, whose practices are also refusing of categorization, seems a crucial opportunity of re-storying. This also raises questions on the mediating effects of Indigenous practices of re-presencing and re-emplacement advocated in resurgence discourse. With the land understood as traditionally mediating Indigeneity and nationhood, (re)clamation of storied places like sacred mountains is perhaps a more straightforward proposition than the claiming of a mall or cyberspace. As a place of disclosure this may exemplify its broader risks of appropriation and deformation in settler-dominated public spaces that remain not exclusive, but perhaps more immanently colonially apprehensive.

To Witness Movement

“It reverberated with a prescient sense of the movement’s evolving form and affective potency: at once melancholic and triumphant, longing, hopeful and defiantly resistant. It captured in sound and carried in spirit the essence of the movement’s resonant tension between force and restraint, outrage and introspection; it pushed and pulsed with a determined, rhythmic insistence and restless motion – an intangible, dynamic and energetic flow that, haunted by memory, resounded a renewed presence.”

“As water flows, so is Idle No More a movement” (Duplassie, 2014). How do we bear witness to ongoing movement? The rivers of story have never ceased to run, though they may sometimes seem to ebb. The 2014 anthology *The Winter We Danced* raises this question for me. It collects many of the most widely circulated dispatches and missives, verse and images from the winter of 2012-13 as it happened, as such it is one of the most important public archives of storytelling on Indigenous resurgence that has thus far been made available, and charged to help carry the living memory of INM’s practices. This not least in resurgence’s connection to the “re-storying” of Canada’s settler-colonial mythologies, as INM ‘co-founder’ (with Sylvia McAdam (Nêhiyaw); Nina Wilson (Sioux/Cree) and Jessica Gordon (Cree/Salteaux)) Sheelah McLean put it: “actively re-telling stories which have been silenced, minimized, and denied” while sharing others toward decolonial transformations (McLean, 2014: 93). The contributors are organizers, participants, leaders, artists, commentators and thinkers across generations, within and responding to INM, a number also situated in academia. Some are friends, mentors, teachers and acquaintances of mine and many are familiar from a distance over page or screen, or from across the circle in the dance. I know many of the events they recount, having been there myself. I read many of the essays, interviews and articles and saw many of the images as they were transmitted over airways and cyberspace. They like I, have all experienced INM’s movement. While this movement was not unprecedented, the anthology’s editors, the Kino-nda-niimi Collective, suggest that bypassing mainstream state and commercial media and broadcasting its own images and voices directly (much through the internet) was – to “write the movement, alongside the movement taking place” (Kino-nda-niimi, 2014: 439).

INM’s ‘real time’ social mediation was largely self-determined, and this was not only a control of representation but built INM’s movement (Simpson, 2017: 220). This storying evoked

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5 I was handed a pamphlet written by academics Taiaiake Alfred and Toby Rollo at an INM gathering in Spirit/Centennial Square in Lekwungen (Victoria, BC). It begins “We bear witness today to an inspiring resurgence of Indigenous consciousness directed at injustices within the Canadian state” (see Alfred & Rollo, 2014: 314).

6 The co-founders have contributed to the formation of an organization under the banner Idle No More which maintains a website idlenomore.ca that remains an active repository of resources on Indigenous issues in North America and globally, and includes a story stream blog that people can add to. One of the features is a “living history” page with a timeline of key moments in the mobilizations of INM. As Leanne Simpson I am discussing INM as the winter we danced, not conflating this with the organization (see L. Simpson, 2017: 218).

7 On November 10, 2012 in Saskatoon a teach-in on Bill C-45’s implications was led by McAdams, Wilson, Gordon and McLean, #IdleNoMore made its first appearance as a social media hashtag in tweets on October 30 and November 4, 2012 by Gordon. The first read “Awesome day of laying the groundwork for rally and petitions opposing #omnibus #billc45 re #indianact please find our fb group #IDLE NO MORE.”

8 The Kino-nda-niimi Collective includes Leanne Simpson, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, Tanya Kappo, Wanda Nanibush and Hayden King.
past, present and future (King, 2014), and during this winter “the vast amount of critical and creative expressions that took place is like the footprints we left in the snow, sand, and earth, incalculable” (Kino-nda-niimi, 2014: 25). These traces are also transitive. There is much in this observation, the ephemerality of action that exceeds preservation and yet whose storying energies are not contained to a single space and moment, unquantifiable effect and affect exceeding intentions (not all “positive, creative and joyful” or beyond repudiation), communications both public and “personal, intimate” in their unfolding, in their motion. How to tell of this with affirmation through uncertainties, to commit INM to our collective memories as part of a ‘history’ of Indigenous decolonial struggle, while honouring the dynamism of action and the principle of self-determination, without typifying its practices in ways amenable to colonial apprehension?

INM is not monolithic, uncontested, an artifact or object of inquiry in the past tense, nor are the practices and people who have animated its vital dialogues and debates. The editorial Kino-nda-nimi Collective for Winter We Danced (who include Leanne Simpson), note that the anthology is not meant to be exhaustive or complete but indicates the perspectival diversity of INM. The anthology format is indeed arguably a way to re-tell political action and events that can mirror their experience without imposing a single authorial interpretive voice; though the editorial practice of selection and omission can still be assessed for these decisions, as those of any individual or collective theorist-storier. As mentioned in Chapter One, on a later reflection on its editing, Simpson suggests that there are at least three interrelated “Indigenous political strains” that came together that winter, Aboriginal rights and treaty rights approaches and nationhood/resurgence, which is anti-capitalist and rejects recognition politics (Simpson, 2017: 219). These strains then offer different approaches to storying INM’s movement and yet their identification and collection, their braiding together, suggests a need to give accounts of INM’s practices in their multiplicity and immediacy to convey both continuity and solidarity.

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9 They make important note of incidents of sexual violence associated with INM events and concerns of safety and inclusivity for “all genders and sexual orientations” (24; see also Martineau, 2015: 239). I must here note that some of the contributors in Winter We Danced and indeed some of the scholars that I cite through the dissertation may be complicit in sexual violence or other gendered forms of misconduct. There is one individual who has recently been acquitted of criminal offences in this regard as part of public record (J. Ghomeshi). My work takes citational politics very seriously, however any allegations that are in current processes of investigation or restorative justice are not for me to flag here, or to preemptively expunge individuals involved in such processes from the discourses at the center of this project that they may have crucially contributed to. I will have to revisit questions of providing platform as part of my practice of relational accountability.
As I have suggested in the previous chapters, the form of retelling is a determinant of its colonial apprehensiveness, the explanatory and linear-developmental approach of Euro-Modern narrative historicism producing colonial mythologies.\(^\text{10}\) And yet, the production of counter-narratives of resistance – “diachronic and ordinal” accounts - is seemingly indispensable even when Indigenous movement and action escape full enunciability in the dominant terms of politics and history, as I discussed in the first three chapters. The need to establish continuity is reflected on by the Kino-nda-niimi Collective, who indicate that while far from idle, ‘the Natives have always been restless,’\(^\text{11}\) “these efforts often go unnoticed - even ignored - until flashpoint events, culminations, or times of crisis occur,” from the White Paper in 1969 and 1980 Constitution Express, to the ‘Indian Summer’ of 1990 - that 2012-13 was also “witness to one of these moments” and so can be told of as a link in a “long chain of resistance” (Kino-nda-niimi, 2014: 21).

The imperative to document these links by drawing a time-line of events (as the Collective does, 389-409), and locate beginnings and leaders with writing that “captures the origins of the movement” is certainly for the benefit of settler-Canadians in particular (including Coulthard’s much-circulated “#IdleNoMore in Historical Context”). *The Winter We Danced* can then be positioned to address the perspectival disjuncture in accounts of common factual truths held in the archive of settler-colonial narrative memory. This includes the state’s documentations of surveillance. In “just two weeks” of January, 2013 alone, Aboriginal Affairs amassed 1500 pages of records on *INM* (and Alex Wilson joked with reporters in 2013 that “It’s a really good archive” (quoted in Schwartz, 2013)).\(^\text{12}\) Yet it is an archive intended to capture and neutralize Indigenous movement. Rather than passively exclude Indigenous stories, this archive has actively “silenced, minimized, and denied” them. It has a motivation to *unwitness*. I was introduced to the phrase “unwitnessing” in a piece by literary theorist Drew Lopenzina about 19th century Pequot author William Appess. Lopezina describes the colonial archive in the broad sense as

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\(^{10}\) As Robert Young (2004) has outlined. It can be noted that Foucault like Arendt was also critical of this authorial narrative approach to history as displaying the desire for intelligibility through rationalization (Foucault, 2002 & 2009), contradicting explanation of practices of power as things rather than relations.

\(^{11}\) A 2001 photograph by David Garneau included in the anthology depicts a red and white train car emblazoned with the Government of Canada logo and graffiti proclaiming that “the Natives are restless!” (244).

\(^{12}\) On the state’s surveillance of *INM* see Crosby & Monaghan, 2017.
“the repository of narratives of tribal dismantling. Its stories fit together over centuries to form a solid tableau of Native defeat and vanishing not only by constructing narratives in which this brutal colonial desire plays out again and again as a positive outcome for the forces of progress and civilization, but by violently unwitnessing the communities that had structured and influenced their lives with stories and visions of a very different making” (Lopenzina: 210).

Lopenzina characterizes Appess as a “storier of survivance” rather than recovery from colonial dismantling Those giving accounts of INM’s transformative power as resistance and resurgence might consider the implications of this appellation: not to defer to the settler-colonial regime of truth reliant on its archive, but to understand our responsibilities as bearing witness to vital movement in all its complexities. Bearing this witness is to acknowledge the difficulty in honouring what Nandy calls the “plurality and multivocality of dissent,” which may not be entirely articulable in dominant languages embedded in a colonial “game of categories” (Nandy, 1996: 638). Yet we can story without reifying categorization that minimizes this plurality as a trade-off for a strong counter-hegemonic posture or account of continuity and solidarity. That is, to present INM as a link in an unbroken chain, as “coordinated, strategic” (Palmater, 2014: 39) while also holding up diversity against colonial narratives of Native social and political disorganization, homogeneity and subsequent “fracturing,” which Hayden King responded to in regard to commentaries on divisions in INM that appeared as early as January 2013 (King, 2014). It was also not long before outside observers would describe INM as a failure of momentum, the transformative power of the practices in its ambit unrecognized by many in settler Canada (Coates, 2015: xi, xxii, 57; Martineau, 2015: 240-1). Yet no energy is ever lost or destroyed but is reconstituted in other forms (see Coburn & Atleo, 2016: 186). As I discussed in Chapter One, commentaries of fracture and those of diminishment when the flashpoints of mass gatherings in urban centres recede from the settler-state and society’s frame of political vision oriented to the spectacular, seek to add to the “tableau of Native defeat and vanishing.” These

13 To evoke the piece by Lorenzini & Tazzioli (2018) on Fanon and confession as a technique of power from Chapter Two, this is to refuse disclosure aimed as confession to this regime and bear witness for another.

14 At the packed teach-in and forum “#IdleNoMore: Where Do We Go From Here?” held on January 16th 2013 at the University of Victoria (I attended), Taiaiake Alfred also discussed the depiction of disagreement in and around INM as a splintering. For an archived event information page see Jarrett Martineau’s website here (unfortunately the audio of the event is no longer available) <https://culturite.wordpress.com/2013/01/15/j16forum-idle-no-more-where-do-we-go-from-here/> Accessed May 1, 2018.
commentaries belie how the transformative power in Indigenous “stories and visions of a different making” that INM’s practices marked unsettled this tableau - and not least in their plurality and multivocality (see also Martineau, 2015: 236).

The Kino-nda-niimi Collective notes that the proliferation, diversification and decentralization of grassroots mobilizations during the winter we danced “often confused and frustrated” commentators and the state, looking for a figurehead who would articulate strategy and demands. While some, such as the four co-founders, Pamela Palmater, Theresa Spence and Wab Kinew would become prominent voices and faces they did not speak for INM, which as “inherently different,” “defied orthodox politics” (23).15 This orthodoxy being the expected avenues of recognition, rights jurisprudence and negotiations led by institutionalized organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). The AFN suspended their activities briefly and its executive passed resolutions of support for “communities in their efforts to oppose the Government of Canada legislative and policy agenda,” as a very nervous December 20th, 2012 briefing to then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs John Duncan noted (quoted Press & Woods, 2013). However, this alliance was uneasy and a posturing of some male elected leaders to ‘steal the microphones’ from Indigenous women organizers in particular was derided (see McCallum quoted in Coates, 2015: 71-3). A January 1st, 2013 analysis of mobilizations through social media for Duncan’s department followed up that

“Idle No More has been able to do something that other movements in the past have not been able to do or manage to sustain. It has people leaving their homes to participate...[It is] quite different from what we’ve seen before in terms of activity and rhetoric” (quoted Press & Woods, 2013).

I have suggested the inherent difference and defiance the Collective address can be located in the epistemic and discursive reorientations of resurgence, and practices associated with INM’s non-conformity to classification as either political or Native ethnocultural expressions. Their

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15 See also Coates, 2015: 69. The Collective outlines several broad areas of mobilization that began the winter we danced: repeal of significant portions of the labyrinthine Omnibus Budget Bill C-45 (and C-38) of Stephen Harper’s Conservative government which ignored the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as enshrined in UNDRIP, introducing changes to the Indian Act in regard to the lease of reserve lands, as well as the Fisheries, Environmental Protection and Navigable Water Acts that effected impact assessments on resource development projects; stabilization of emergency conditions in reserve communities and collaborative approaches to addressing their self-sustainability; and an end to unilateral legislative processes (consultation and FPIC) toward realizing nation to nation relationships between Canada and Indigenous peoples as forwarded in RCAP (22). For another summation of this see Coates, 2015: 1-20.
challenge to colonial apprehension in their initial witness is now also a challenge of remembrance and recollection against a reifying documentation of movement, which involves the re-membering and re-collection of diverse stories in its name (as Winter We Danced is quite directly).

One Storying: A Healing Time

Let’s dance among
the people’s smiles
for, this dance is ours
and so is this song of love.

- SkyBlue Mary Morin from “A Healing Time” (Morin, 2014: 8).

INM’s inherent difference, defiance and plurality of movement can be storied in many ways. In Chapter One I outlined my concerns with applying a narrative of anti-colonial resistance alone to INM, and have touched on the incommensurability of Indigenous decolonial struggles for and of freedom with horizontalist protest movements for social justice, which I will briefly return to now. Winter We Danced includes commentaries of “co-resistance” that Rachel Flowers (2015) suggests can recapitulate colonial desire for pacification in regard to their characterization of INM as displaying a ‘productive’ love rather than a stultifying anger (eg. Irlbacher-Fox, 2014b), ignoring how the love of Indigenous women in particular is resistive, powerful and directed inward to the protection of our peoples for which we have been targeted, during the winter we danced as before (see Nason, 2014). That the smiles, this dance and this song of love “is ours.”

The unfolding of INM’s storied practices may seem to have much in common with narrative analyses of other non-Indigenous and especially socially-networked protest movements through emotion. These readings are part of what some consider an affective turn (at least) since the emergence of the Arab Spring in 2010, Occupy Wall Street (to which INM was often compared in mainstream media), anti-austerity movements like the M-15/Indignados in Spain etc. They attend to how online organization and transmission mobilizes people and critically the feelings that their gatherings elicit in participants. In these analyses, attention is paid to affective
distinctions and shifts, with varied judgments on their effectualness or the relative ‘productivity’ of various emotions (see for example Tejerina et al, 2013; Tova & Langman, 2013). One of the most well known iterations of this is Manuel Castell’s Networks of Outrage and Hope, in which he suggests that

“social movements do not arise just from poverty or political despair. They require an emotional mobilization triggered by outrage against blatant injustice, and by hope of a possible change as a result of examples of successful uprisings in other parts of the world, each revolt inspiring the next one by networking images and messages in the Internet” (Castells, 2015, 248-9).

A certain affective language laced with judgment on what emotions are deemed appropriate and productive are evidenced in many commentaries on INM, seeming to hinge on the affective reaction participants convey and stir in observers who wish to be uplifted or comforted of the intentions of the actions. That winter’s resurgent ‘cultural’ practices for example, have been narratively read as offering a healing medicine of “hope and solidarity” for Canada, a tonic to purge its “pain and amnesia” (MacDougall, 2012), a “vision of hope,” (McLean, 2014) with Indigenous peoples representing “Canadians’ last best hope” (Palmater quoted in Kinew, 2014: 97) in ways that align with the domesticating appropriation Flowers speaks to, as positioning “the settler at the heart of decolonization movements” (Flowers, 2015: 35-8) – though these readings were also offered by some Indigenous organizers like Kinew.

An example of such storying of INM in these terms is historian Ken Coates’ 2015 #IdleNoMore and the Remaking of Canada which I touched on in Chapter One; a book offering to make sense of the winter we danced for other more “bewildered” settler Canadians who “missed the point altogether” as the back cover proclaims: that it was not for or about them, nor the state’s recognition, that the point was not to “persuade or convince” (xxi). Yet his delivery of this message (he also distinguishes INM from Occupy throughout)\(^\text{16}\) can still be deemed self-centering. In one chapter, he sets out to “explain the roots” of Indigenous peoples’ “anger and hope” and concludes that the “desire, quite simply, was to shift the pain and the focus from self-abuse and community frustration to a proper and sustained demonstration of Aboriginal culture, identity, and determination” (Coates, 2015: 43 emphasis mine). Coates’ self-positioning is as an

\(^{16}\) Coates describes Occupy, which did some mobilization in support of INM as dissipating into irrelevance for its amorphousness (see for example 46-7).
observer who “watched from the sidelines” and did not participate in any events directly (xiv) but engaged with the outpouring of experiential stories across media. He presents his endeavour as “personal reflection” distinct from academic or “first person accounts, and journalistic renderings” (xii). Despite the disclaimers of intent to communicate his view on INM’s ongoing transformative power and multivocal flourishing (51), he still seeks to explain the aims of Indigenous participants and to judge INM’s “proper demonstration” of culture, being “peaceful and constructive” (xvi; 122) against the potential for a violent and “destructive” political uprising (xi) in authorial terms. In a frequent evocation of “Aboriginal determination” (including on the round dances, 63), Coates skirts the principle of self-determination in the mediation of stories, reasserting an ethnographic stance and tacitly delegitimizing forceful or to him unpalatable affective expressions of Indigenous power, and often in a gendered framing.

Coates distinguishes Indigenous women such as co-founder Saysewahum Sylvia McAdam (see 46) as grassroots leaders in INM’s “celebratory” demonstrations from those of confrontational stand-offs engaging in “vitriolic” expressions of anger (ie. of “warriors,” implied as masculine) throughout his account. While Indigenous women may not always assert strength and resistance in ways recognizable to a gendered dominant political rationality that demarcates the domain of politics with lines of force – our feather can be held in a fist. Yet it is Coates’ depiction of Theresa Spence’s strike/fast being conflated with INM in the “public’s mind” and less directly the distinction of her leadership from the co-founders (see 104, 107), that is perhaps more telling of the problem in his storying:

“The traditional media, struggling to get a handle on Idle No More, finally had a linear narrative to follow, all of the standard elements of a ‘real’ protest. Here was a leader standing up for her people. Here was a clear set of demands. And here on Victoria Island, was easily understood and readily described political theatre” (Coates, 2015: 81).

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17 He suggests his perspective has been “gleaned from hundreds of YouTube videos, thousands of Facebook postings, and tens of thousands of tweets, newspaper accounts, and other evidence” (xviii-xix).
18 Yet even when we do invoke a “warrior spirit” this is minimized (quoted in Coates, 2015: 18-9; also Bonnell quoted 53). Indeed, the founders of INM’s manifesto precede each point with we contend that (Gordon et al, 2014). A detachment of peace from a warrior posture is also not made in many notable articulations of this in masculinist terms (on Haudeneseaunee warrior ethics see Alfred, 2009 & in comparison to Gandhian Satyagraha 2005: 206; also 58 on guerrilla “machismo”) and this is addressed in current work on Indigenous masculinities, see for example the collection Indigenous Men & Masculinities (Innes & Anderson, 2015).
It is an apt characterization of Spence’s strike/fast as a ‘performance’ that could be *apprehended* as political action more straightforwardly than a round dance in the settler-colonial theatre of apprehension. Yet rather than the mainstream media and politicians, Coates seems to lay blame (though “unwitting and unintentional”) on Spence and her supporters for having “muddied the line” between established brokerage organizations (especially the AFN) and the INM grassroots critical of their leadership; pushing INM “off the front pages” and the subsequent appropriations of focus away from the grassroots (108, 101). Particularly notable for its hand-waving of British-Canadian juridical and governance tradition is Coates’ suggestion of Spence’s “misunderstanding of contemporary Canadian politics” and its “realities of decision-making and power,” which he suggests involves “separating the political from the ceremonial” (81; 92).

In Spence’s expressions of pain for her people and demands to meet with both Harper and a representative of the Crown who treated with them (the Governor General; Treaty 9, 1930), Coates suggests that the “chief’s political statements, crafted in frustration and informed by deeply held beliefs, lacked pragmatism and, from the outset, centered on politically impractical demands” (Coates, 2015: 80). Coates ultimately considers Spence’s fast a polarizing and “counterproductive” “distraction” from those “proper cultural” practices that did not make explicit demands of the white men who embody settler sovereignty and of course, did not anger observers or make them uncomfortable (as much) – building rather than blocking bridges (see on Juden, 92; 112). Indeed Spence’s fast was at the time characterized by right-wing pundit Christie Blatchford as “holding the state hostage to vaguely articulated demands,” which in her view was “an act of intimidation, if not terrorism” (quoted in Coulthard, 2014: 161). While Coates does not replicate this denigration, perhaps there is still a preference intimated here for the reasonableness of good “authorized Indians” (Webber, 2016: 4-5), like Indigenous women leaders performing ‘culture versus politics,’ and not in his view conflating the two. And perhaps also a desire for practices that fit into a settler-Canadian imagination of a “truly national movement” that could

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19 Simpson (2016) and Patricia Monture characterize settler sovereignty and the Canadian state as manifestations of patriarchy and male dominance, the latter like theorist Wendy Brown seeing gender emancipation strategies relying on state power implicated in women’s subordination as having fatal contradictions (see Coulthard, 2014: 101).

20 Spence’s complexity as a figure and leader and fluctuations in her support base and low approval ratings among settler-Canadians (108) following “critical evidence” presented to discredit her as an administrator in relation to the Attawapiskat housing crisis (90, 100) is highlighted by Coates. He describes her as having “lofty aspirations” “muddled” and “convoluted demands,” “inconsistent behaviour” and a “troubled past” (99, 108) in contrast to in my view a more sympathetic depiction of AFN Grand Chief Shawn Atleo as beleaguered and “driven to near exhaustion,” with his motivations as “in the best interests of First Nations” being accepted (91, 96).
culminate in a “glorious moment” of the “meeting of peoples and cultures in common cause,” as he wistfully expresses regarding the ideal reception of the Journey of Nishiyuu in Ottawa, an “antidote” to the “confusion” generated by Spence’s fast (Coates, 2015: 122-24). Here is the ultimate National Aboriginal Day, a celebratory time of healing for all.

I will return to the feminization of INM’s practices’ affects and embodiments, their legitimacy/reasonableness or illegitimacy/unreasonableness, their cultural/politics with Indigenous women as their founders and leaders motivated from love. Here I will just say that Coates’ book is certainly valuable as documenting many factual truths of INM’s movement that are otherwise unrecorded out of the internet’s cacophony of commentaries, especially its “white noise” (such as details of meeting attendance etc.). Yet while positioned as sympathetic, it suggests a certain defeatism. And as offering a storying out of incoherence, it demonstrates an ongoing and pervasive division perceived between performative displays of cultural resilience registered as acceptable to Canadian sensibilities from fundamentally political expressions of Indigenous peoplehoods. This is even when Coates notes their simultaneity (the cultural depicted as morally transcending the political), and despite the repeated declarations of Indigenous participants otherwise (in the Tweets, Facebook posts and videos he cites). For example, a December press release Coates quotes describes practices as “acts of Nationhood premised on ancient ways and teachings,” and the call to action for December 10th 2012 was to “live Nationhood” through diverse “every day” activities from drumming to fishing (quoted in Coates, 2015: 18-9; 49).

Such Indigenous praxis is not discursively recognized as politically meaningful or transformative in the dominant and conventional terms of the political that Coates sets out, but whose banning and attempted strangulation tells another story of their menace to the settler-state and society (as discussed in Chapter Three). While INM challenged classification and channelled frustration with status-quo “Aboriginal politics” (128), its movement as culturally regenerative is not counter-political. Here I can turn to another (re) storying of INM that indicates its multivocality and pertains to the naming of its confluence of stories in 2012 and beyond.

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21 An excerpt of a poem composed of over 15,000 ‘comment section’ responses to 55 mainstream news articles on INM by Shane Rhodes entitled “White Noise” is included in Winter We Danced (262-266) and conveys the “cacophony of anonymous Internet commentaries” (Sinclair, 2014b: 273) as a backdrop of static (predominantly settler-Canadian) at the time very well in contrast to the communiqués from the movement.

22 Examples of Coates’ framing include saying “celebratory” and then “also always nearly political” (66); Spence’s fast ending having “stripped Idle No More of political baggage” and allowing a return to “peace and cultural celebrations” (113).
Another Storying: Nations Rising

“An accumulation of voice and resistance that rose to meet the parting of history and justice that lay swallowed deep underwater. The remnants that lay in wait within the water.”

- Lesley Belleau, from “Pauwauwaein” (Belleau, 2014)

The phrase *Idle No More* was derided with racism that winter, a “chastisement or accusation of laziness” that co-founder Jessica Gordon corrected as rather a call to enaction and support of the decolonial work long being done by Indigenous peoples (Gordon quoted Coates, 2015: 70). Kino-nda-niimi Collective member Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair similarly asked the editor of the Morris, Manitoba newspaper who penned an editorial in this vein (writing that participants were “acting like terrorists in their own country”), whether any “dependency is more about those dependent, or those who created the system of dependence,” and how then to be “more than the words we have inherited” (Sinclair, 2014b: 274-5).23 One effort to address the inheritance of words and Indigenous people dancing in shopping malls perceived as a threat to the way of life enshrined by a settler-colonial and capitalist state24 has been the re-storying of INM to Indigenous Nationhood Movement. In a televised special on January 8th, 2013 leading up to the scheduled AFN meeting with PM Stephen Harper on the 11th, then anchor of the CBC News flagship *The National* Peter Mansbridge would ask his panellists, “does danger lurk?” and Tom Flanagan, detractor of Indigenous nationhoods could call INM an “Aboriginal uprising” (quoted in Fitzgerald, 2015: 117).

Yet following that meeting of AFN Grand Chief Shawn Atleo and Harper on January 11th, 2013 and the end of Theresa Spence’s fast in ambiguities on the 24th, a number of prominent voices began to express frustration at a perceived inertia and cooptation of activities under the INM banner. INM organizers began to address this in a turn (back) to more localized

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23 Sinclair’s expressed view of INM was centered in “love” and the reinvention of the Indigenous relationship with Canada (Sinclair quoted in Schwartz, 2013).

24 Stephanie Fitzgerald describes her experience at a flash mob round dance in Kansas in December 2012 that speaks to this. The Facebook event had specified participants should leave “promptly and quietly” if asked and after the mob was broken up by security guards and she was making her way out, she overheard two guards on their way to the location of the dance say “There’s two hundred Indians dancing and they’re all riled up.” She writes “In actuality, there were only about fifty of us, and no one was riled up.” She left the mall to see nine police cars with sirens blazing pull up (Fitzgerald, 2015: 115-6).
and autonomous efforts, including through a coalition with the grassroots network Defenders of the Land to declare a “Solidarity Spring” and “Sovereignty Summer” among other initiatives (INM & DL, 2014 & 2013). Those concerned with momentum and focus included Kanien’kehaka intellectual Taiaiake Alfred who in a January 27 blog post, called for Indigenous people to “see our actions in Idle No More as part of a larger and long-standing commitment to the restoration of Indigenous nationhood” and devise practical strategies for its further actualization – to continue to “transgress, reoccupy, rise” (Alfred, 2014: 348).

While considerations of the winter’s lessons around principles of governance and sustainability, as an opportunity to “examine nationhood” and ask “where do we go from here” were considered by many (Williamson, 2014; Vowel, 2014 and Champagne, 2014), Alfred’s call among others’ provided an impetus to organize around this shift of naming. Following discussions at an Indigenous leadership forum at the University of Victoria, Indigenous Nationhood Movement was “launched” during a May reclamation action that I will discuss further (Martineau, 2015: 247). A website came online in November 2013 as a platform for sharing information and actions around a statement of principles, and an outline of campaigns for which a number of theorists on resurgence wrote, including Coulthard and Leanne Simpson. Their emphasis is on the Indigeneity of the nationhoods referenced, the integral relationship with homelands and lifeways as place-based ways of knowing-being-doing (what they call grounded normativities). That is, nationhood not in statist terms and beyond the simple affirmation that for colonized peoples the “most essential value, because the most concrete is first and foremost the land” (Fanon, 1968: 44). As Coulthard puts it, decolonial struggle is “for land in the material sense” but also “deeply informed” by the land “as system of reciprocal relations and obligations” (Coulthard, 2014: 13).

Simpson articulates the imperative for land protection clearly in her blog post on December 21st, 2012, “Aambe! Maajaadaa!”: “I stand up anytime our nation's land base in threatened because everything we have of meaning comes from the land - our political systems,

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25 This view is in keeping with Alfred’s long time perspective in his work and activism associated with warrior societies. Indeed in a 2005 research paper (with Lana Lowe) for the Ipperwash Inquiry they wrote: “To gain a true understanding and appreciation for the reality of the indigenous nationhood movement and the role of warrior societies in it, it is crucially important to understand the nature of the established legal, social, and political order itself. Comprehending warrior societies as they actually exist among indigenous people is impossible without considering them in the context of the larger struggle of indigenous peoples to survive as nations of people with their lands, cultures, and communities intact” (Alfred & Lowe, 2005: 2 emphasis mine)
our intellectual systems, our health care, food security, language and our spiritual sustenance and our moral fortitude” (Simpson, 2012). As much as a platform for organizing, the Indigenous Nationhood Movement website was conceived to address issues of representation of Indigenous stories that INM’s self-mediation demonstrated.26 Indigenous Nationhood Movement provided a corrective on the delegitimation of actions disrupting access to land by the state and capitalist interests, such as slowing traffic, blockades and the “establishment of reclamation sites” as “reactionary, threatening, and disruptive” (Coulthard, 2013b). Later in his Red Skin, White Masks Coulthard rebuffed the usual arguments against these direct actions including that they are self-defeating or alienating while formal negotiations are more effective (as per a INM support poll also cited by Coates to argue this; 2014: 166) This corrective includes the disconnection of INM’s practices of re-presence-ing and re-placing settler spaces like the round-dance in the mall from the imperative to protection in more prolonged and unsettling ‘confrontations’ on the land such as blockades.27

When continuity in Indigenous activism has been addressed in mainstream media it is portrayed sensationally as a series of clashes disjointed from communities’ long resistances to ongoing colonial dispossession and domination and their multifarious aspects, including environmental racism. Indeed, coverage of INM evoked Red Power and the American Indian Movement’s 1970s flashpoints, those of Kanehsatà:ke (Oka – expropriation), Ipperwash (expropriation), Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows – mercury poisoning), Listuguj and Esquem好友tij (Restigouche; Burnt Church – logging and fisheries) and images of seized weaponry, destroyed police or military equipment and arrests featured prominently to evoke settler anxieties. These actions are not deemed traditional practices of protection borne from responsibility to each other as links in a chain of intergenerational embraces, the Anishnaabe kobade Simpson so eloquently references to describe nationhood in an essay for Indigenous Nationhood Movement (Simpson, 2013).28 As Coulthard suggests, mainstream commentaries on

27 Indeed Coates disassociated these with peaceful causes “worthy” (eg. Coates, 2015: xii; 84-85; 119), and noted the “respectful” relations with police who were supportive of “lawful” and “peaceful assembly” (quoted 83). What he described as their “close but friendly eye” (58) was still one of surveillance. Temporary blockades were among many of the practices or modalities of resistance engaged during the winter we danced and not only Elsipogtog in October 2013, though not endorsed by the co-founders Coates attends to (Ladner, 2014: 246; see also Coulthard, 2014: 161). For example the two-week December blockade of the railway that transports the poisonous products of Chemical Valley at Aamjiwnaang First Nation near Sarnia. For contextualization of the Aamjiwnaang blockade see Wiebe, 2017.
28 Simpson describes the kobade this way:
practices like blockades as reactive protest not protection emphasize how they are a negation while ignoring how they are also generative:

“an affirmative gesture of Indigenous resurgence insofar as they embody an enactment of Indigenous law and the obligations such laws place on Indigenous peoples to uphold the relations of reciprocity that shape our engagements with the human and non-human world – the land” (Coulthard, 2013b)

They are instantiations of a generative refusal, both a ‘no’ and a “resounding yes” (Coulthard, 2014: 169). Simpson has gone on to reflect on the possibilities of sustained momentum in INM’s unsettling efforts had organizers shifted from mobilizations in cyberspace back to the land more directly, and tactically “embraced placing Indigenous bodies between settlers and their money, in a coordinated, strategic, nation-based, and internationalist orientation connecting with movements globally” (L. Simpson, 2017: 236; also Coulthard, 2014: 173). I will consider this emphasis on emplacement and the choice of locations for the mediation of our storied practices, and so too for their re-telling further.

While the status of Indigenous Nationhood Movement as a specific initiative and collaboration is now uncertain, as a re-storying of INM, I (who identify with Coulthard and Simpson’s story line) consider it an important alignment with the decolonial implications of resurgence, making the challenge of its discursive and epistemic reorientations quite apparent. Anishnaabe writer Lesley Belleau attested to this, casting INM’s flashpoint as a “revelation” of what had been obscured: that “what the world saw as Idle No More” was a “return to and speaking of that long history of action our people have,” as the “reality of the actions of Indigenous Nationhood” (Belleau, 2014b: 352). This was for Belleau an “accumulation of voice and resistance that rose to meet the parting of history and justice that lay swallowed deep underwater” (350). INM then visibilized and disclosed this resurgent motion through speech-acts in a settler-dominated public, though this disclosure has encountered its limits of enunciation and

“The idea of my arms embracing my grandchildren, and their arms embracing their grandchildren is communicated in the Anishinaabe word kobade. According to elder Edna Manitowabi, kobade is a word we use to refer to our great grandparents and our great children. It means a link in a chain – a link in the chain between generations, between nations, between states of being, between individuals. I am a link in a chain. We are all links in a chain” (L. Simpson, 2013).

29 The website of the Indigenous Nationhood Movement nationsrising.org and its archive of essays is currently unavailable. The Facebook page has also not been updated since 2015. For the Statement of Principles see 354-55 in Winter We Danced. Coulthard and Simpson have gone on to energize the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, an Indigenous and University of Alberta accredited land-based learning program in Denedeh (NWT).
intelligibility as expressions of Indigenous culture/politics. *Indigenous Nationhood Movement* indicates the challenge of storying INM’s diverse practices together for sharing its meaningfulness, to link INM in a chain of “resistance that began long before in different names, different locations through the generations since the arrival of Europeans (McAdam, 2014: 65) and as not only resistance but embraces, practices of affirmation, survivance and freedom that exceed the colonial relationship and refuse apprehension by its narratives of elimination and defeat. Those who have consistently been on the frontlines of this resistance and affirmation have been women.

**Strong Women Stories: Leaders On the Frontlines of Survivance**

“We are women. And because of this, we were compelled to speak, unless the silence held us as do the still ones. And this is okay, because some of us will speak for them. But for some of us our tongues are loosened against a long shoreline, stretching as far as imagination can insist...

These words that we have dancing against our lips are leaking a strong river over shore and we are wading here, finding solid ground, and deciding to stay...”

-Lesley Belleau, from “Silence Is Not Our Mother Tongue” (Belleau, 2014: 180)

When Theresa Spence announced her intention to begin a hunger strike on December 10th, 2012 she indicated that while inspired by INM’s Day of Action this was a decision borne from many years of struggle and the past several years in particular; with Attawapiskat and its governance scrutinized and humiliated following attempts at bringing attention to their housing crisis and few returns on an Impact and Benefit Agreement with the multinational mining corporation De Beers Victor extracting diamonds next door. The six weeks that she fasted on Victoria Island in the Ottawa River, she endured a further barrage of scrutiny and humiliation aimed at her declaration of a willingness to die for her people, particularly once the campaign of discrediting her personally, led by Aboriginal Affairs, was underway and taken up by “irate Canadians who ‘weighed in’ continuously on her insincerity, her avarice, her body, and in particular her fat” as Audra Simpson put it (A. Simpson, 2016b; see also L. Simpson, 2014b). In a 2013 conference presentation I attended, Simpson linked these responses to the gendering of

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30 For an account see Alanis Obsomsawin’s film “People of the Kattawapiskak River” (2011, National Film Board of Canada) and on the IBA and consent to extraction see Pasternak, 2015.
the settler-colonial logic of elimination, that we could story Spence’s fast as a “hunger strike under conditions of ongoing death” (A. Simpson, 2013, 2016).

The view of Indigenous women as leaders, matriarchs and knowledge keepers, their association with the land and a reproduction of nationhoods as having made us specific targets of eliminatory violence is broadly attested to; where to violate and disappear women’s bodies is to violate and disappear the carriers of socialities, customary law and protocol, kinship and clan, property, governance and children - of Indigenous political life. Simpson suggests Spence’s two bodily signifiers as a ‘Native’ woman and also a Chiefly leader, that her physical body in “excess” defied starvation and her hunger strike was ‘unsuccessful’ because she survived it, points to femicide (or feminicide) as a technique in the structural drive toward the dispossession and replacement of Indigenous nationhoods (A. Simpson, 2013, 2016). Indigenous women “embodied and signalled something radically different to Euro Canadian governance and this meant that part of dispossession, and settler possession meant that coercive and modifying sometimes killing power had to target their bodies. Because as with all bodies, these bodies were more than just “flesh” – these were and are sign systems and symbols that could effect and affect political life. So they had to be killed, or, at the very least subjected because what they were signalling or symbolizing was a direct threat to settlement” (A. Simpson, 2016b).

31 Leanne Simpson signalled this as endemic to colonial-capitalist extractivism in her interview with Naomi Klein during the winter we danced as I previously mentioned. See for example, L. Simpson, 2013 & 2015; Maracle, 2012; Flowers, 2015: 34, 41-2; Hargreaves, 2017: 2, 10-13, 17. For an articulation of differing conceptions of Indigenous motherhood and nationhood articulated by Indigenous political organizations and the metaphors of embodiment see Fiske, 1996. Any binary, heteronormative gender and biological sex essentialism in “linking women’s bodies to the land” can and has been questioned however (see Starblanket, 2017: 28-33; Simpson & Smith, 2014: 16-7). Indeed Leanne Simpson encourages us to consider how Indigenous LGBTQ2S people as embodiments of threatening queer normativities have been targeted similarly (L. Simpson, 2017: 126-7). I as a cis-presenting woman am learning on this from LGBTQ2S teachers and must acknowledge this limit in my own accounts, though what I present here is only one story line. I was very effected by this assertion of Billy-Ray Belcourt Simpson quotes, and will consider its implications going forward: “To be queer and native and alive is to repeatedly bear witness to worlds being destroyed, over and over again” (quoted in L. Simpson, 2017: 119).

32 For an argument to shift the term of femicide applied to violence against Indigenous women in Canada to feminicide through intersectional analysis see Garcia del Moral, 2018. Simpson calls on Jodi Byrd’s notions of how Indigeneity (or rather Nativeness) functions as a conceptual “transit” that facilitates acquisition of lands, territories and resources as well as her concept of “cacophony,” the multiplicity of competing narratives and stories with assertions to truth out of history that require listening and deciphering, which she relates to the “white noise” online (see note above). She suggests a discourse which emerges from the cacophony as dominant is that of the sovereign (settler) state, which has a white, heteropatriarchal male character while the ‘transit’ of its alternatives can be seen to be embodied in Indigenous women.
Simpson suggests that Spence made a sovereign decision not to feed her body, spectacular in the sense of its extreme visibility, laying bare the state’s exception, as her community and homeland’s abjection and neglect, settler-society’s indifference in view of Parliament Hill, disclosed for public judgement. But she did not die, though she said she was prepared to. I was struck by a link in Simpson’s telling to comments by Waneek Horn-Miller (also Kahnawà:ke Kanien’kehà:ka), linking women’s leadership in non-violence the winter we danced to that at Kanehsatà:ke in 1990, which she witnessed. She recalls an intense discussion on the barricade in the last days of that “long heated summer of provocation” between older women and young men, whose anger she felt and understood, that wanted to “go out guns blazing.” She had earlier been asked by journalists if she was ready to die and she said she was because then “maybe my life would mean something.” Yet she heard in that discussion with the male warriors that “It was the women’s role to remind them, that in the great law, it does not state that you fight till you die, but rather you fight till you win” (Horn-Miller, 2014: 119-20).

What Simpson attends to is the powerful contention of Indigenous women’s leadership in a fight for life, which is not conciliatory even when it is non-violent and prepared to die.

Aligned to Simpson’s depiction of the biopolitical metaphors of bodies politic and the totalizing encroachments of the settler-state, Spence’s right of refusal can be linked to self-determination, as the “sacred right of choice” of a woman to her body as her “house,” as Lee Maracle relates of a teaching by her grandmother (Flowers, 2015: 41). As Kulchyski notes, the “imagined availability” of Indigenous women’s bodies being displayed and reproduced in documentations by ethnographic scholarship “at the service of the state,” has prevented emergence in the settler-colonial imaginary of “female leaders and diplomats” whose “stories and storytelling praxis...explode these fantasy projections” (Kulchyski, 2005: 69-70). Like Spence’s storied practice, our own interpretive storying - and sharing of it - is critical work because her body

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33 Here Simpson evokes the state of exception, that instead of yet another declaration of emergency for her community she went to Ottawa and declared this for her body and as an Indigenous woman’s body this is the norm. In their dialogue Dispossession: the Performative in the Political, Athena Athanasiou and Judith Butler consider the “racialization and feminization of ‘becoming precarious’” through dispossession and the decision of some to end their lives or further expose their bodies in actions like hunger strikes. As Butler suggests “The prisoner who continues to eat keeps the machinery of the prison running, so the starving prisoner exposes the inhumanity of that machinery, of those prison conditions, formulating a ‘no’ through bodily actions that may or may not take the form of speech” (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013: 144-5).

34 Saysewahum (McAdam) also made a similar attestation at a Sturgeon Lake gathering on December 3rd, 2012 (see Coates, 2015: 46).
“was not seen as a sign of resurgent Indigenous life to white Canada, it was not seen as a stubborn, resolute, and sovereign refusal to die, staying alive to have that conversation about Crown obligations, about housing and about historical obligations - it was read as a failure to do what it was supposed to do - perish” (A. Simpson, 2016b).

While as Jana-Rae Yerxa (Anishnaabe) has suggested of Indigenous women’s violability, “repeating a lie does not turn it into a truth” (Yerxa, 2015: 101), Arendt and Simpson would suggest it can make it a fact, and while living in a settler-colonial context in which narratives of elimination are powerful compel the tactical imperative for our own vulnerable disclosures like Spence’s, “speaking truth” to them does not ensure they will not be apprehended/appropriated by that power. Likewise as theorist on violence Alison Hargreaves has warned, storiers must consider the demands for testimonials and their dissemination, the rhetorics that “order experiential knowledges” in gendered terms for anti-oppressive as much as oppressive ends (Hargreaves, 2009).

Gina Starblanket (2017) offers three crucial sites in resurgence discourse around Indigeneity with implications of gendered power relations, that can be considered when engaging the critical work of storying Indigenous women’s leadership, the linkages between women’s political practices and postures and those with ‘broader’ decolonial movement. These are cultural memory (identifying integral traditional knowledge and practices); land-centered identity practices (expectations of women’s labour roles and physical capacities in sustaining the aforementioned knowledge and practices); and a focus on intimate and everyday praxis rather than the “political significance of the extraordinary: those events, interventions, acts of resistance or subversions that exceed the typical scale or length of our usual interactions” (Starblanket, 2017: 33). INM can be said to demonstrate the nexus of questions of cultural memory, embodiment/emplacement and the everyday ‘Native’ practices that may not be considered “politically significant” in the dominant rationality, made spectacular. As Starblanket sets out, the “process of “regenerating” or “revitalizing” past ways of being and relating begins with the act of remembering. It involves centering that which has been marginalized, reconstructing that which has been fragmented and communicating that which has been silenced,” or indeed deciding what can be forgotten (25).
Gendering must be considered in such processes of remembering and retelling culture in storying INM. We can also highlight women’s diverse experiences with traditional practices, against replicating a sense of authenticity that casts some as either “sufficiently cultural” or “culturally deficient,” and disciplinary judgment of what is honorable or dishonorable behavior or conduct in their actions or forms of participation that reinforces heteropatriarchal repression (Starblanket, 2017: 26-7, 32). In regard to embodiment, while holding up Indigenous women’s difference in contributions and leadership, we can also similarly strive to avoid essentializing expectations in the spiritual, maternal/matriarchal or other responsibilities we may place on them, as individuals who are often provided the “potential to embody certain (but not all) types of politics” (33). We might also consider how what have been deemed ‘Indigenous women’s practices and issues’ challenge gendered divisions and scales of the cultural (especially spiritual-ceremonial), social and politically significant – particularly for decolonial action (31).

With these discursive sites Starblanket sets out in mind, scholars might judge how to story the distinctions and connections in the optics of leadership and power relations between different flashpoint events and practices. For example, the Elsipogtog blockade from that of Kanehsatâ:ke as they have been committed to settler-Canadian collective memory as “visual synopses” (Wilkes & Kehl, 2014). Particularly how people in a moment of action or movement are taken as cipher for a whole story line. The settler-colonial ways of seeing (Taschereau Mamers, 2017) Theresa Spence’s body can fit harmful narratives, Indigenous women’s leadership can be storied differently. On October 17th 2013 one of the first Twitter users to respond to APTN photojournalist Ossie Michelin’s post of his photo of Amanda Polchies from that day suggested that “[t]his is going to become the defining picture. Like the faceoff between the two sides during Oka.”

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35 The evening before, an RCMP cultural liaison had offered the Elsipogtog camp tobacco as a gesture of peaceful intentions when the latter had removed a van from the entrance to Texas Southwestern Energy’s camp. At six am the next morning RCMP snipers raided the sleeping Warrior Society camp and then moved in with full riot gear and K-9 units (Troian, 2013; Fitzgerald, 2014: 120-1). Ossie Michelin posted the photo of Polchies he took on his iPhone among many from that afternoon on Twitter October 17, 2013 with the caption “Tensions flare as the police line advances. Police tear gassing the crowd” <https://twitter.com/Osmich/status/390871580672135168>. It was shared over 160,000 times in the first four hours after posting (Michelin quoted Schilling, 2013). The response tweet I quoted was by user @nicksays_summer <https://twitter.com/nicksays_summer/status/390872127483547648>. Another user suggested that the photo would “change the world” <https://twitter.com/peacebird2/status/536747090899386368>. Accessed May 1st, 2018. “Face to Face” was originally published in the Ottawa Citizen newspaper and taken by freelance photojournalist Shaney Komulainen.
There is Amanda kneeling before the police line raising a feather, the “only weapon she had” which has come to signify with INM and for many “what has been happening to Natives since Europeans first stepped onto Turtle Island’s shores” (Schilling, 2013). Compare this to the iconic moment of 19 year old soldier Patrick Cloutier and armed Anishnaabe warrior Brad Laroque’s stare-down on September 1st 1990 (54 days into the siege) – Face to Face or the “little soldier...staring unblinkingly at the angry warrior” as the newspaper La Presse described it (quoted Wilkes & Kehl, 2014: 491). Yet what complications, what stories do both images render invisible or marginalize as “visual synopses” of flashpoint events in story lines, and specifically those of Indigenous women’s roles, practices, postures, intentions and perspectives?

Polchies (then 28) has recounted how she arrived that afternoon to the blockade and saw women being hurt, including 66 year-old Elder Doris Copage who had been pepper-sprayed in the face. Realizing she had a feather in her hand in that moment on the road she said she just knelt and began to pray:

“I prayed for the women that were in pain, I prayed for my people, I prayed for the RCMP officers”...

When the line of RCMP officers moved forward, she remained on her knees.

“I heard someone behind me saying, ‘Keep praying if you’re not going to get up.’

That’s what I did.”

All she could see was darkness from the uniforms that surrounded her.

“I just closed my eyes and held my feather and prayed for protection,” she said.

“Then all of a sudden there was light” (quoted in Troian, 2013).

The RCMP had moved across the road and began arresting people. She did not intend to be a symbol. Pamela Palmater commented on her action and the other women and community members who continued to drum and sing in the midst of the “aggressive display of power and intimidation” which “was not met with an equal display of violence” (Palmater, 2013b). Cheryl Maloney (president of the Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association) and student participant Haley Bernard (22) interviewed at the time, described Mi’kmaq women’s embodiment and traditional role as water protectors (evoking the womb and menstruation), as well as a spiritual revitalization among the youth that were taking up their responsibilities as such. Copage, who held a crucifix and recited the rosary with the local priest that day, said that she prefers “protect” rather than “protest,” saying the RCMP mocked their efforts and when she asked one officer if
he was “really ready to kill the Natives” he said “yes, if I have to” (Maloney, Bernard and Copage quoted in Troian, 2013).

In their study of competing nationalist discourses on the significance of *Face to Face*, Rima Wilkes and Michael Kehl note that the image can and has been read as a “repetition of the man-to-man combat binary,” drawing on their colonial correlatives of self/other, civilized/uncivilized etc. but that it “cannot be understood in solely synchronic and singular terms,” as imagery moves over time (Wilkes & Kehl, 2014: 482-3). Neither can the image of Polchies, kneeling in prayer before the blue line of force, be taken as only a repetition of the woman-to-men asymmetrical power relation, Indigenous feminine (non-violent, cultural-spiritual-ceremonial) resistance to settler sovereign onslaught. As with the other Mi’kmaq women’s voices across generations of Palmater, Maloney, Bernard and Copage and those she felt “behind her,” the snapshot of that moment can be complemented with another, one of a line of smiling Mi’kmaq women standing face front across the highway at Elsipogtog, many wearing ribbon-skirts in camouflage fabric, men at their back and sides, drums raised (see Howe, 2014). Likewise the image of adversaries in *Face to Face* can be heard with the voices of the advisors Horn-Miller remembers from that summer, and that of Katsi’tsakwas (Ellen Gabriel) who served as a spokesperson chosen by the women of the Longhouse during the siege, a diplomat in Europe that autumn who is still speaking 28 years later. As she has said, the “flashy warrior against the soldier” has retained its imprint, despite that women though equals “were in charge” during the siege. Rather than the metaphor of the womb (Fiske, 1996), for Gabriel women are the “backbone” of the nation, whose laws have never been static for interpretation, and whose leadership has never been confined to the flashpoint event (Gabriel, 2016).

When youth Donna Cook addressed a student-organized INM gathering on January 26th, 2013 at the B.C. Legislature she said unequivocally that our “weapon of choice is the drum” (quoted in Lavoie, 2013). What I heard standing behind her on that day, was an expression of drumming as a decolonial practice that does not adhere to reading as anti-colonial resistance where the decisive moment is when the Native’s dancing is countered by the Colonist’s gun, the

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36 The photojournalist who took the photo of the women holding drums, Miles Howe who was (in his words) “embedded” at Elsipogtog that autumn has written his account whose title *Debriefing Elsipogtog: Anatomy of a Struggle* evokes both disclosure and dissection (see Howe, 2015).
37 Also see Maclaine & Baxendale, 1991: 42; Gabriel, 2010.
gaze returned and the gun answered in kind. Drumming and singing may be deemed weaponized in this context as much as it is a practice contiguous with others relationally inextricable from the life of the people and their homelands. It is the heartbeat of nations and our earth. As each beat resonates it joins the energy of all others before it and into the next generations. The drum is a living heart and as the proverb goes, a nation is not conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground. The women of Elispogtog have their hearts raised up before the Colonist’s guns. Though we can de-center any gendered comparative valuation of lives or leadership in this proverb (the women were not standing alone), this is only one story line among many. This is one I heard, and this is one I see.

Links of traditional significance between the leadership practices of women’s resistance and resurgence in all their manifestations can be storied, though not always visibilized and legitimized as “properly political” in their customary and everyday forms or ‘properly cultural’ when they seemingly take on a performativity associated with the dominant Euro-Modern political rationality, its masculinized norms of dissent, antagonism and confrontation as a moment’s show of power lines. Scholars might consider how giving accounts of women’s practices of leadership in INM’s movement does not replicate heteropatriarchal culturalism in an affective feminization of certain practices or postures, or presents women as passive mediums for the expression of sovereignty in Indigenous resurgence stories or for assimilative inclusion in Canadian nationalist narratives. That while connecting the accounts of strong women to story lines that exceed gendered experience (eg. nationhood), hierarchical classifications of priorities and issues are not replicated; to present a unifying front of collective self-determination at the expense of engaging internal diversity, inequalities and intersectional experiences. Scholars

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38 See Fanon, 2004: 20; see also Coulthard, 2007: 454; Gibson, 1999: 415.

39 Forwarding a woman-centered story line is not to suggest a necessary particular biological embodiment or intended to make Queer, Trans or Two-Spirit as much as youth and men’s leadership invisible. On the drum I must here acknowledge what I have learned from grandmother big drum keeper Rob Spade and his partner Celeste Pedri-Spade (Anishnaabe), my friends and teachers. Our drum Standing Nation, with which I sang for about five years, was all gender-inclusive in its protocols, though most powwow big drums are not. For a story of the big drum, heartbeat and gender from a feminist perspective please see Deerchild, 2003. For one discussion of song and music as not isolated from relationality in Indigenous lifeways and as healing see Amadahy, 2003.

40 “Properly political” a phrase in an observation made by Jo-anne Fiske in 1996 in regard to male-dominated Indigenous political organizations such as the AFN and forerunner National Indian Brotherhood that prioritized sovereignty over women’s rights, vis-à-vis organizations like the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC), see 1996.
might listen well to the stories “strong women in hard times” can or choose to tell and so relive, let their voices, their disclosures and also their omissions – the “space between the words” (Bell quoted in Million, 2009: 64) - guide us in recounting them, “not to make claims about their stories,” for example as verifiable testimonies of experience, but “rather to make claims from their stories,” including to consider how our embodied memories are differently mediated by gendering and racialization, among other factors (Speed, 2017: 181).

Despite the risks of appropriation, Dian Million has suggested Indigenous women’s stories of lived or felt experience “rich with emotional knowledges,” have been positively transformative when disclosed to counteract censorship and the relegation of gendered violences to the private sphere of communities or the Canadian domestic/domesticating space (eg. as individuated crime phenomena rather than systematic colonial and heteropatriarchal structure). As these violences must be brought forward, so too must stories of resistance, and so it is important to intercede on how they are recounted in scholarship. I agree with Million that this is particularly critical storywork for Indigenous women scholars concerned on how the reception of poetic and avowedly non-objective or disinterested expressions of affect such as pain, joy, love or especially anger may be turned against us, as “felt scholarship continues to be segregated as a “feminine” experience, as polemic, or at worst as not knowledge at all” (Million, 2009: 54 also 62-4).

41 This is a phrase that is used in the 1987 collection of multigenerational stories of Wolastoqiyik women from the Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick Enough is Enough: Aboriginal Women Speak Out (Janet Silman Ed. Toronto: Women’s Press). The Tobique Women’s Action Group was formed for women who had lost status by ‘marrying out’ including (Senator) Sandra Lovelace who helped repeal the sexist provisions of the Indian Act (Bill C-31). See also Million, 2009: 57 on context.

42 For influential works on the Indigenous feminine and Indigenous women’s relationship with feminism see Paula Gunn Allen (1986), Lee Maracle (1996) and Kim Anderson (2016). Also Joyce Green (et al), 2017. Perhaps as Mi’kmaq scholar Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, we can listen to the voice of poet Rita Joe for guidance on seeing and then storying women’s leadership the winter we danced:
Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful.
So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me (from “I Lost My Talk” quoted in Doyle-Bedwell, 2012: 192).

43 The Indian Act’s reorganization of family relations in particular impacting Indigenous peoples conceptions and experiences of intimacy (Million, 2009: 54-6). For a comprehensive work on heteropatriarchy and colonial constructs of Nativeness through concepts of the family/kinship, the body, mediation etc. in Canada see Emberely, 2007. For a consideration of the U.S. context see Piatote, 2013.

44 For one articulation (of which there are many) of Indigenous women’s positions in Academia see Mihevsah, 2003.
Million considers the complications of disclosure with available discursive models for telling or testimonial, through autobiographical Indigenous women’s literatures, such as the work of Lee Maracle. These complications include external pathologizing of Native stories ‘of pain’ against their politicization (citing Emma LaRocque 62-3), and internal sanction on what is appropriate to tell collectively and individually, as occupying “colonial spaces [in which] ‘Indian’ and ‘women’ are already known” and judged (60). For scholars, in upholding Theresa Spence’s reason(s) or Amanada Polchies’ ‘spontaneous’ choice’s non-reason, we too may be cast as irrational or naive, pejoratively “political” in our tactical interventions and so reductive or illegitimate in our interpretations (67-8). Yet Million upholds the need to contribute to a “subjective record” of Indigenous experiences and their “inappropriate” emotions though it may never be accorded the designation of “proper history” because if “if Indians captured public opinion, even momentarily, a case can be made that, for once, their own felt knowledge did speak itself” (73). The flashpoint of the winter we danced may have been one such moment and we must bear respectful witness to this.

Dr. Alex Wilson, writing on INM in the same volume as myself, has given me much to consider on a link between this witness in scholarship and the women’s leadership that might be theorized-storied. She reflects on a friend’s translation of Ogichidaakwe, the Anishnaabe title of warrior woman given to Teresa Spence by Leanne Simpson, as one that makes things happen, an understanding of leadership in the verb-sense of leading, as an activating or initiating role that evokes relational responsibility (Wilson, 2015: 263). Wilson connects this with the Cree principle of leadership Sakihiwawin, as a “commitment to love in action.” For her love, denigrated in its feminization, implicates an ethical way of being that considers the affect and effect of one’s activations for others, because action always has both physical/material and spiritual/energetic consequences (259-60). Women organizers’ leadership the winter we danced was for Wilson guided by this love, and so too can this guide Indigenous women scholars in our

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45 Million quotes an interview by Ojibway author Ruby Slipperjack that evokes the storytelling relationship conveyed in the last chapter against apprehensive authorial narrativization or translation as a “direct political statement,” which “transgresses the way Western knowledge works” and the “truths” those writing in a “Western academic mode think they readily ‘see’” (61, 64). On being asked if she was making a political statement Slipperjack says:

“Well, it says, “this is how I feel,” “this is what I am feeling,” “this is what is happening around me” and “this is how I am reacting.” “this is how I am dealing with the situation.” That is where it stops. I cannot tell you why this and this and that happens, you figure that out yourself. Who am I to tell you something? It is there for you to see” (Slipperjack quoted in Million, 2009: 61).
disclosures. This is not an expected, essentializing cisgendered and heteropatriarchally constructed feminine selflessness and dedication to the comfort or understanding of others, but an acceptance of the risks and possibilities of acting through speech and deed. It is heroic in Arendt’s sense.

As many Indigenous women theorist-storiers have suggested, with the experience of censorship, “the invisibility of unspeakable things requires them to be spoken” (Moreton-Robinson, 2002: 186; Coburn et al, 2013). INM’s co-founders - or rather leaders as activators in Wilson’s sense - “made a decision not to stay silent,” as they saw silence as acquiescence (McAdam, 2014: 66; Fitzgerald, 2015: 111). Women felt compelled to speak though they suffered violence for it. Organizer Lesley Belleau - whose words are of water and I have found ripple close to my own feeling and so have prefaced these past sections with them - chose to share her individual story line from childhood abuses to sexualized hate mail for her INM editorials, to tell against a “gripping silence” which when broken, might anger and discomfort and confuse as a radical attempt to “speak a history that doesn’t make sense to some” (Belleau, 2014a: 181). The story line that can be traced here is *Strong Women*:

“As they had done for centuries when nurturing and protecting families, communities, and nations, women were on the front lines organizing events, standing up, and speaking out. Grandmothers, mothers, aunties, sisters, and daughters sustained us, carried us, and taught us through word, song, and story” (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014: 23)

Rather than women as bodies on the frontiers of elimination, we can story affirmation of the fortitude in living, diverse women’s leadership on the frontlines of survivance and as storytellers, or theorist-storiers of resurgence at the shorelines of enunciation.

**Indians in Unexpected Places: Where We Are Mediated**

“Once, long ago the ocean’s power was shown to an unsuspecting people. The tides began rising higher than even the oldest people could remember. It became clear to these people that there was something very different and very dangerous about this tide.”

- from “The Saanich People” (Paul et al. 1995: 2)
First there was the flood. When the tides began to rise, an Elder told the people to gather their canoes, food and as much cedar rope as they could make and carry them up to the mountains. They did and the water rose until the people had to get into their canoes and tie themselves together, and then to an arbutus tree at the highest point they could reach. They floated there until a raven appeared to tell them the tide had begun to recede. And when a child saw the raven fly down and circle a piece of land that had begun to appear out of the ocean, they excitedly shouted “NI QENNET TFE WSÁNEĆ” – Look what is emerging”! 46 This is not my story, but has been shared by the first people with those who live here now, that they might know where they are. And it comes before another that I know.

The land had been inundated again by another tide more strange and treacherous, and the people so subsumed have felt stranded. It is May 22nd, 2013 and six hundred, some say eight, are ascending another mountainside in another part of that territory now known as the Municipality of Saanich in the Greater Victoria area. Southward this mountain presides over swathes of suburb and University campus, from which many had come. Some of these people carry placards that read, “Reclaim, Rename, Reoccupy.” Nine, several in reflective vests with the initials INM emblazoned across their backs and T-shirts with Indigenous Nationhood Movement across their chests carry a sign weighing 1000 pounds on their shoulders carved from yellow cedar, with a Thunderbird’s wings sweeping over the curve of a familiar summit in silhouette. They are not Parks or public works employees, but are rather sanctioned by other authorities. Hereditary leaders have gathered the permission of others of their people and those neighbouring. Now their close relations accompany them, as well as activists, academics and students living in the mountain’s view. Words are spoken. Drummers circle and begin to sing and the sign is raised up by many hands, including a child’s, and set in concrete. The assembled crowd cheers and whistles. It reads PKOLS – White Head in SENĆOŦEN. The mountain once again is named. It has carried another, and in acknowledgement of that story, of how that name came to the mountain, the signing of a treaty of peace is re-enacted at a place it is said that James Douglas took the people and pointed outward to where they might still hunt and fish as formerly. It is a place that has always been for meeting and marking presence and boundaries from sight lines,

46 This is the story as I am re-telling from Philip Kevin Paul and his co-writers in “The Care-Takers” (Paul et al., 1995: 2-3). Tellings vary, the raven perhaps a crow, the Elder perhaps Creator. In some not all the people heeded the warning and survived. For another by Earl Claxton Sr. see Claxton Jr., 2015: 45-6 and another see Pelkey quoted in Ball, 2013.
since the beginning when XÁLS cast stones. An intention is announced that another mountain would soon be given back its name, where the people were given theirs, from where they became WSÁNEĆ when the waters receded, at ŁÁU, WELNEW, their refuge. Here they remain always the emerging people.\(^{47}\)

The people went into the hills.
They went there together as one body knowing who they were to bring the names home.

-Philip Kevin Paul, from “Taking the Names Down From the Hill” (Paul, 2003: 93)

This is a story line of the land and waters I am fortunate to live with, though uninvited by their care takers, mountains I have climbed and on whose summits I have rested to gaze out through those mountain’s eyes on the Salish Sea, to islands who were once people too, that still are. It is also a story line of Idle No More, in the spring that followed the winter we danced.

Leanne Simpson wrote about PKOLS that day in May and posted it online. She contemplated on using the original names for Indigenous places, not as a symbolic “act of semantics” but, quoting Taiaiake Alfred who was involved in organizing the reclamation, as “saturating our land with stories” - a “mechanism for reconnecting” (Simpson, 2014c: 363). As these lands have been deluged before to an unsuspecting people, perhaps a tide is turning this way again. Indeed WEC’KINEM (Eric Pelkey) from STÁUTW who helped lead the action said, “We feel that our names are re-emerging. Even the general public is hungry for the knowledge about the local area; it’s been repressed all these years. Peoples’ versions of history never include our own history”

\(^{47}\) PKOLS is possibly a Lekwungen abbreviation according to Philip Kevin Paul who also describes the traditional meeting and marking practices here. The name is also said to refer to the place the glaciers last receded on Southern Vancouver Island and is near where the Creator XÁLS cast stones to shape the surrounding mountains and mark territory with Sechelt, White Rock and PKOLS in white granite (Paul quoted in Hilderbrand, 2013; Claxton Jr., 2015: 43-45). For the reclamation, hereditary leaders of the STÁUTW (Tsawout) led by WEC’KINEM Eric Pelkey gathered the permission of other WSÁNEĆ communities WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BOKEĆEN (Pauquachin), WSIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) and their Lekwungen speaking neighbours from SXIMEŁEŁ (at Songhees). The Indigenous Nationhood Movement advocated reoccupying sacred and traditional-use places and helped organize this action, those in INM t-shirts had participated in the leadership forum at UVic that this had been discussed. The cedar PKOLS sign was made by master carver TEMOSEN Charles Elliot (WJOŁEŁP), and the multilingual document signed by leaders during the reenactment was one of intention to further reclamations after which food was shared (Martineau, 2015: 248). An official request for a name change was filed. For news coverage on the day see Lavoie, 2013 and Ball, 2013.
(quoted in Ball, 2013). The name PKOLS tells the story of a living relationship of WSÁNEĆ with their homelands. While this story is one they have continued to carry, it is a relation whose visibility and audibility has been drowned out by settler-colonial displacements and deplacements. This mountain is particularly meaning-full in this regard, as the site of a marking in 1852 of what had been understood as a peace offering following increasingly violent intercessions by colonists from Fort Victoria. A gift from Douglas, Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island, that was then taken as an agreement to the ceding of their territory.48 Now it is a popular viewpoint for locals and tourists to take in the surrounding vistas, with a marker at its summit that tells the distances from its centre to locations all around. A practice XÁLS began. There are cellphone towers there, technology for connecting, and when the PKOLS sign was embedded it “penetrated the roof of an emergency telecommunications building, leaving it vulnerable to water damage” (Petrescu, 2013). I like to imagine the water seeping in, dousing the wiring so that every signal, every wavelength spoke the mountain’s names and broadcast their stories out over the city. This could be a new flood that would wash away another, not drown but quench, renew. But is this electric medium, which takes the names down from the hill and sends them through the air ultimately deforming, apprehensive?

One of those who carried the cedar sign with Indigenous Nationhood Movement across his chest was Jarrett Martineau, Nêhiyaw/Dene musician and scholar on art and resurgence, who was a graduate student at the University of Victoria at that time and a friend. He has reflected on both the PKOLS reclamation and practices like the flash mob round dances as “corporeal represencing” of public space that “called on Settler society to witness them as performance, join them in celebration of Indigenous resilience and survival, and to heed them as a call to responsibility,” with their visibility not primarily for settlers but Indigenous mutual affirmation (Martineau, 2015: 231; 234). Yet for Martineau the dynamism of INM’s digital archive, techniques of circulation and communicative technologies, formed a problem of sustainability - their metrics of diversity, momentum and success also might gauge contradiction, decline and judge failure (as in Twitter velocity and flame wars, 238, 241, 244). But more was the issue of practices’ “legibility” and so susceptibility to control and surveillance: “recast within an

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48 For a thoughtful editorial on the Douglas Treaties including the peace treaty entered into at PKOLS in 1852 and the interpretation as a document of cession, as told by Elder John Elliott from WJOEÉP see Petrescu, 2017 and also Claxton Jr., 2008 and 2015: 23-43 on the oral history. See the notes to Chapter Three on Douglas and the reserve system.
aestheticized regime of political performance, drawn into the machinic gaze of technology, and encoded according to the representational logic of spectacle” (235).

In Indians in Unexpected Places, Philip Deloria suggested we attend to the frequency of Indigenous practices that confound classification in the sense of their regularity of occurrence, rather than paint them as anomalies. Martineau suggests attention to the frequency in and on which our stories are transmitted, as a modulating effect, an attention to their mediation. As Ryan McMahon spoke to of flash mobs as a ‘new’ form of engagement amenable to Indigenous socialities (2014), social media has been suggested to align to an extent with traditional forms of communication and mobilization (L. Simpson 2017: 220), with for example Facebook seen as “great tool that allows amplified storytelling” (McLeod, 2014: 127-8). This amplification is perhaps most quantifiable in considering Twitter, that from November, 2012 to May, 2013 there were 1,215,569 mentions by 143,172 users (Schwartz, 2013). In his view of Occupy Wall Street, Manuel Castells has also emphasized this amplification and also a self-mediation the Kino-nda-niimi Collective noted of INM with smartphone use and live-streaming events:

“There is a constant practice of storytelling in the movement, with everybody taking pictures and making videos, and uploading them to YouTube and to multiple social networking sites. This is the first kind of movement that tells every day its own story in its multiple voices in a way that transcends both time and space, projecting itself in history and reaching out to the global visions and voices of our world” (Castells, 2015: 177-8).

Yet this capacity for multiplicity, inclusiveness and spontaneity, and the sense of urgency evoked, for Martineau expose story to the “expansive and absorptive exigencies” of the “networks within which it circulates” (Kulchyski, 1992: 193; Martineau, 2015: 237). The risks associated can be considered along several registers, a de-linking of Indigenous subjecthoods and struggles from place, and the appropriation of stories (and their aesthetic markers) by state and capital. Let us consider the second first.

The sense of both intimacy and anonymous expansiveness in sharing stories across social media that is so affective has also exposed us, particularly women, girls and LGBTQ2S people to

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49 For a quantitative social media analysis of INM from June 2013, see Blevis, 2013.
50 On the congruence of Occupy Wall Street’s prefigurative politics and communicative technologies of “mass self-communication” - particularly the faculty to “derive dispositions and inclinations from their past patterns and experience” as a “digital habitus,” but in terms of individualism and insularity rather than the ‘sociable media’ amenable to difference that McMahon and McLeod perceive, see James, 2014: 110-3.
a ‘new frontier’ of racist and gendered violence and exploitation, and INM was not excepted in this. Also while these may not be directly solicited testimonials that are documented and re-circulated through ‘official channels,’ such as those of Truth and Reconciliation commissions for example, the digitization of an archive of memory raises similar issues of consent, but also decontextualization that then allows the selective redeployment of stories for harm. While offering a “discursive break” in colonial narratives operating on multiple frequencies, INM’s practices and its real-time self-mediated accounts were perhaps still seen and read by settler society at the shallowest and so most graspable level. That is, passively spectated, ethnographically observed (Baloy, 2016) and so not respectfully witnessed, with expectations of participation and attendant responsibilities to commit to memory. Indeed they were subject to overtly angry and sensationalizing appropriations if such shallow interpretation was even questioned. As I expressed concern about the explanation of Indigenous storied practices and the limits of their “coded disruptions,” the title of Leanne Simpson’s blog post “Fish Broth & Fasting” was changed by Huffington Post to “Think Chief Spence is on a ‘Liquid Diet’?: I think You’re Ignorant” (L. Simpson, 2017; 2014b: 295). Less overt were the reframings of practices like the round dance as public performances of reconciliation as national healing, in the reaching to clasp hands (Edmonds, 2016: 2-3) or their capture in a reactive narrative of “crisis-based response to crisis-based governance” (Martineau, 2015: 241). The effects of the spectacular publicity of INM’s storytelling was exposure to the risks of action and storytelling which include the separation of intent and outcomes – the limits of self-mediation. The problem of state surveillance and modification of stories into data for containment was pressing on INM, as access to information requests have revealed the attempts by agencies’ to infiltrate sharing platforms. For example, then Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Michael Wernick asked his office if there was a way they “could surreptitiously piggyback on the app [that had been developed] to get its own message across” (quoted in Schwartz, 2013; see also Crosby & Monaghan, 2017).

Besides social media hashtags, there are those “visual synopses,” the iconography of struggle that ease the contextual transferability of story for either good or ill, such as the symbok of the feather and the fist. As an artist, Martineau is particularly reticent on representational aesthetics and the form or techniques of circulation usurping its substance (244-5). In a 2013
interview on this he was direct in articulating how this is anything but benign when considered in terms of “marketing”:

“Having iconic visual representation of the movement - in the form of graphics, posters, logos, images, videos and photographs - is central to the dissemination of the movement and its’ messaging. Visuals that are high impact and compelling are the best way to draw people in that might not know anything else about the movement and its ideas. The challenge, of course, is that many people will just grab onto the images, if they like the aesthetic, and not necessarily engage more deeply in terms of action. We live in a highly visual, brand-saturated, hypercapitalist culture that can easily co-opt ‘resistance’ aesthetics, and quickly commodify and sell them back to us at Urban Outfitters the following week, so playing the game of ‘branding’ a political movement is a deeply ambivalent process.” (quoted in Rogers, 2013)

I would suggest these risks indicate an imperative to story Indigenous resistances in “objects, structures and signs that on the surface may appear wholly in the realm of domination” (1992: 185), which Martineau and Eric Ritskes have described in regard to Indigenous art practices long engaged in “fugitive” subversions of the capitalist commodity form to reclaim terrain and assert presence, albeit sometimes virtually (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014).51 Here I can once again turn to Kulchyski on appropriation and subversion to suggest how Martineau’s views on INM’s mediation also impacts scholarship recounting its stories of and in movement.

In a 1992 article, Kulchyski like Martineau ponders whether subversive representations of other ways of knowing-being-doing or social and political formations in the “language of power” can then be deemed ‘true’ expressions of them (Kulchyski, 1992: 188). In a later piece on the commodification of Indigenous ‘cultural products,’ he considers Walter Benjamin’s pivotal essay, “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (Benjamin, 2007: 217-52). Discussing ancient cave paintings intended for communication with spirit, Benjamin suggested the creation of all art is ritualistic and tied to “its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (Benjamin quoted in Kulchyski, 1997: 617). Benjamin (like Marx) characterizes the detachment from the presence of ritual that the commodification of artworks mechanically reproduced, as offering an emancipatory moment that makes its

51 On the colonial library or archive privileging literate documentation and as also virtual as well as Indigenous re-sourcing from it re: the work of Achille Mudimbe, see my note in Chapter Four and Wai, 2015.
production ‘political’ for its reproducibility and non-exclusivity, “expanding circulation and distribution” (612-3, 617). Kulchyski points out that Benjamin makes this suggestion, which detaches ritual and tradition from an emancipatory vision of politics (and definition of political action), situated as he is in a “Western enlightenment position.” What this raises for me is a question on the modes of (re) producing accounts of resurgent practices in motion such as those of INM, how publishing and sharing their stories (orally and literately, in ‘old and ‘new’ media forms), transforms them into objects or artifacts of analysis while attempting to convey their vital presence in place and time.

As “the anecdote, the story, is perhaps the only written form that tries to preserve subversive gestures” in intangible and ephemeral actions (Kulchyski, 1992: 188), academic disclosures of story in the literate language of a dominated domain of enunciation are a particular concern. While the tactical imperative to disclose them is to commit to memory, legitimate, sustain and grow a movement and its traditions of resistance in hostile times, Kulchyski indicates that the dangers of exclusion must be balanced against those of appropriation in a contemporary settler-colonial “society of the spectacle” that desires Natives and fetishizes Nativeness. Here Indigenous peoples “who once had difficulty being heard now get called, ordered, to live under the injunction of constantly speaking, speaking to the point of exhaustion, speaking as another link in the chain of those who now must be represented” (Kulchyski, 1997: 616). Kulchyski indicates the risk of appropriation is in the uncertain transits and effects of all action, gestures and stories having the potential for a transformation of their intended signs by others, but there is also always also the possibility for subversion. Scholars engaging a methodological ethic for telling Indigenous stories must then consider these two possibilities, between a subversive potential and tactical imperative to share, and the persistent settler-colonial desire to apprehend, in order to dominate and dispossess.

How the places we tell stories mediate us remains in question, whether there is a distinction between the grounded places we must inhabit, from the virtual spaces we can occupy. Is Indigeneity fully communicable in the ‘air’ of cyberspace, or only on the mountains of our homelands? Martineau was at the forefront of online organization during the winter we danced, partly using the Indigenous music website he produces Revolutions per Minute, he helped build the site for the January 11th 2013 global day of action (#J11), and worked to develop an INM networking app and media hub (Martineau & Hui, 2014). Yet, he has since reflected on the
superfluity of information occupying our minds and distracting our energies, the current “mediatization” of subjectivity displacing “other forms of collective action” that are community and land-based (Martineau, 2015: 238-9). In this Martineau was one who answered his mentor Taiaiake Alfred’s call to “relocalize,” “reground” and “reterritorialize” (246-7), and so INM as Indigenous Nationhood Movement would emerge on May 22nd, 2013 on the mountain. He has suggested that in “literal terms, PKOLS refuted the dispossession of original place names by replacing, or returning, the name to its rightful originary place” (Martineau, 2015: 249). For Martineau, INM’s winter of dancing while “affectively powerful” could not compel the settler state nor transform structural relations with Indigenous peoples, and risked the limitation of liberation to the virtual, and struggle to ‘imaginary’ sites (245). He raises the tensions in a need to disrupt colonial spatiotemporal enclosures of Indigeneity toward affirming imagination and living peoplehoods with their “literal” normative grounding as inextricable with homeland, and so the materialities of decolonization.52

Certainly the ephemerality of the sense of possibility that proliferated during that winter and the unsettling affect of unexpected Indian appearances in settler dominated public spaces seems answered by the reclamation at PKOLS. “To bring back the names we have always used to where they belong” (WEC’KINEM quoted in Schertow, 2013) is a return to the land as “ontoeipistemec foundation” in Martineau’s phrasing. With so much of the land still flooded by strange and treacherous waters, are we ready to take the names down from the hill again or is now a time to anchor our canoes? Must they as Johnny Mack has asked, be reoriented or indeed remade if they no longer carry us as they have before? To begin, we might trust in the power of our stories to sustain us through uncertainty as they always have.53 To enact this we must continue to tell and re-tell them. This trust may not adhere to the economies of the dominant political rationality and its metrics of success and productivity. Nor does it preclude critical judgment of living tradition either. And perhaps some of us who remain unmoored or who travel, those whose own story lines and languages have been de-placed or are rooted in different places and stretch across expanses, might bring back stories we have been given and offer them to others who may accept and weave them with their own to strengthen their rope, or refuse them as

52 There is a wave of thinkers and artists considering Indigenous futurities and futurism as an opening to imagine a decolonial potential in the present, and is aligned although not precisely with afrofuturism (see Keene, 2018).
53 And that ancestral places however changed may continue to gift us with stories, and new traditions. In the poem “Taking the Names Down from the Hill” (2003) earlier excerpted, WSÁNEĆ poet Philip Kevin Paul evokes this beautifully in his own return home, going back to the hills alone but finding renewal.
they will. I can here recall a metaphor evoked by Lee Maracle of the place “between the sandbank and the river where silver streaks are born,” shaped by “colour and difference” where all inhabiting it, the poets and storytellers like Maracle are “distinct, powerful and beautiful” and where “we dream new worlds with old themes rich in human love and promise,” striving to “inspire through words” and so change the world (Maracle, 2004: 204-5). What might change if more theorists tell of politics from this place, and perhaps should, when rivers overflow their shores.

Circles and Lines

“I feel a desire to feel/link these experiences that is stronger than any knowledge I might have of the value of their historical “specificity”...The stories, unlike data, contain the affective legacy of our experiences. They are a felt knowledge that accumulates and becomes a force that empowers stories that are otherwise separate to become a focus, a potential for movement”

- Dian Million, from “There is a River in Me” (Millon, 2014: 31-32)

In closing I would like to return to where I set out, which is where the story lines I discerned have brought me. Attempts to give accounts of INM’s transformations, its forms of mediation and public manifestations, then the seeming retreat of vocality and visibility, drew my attention to questions of their remembrance. How the confluence of stories during that winter are told of as related, how this confluence is named through the coming seasons and how its diverse voices are transmitted between past, present and future, its specificity as a moment in place and time, or as flashpoint illuminating connections? How and for whom?

Questions of disrupting temporal-movement-becoming/spatial-stasis-being divisions have been taken up extensively in broader work on Indigenous histories and the “problem” of Euro-Modern narrative historicism (see Martin, 1987 to Rifkin, 2017), but not so much in regard to giving accounts of Indigenous political movement and action as such. Non-Indigenous scholars have begun to listen and emphasize the centrality of naming and kinship relations between human and non-human as sustaining continuities of Indigenous collective identities, socialities and story lines through change, crucially in intersubjective relationships with homelands. That is, their emplacement without a reifying emphasis on static social structures or emplotment in
accounts of events (Jackson, 2002: 31). Such reification has been omnipresent in colonial discourse’s ethno-logical culturalism that (selectively) stifles and confines Indigenous mobilities (Borrows, 2016). Yet as Neal McLeod (Cree) has put it, it is “the sense of place that anchors our stories; it is the sense of place that links us together as communities” (McLeod, 2007: 6). The emphasis on what resurgence theorists Coulthard and Simpson call “grounded normativities,” Indigenous cultures as a mode of life in place (Coulthard, 2015; Simpson, 2017), call up a converse problem of replicating a preoccupation with temporalizing transformative political action as movement through time, in dominant Euro-Modern terms as causal, ordinal, predictable; particularly for giving accounts of ‘traditional cultural’ practices aligned to ‘revolutionary political’ change.

While it is beyond my capacity and intent here to rehash these issues, I would like to acknowledge an articulation of the concept of tradition that has profoundly impacted my thinking on refiguration, bearing respectful witness to movement, its ebbs and flows, its circulations and trajectories. Particularly, the role of repetition in sustaining continuities through change, that I think can be extended to the present tactical imperative to re-tell stories of INM’s practices as resurgence, that can themselves be told of as traditional storied and storying practices. This is the depiction of Indigenous traditional praxis, and indeed histories as regenerative articulated by Káínawa Elder and philosopher, Leroy Little Bear. He describes world creation not as a

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54 Keith Basso’s *Wisdom Sits in Places* has been influential in this regard (see Brooks, 2002), in discussing Indigenous “narrated place-worlds” (Basso, 1996: 32). See notes to Chapter Six on emplacement and epistemologies. In his work with the Stó:lō, Keith Thor Carlson has considered the reification of certain expressions Indigenous identities “out of step” with Indigenous historical consciousness. Part of the outsider literatures in the vein of Basso, his work is concerned with taking metaphysics centered in place seriously, and presents an injunction (following Marshall Sahlins) against a juxtaposition of structure and event (as somewhat suggested by Patrick Wolfe). Instead he suggests to reverse focus on change through continuity rather than structures that maintain social order and equilibrium which many anthropologists have fixated on (structuralism) - though he still suggests an aim to make Indigenous collective identities “ethnographically intelligible” to others (Carlson, 2010: 9, 27). Critical geography has also increasingly begun to engage with concepts of becoming and “worlding” in (“more than human”) place-based terms (see Larsen & Johnson, 2017: 5).

55 It should be noted Taiaiake Alfred’s view of Indigeneity and an Indigenous “sense of place and being” in relation to nationhood is different. He disagrees with the concept of territory as a statist and “colonial way of looking at the landscape” and uses homelands instead, asserting “Onkwehonwe resurgences will act against the boundaries white society has placed on being indigenous and will move freely in our homelands” (Alfred, 2005: 206-7).

56 I am not alone in this influence. Jeff Corntassel discusses Little Bear on cycles of ceremony and story in his conception of “everyday practices of renewal”: “It may be said that Native American history is not a temporal history but a history contained in stories that are told and re-told, in songs that are sung and re-sung, in ceremonies that are performed and re-performed through the seasonal rounds” (quoted in Corntassel, 2012: 89) Though I have only had the opportunity to meet Little Bear once in person and was changed by his presence, I have learned much through what he has chosen to publish of his philosophy and intellectual system, which I discern has been influenced by Vine Deloria Jr. both of whom mentored Taiaiake Alfred (Alfred, 2008b: 9). See also Henderson, 2000 on flux.
singular, authorial act of production, of completion or achievement, but as ongoing cycles of renewal through repetition, a dynamic process in which human judgement, agency and experience has a role. We help to reaffirm continuities by perceiving the earth and universe’s constant transformations wholistically, discerning patterns out of motion, and acting in accordance with them (Little Bear, 2004: 28 and 2000: 78). As Little Bear describes:

“The Earth is where the continuous and/or repetitive process of creation occurs. It is on the Earth and from the Earth that cycles, phases, patterns, in other words the constant flux and motion can be observed and experienced. In other words, creation is a continuity, and if creation is to continue, then it must be renewed, and consequently, the renewal ceremonies, the telling and re-telling of the creation stories, the singing and re-singing of songs, which are the humans’ part in the maintenance of creation. Hence, the annual sundance, the societal ceremonies, the unbundling of medicine bundles at certain phases of the year” (Little Bear quoted Henderson, 2000: 248).

Little Bear suggests that without intentioned renewal, particular combinations of energy that form the realities of people’s existences - their specific social orders and worlds of meaning - will dissipate into the flux (Little Bear, 2004: 27). Tempering an assertion of human power as primary in the process of world (re) creation is the sense of our interdependency and contingency with an animate universe.57

The telling and re-telling of stories is part of the “human role in the maintenance of Creation,” where repetition is never mechanical reproduction of the same or invariance, but regeneration. Stories have a social life, they are transitive, passage and linkage, they reflect, remember all who have participated in them (Cruikshank, 1998).58 There are many lessons in

57 As Vine Deloria Jr. also reminds of this preventing the authoritarian desire to subdue: “The world that he experiences is dominated by the presence of power, the manifestation of life energies, the whole life-flow of a creation. Recognition that the human beings hold an important place in such a creation is tempered by the thought that they are dependent on everything in creation for their existence” (Deloria Jr., 2003: 87).

58 Leanne Simpson has recently echoed Little Bear in direct relation to scholarly telling practices:

“Repetition is interesting for a writer, because editors unfamiliar with Indigenous aesthetic principles hate repetition. Repetition is a bad thing whether you are writing non-fiction or fiction. Editors look for it because the assumption is that the reader will get bored, yet rhythmic repetition is at the base of Nishnaabeg intelligence. We hear variations of the same creation story for our entire lives, and we are expected to find meaning in it at every stage of life, whether that meaning is literal (when we are kids), metaphorical, conceptual, or within the constellation of our collective oral traditions or that meaning comes from lived experience. Our way of life is repetitive. Every fall we collect wild rice. We don’t take a year off because we are bored, because aside from that being ridiculous, if we are not
Little Bear’s conception of traditional practices for contextualizing the role of theorist-storiers in giving accounts of and sustaining the movement of energetic formations like INM’s, to discern patterns, correspondences, expressions of peoplehoods. Here to be a traditionalist as Linda Akan (Salteaux) relates, “does not mean a return to a vestige of the past; it refers to a continual cultural resolve of individuals or groups to be in the worlds and with the world” (Akan, 1992: 29). Here I think of Arendt and Benjamin on historical memory and diving for pearls, to theorize-story as concertedly remaking connections through fracture. But rather than retrieval or recovery of Indigenous lifeworlds from death, and their reconstitution or preservation as artifacts, to story as resurgence tells of these supposed “remnants” of nations as survivant, rising from water that had obscured them from the settler-colonial eye and ear as Belleau described. While concrete liberatory effects of INM are yet to be known, we can story the renewal of Indigenous worlds through the refigurative traditional political-cultural practices enacted during the winter we danced. We can re-tell its (re) creation stories, re-sing its songs that otherwise may be specific and separate, story them together to bring their connections into focus to empower the “potential for movement” conveyed through them, we can theorize from life as Million puts it, our experience in and from living worlds and lives in common (if not shared).

I again think of the kobade as Simpson describes of nationhood, for a model of theory-storying from an undecidable and complex life. This is a chain of embraces, not bindings of representation, but a chain that is also a hub, a network, a web and an “intimate ecology” of relationships “cycling through time” (L. Simpson, 2013). Its rivers of stories are lines and circles, blockades and round dances, stillness and movement, links in a chain of tradition that is also resistance. We might discern patterns, story lines both individual and collective from among them, that link, cross or run parallel to others, though they may seem to take us back to where we began. Here I have only recently come to consider with Simpson and Martineau, another metaphor, of the constellation as a way to see and story a shape to a (net) work of resistant and resurgent movement illuminating, but “beyond everyday acts.” That as a web of story, we might draw around silences, trace the perimeters of refusals, evading apprehension as this “fugitive” movement does itself (L. Simpson, 2017: 215-6). Like a constellation, these might be “coded

continually and collectively engaged in creating and re-creating our way of life, our reality, our distinct unique cultural reality doesn’t exist. If you’re bored, frankly you’re not paying attention” (L. Simpson, 2017: 200-1; also 2011: 32-33).

The line and circle suggest a temporality as a “helical structure connecting tradition and futurity” (Däwes & Hauke, 4), which evokes a dialectical approach to history.
mappings” that are “opaque” to some, “visible to everyone all night and unreadable theory and imagery to the colonizer” or those not embedded or initiated in its knowledge system (212-3). “Shining with the seasons, serving as signposts indicating when it is time to tell winter stories” (213), constellations can offer a model for modes of telling that offer both enough external discernability and opacity: conveying shape to our actions against fragmentation when their public re-storying and (a limited) disclosure may be imperative, and critically suggesting or counseling on what stories the present season requires.

However it is yet another metaphor her Elders talk of that Simpson evoked in 2010 as she reflected on the stand at Kanehsatà:ke “twenty years since the blockades,” that can be recalled to consider theorizing-storying INM and relational accountability in our own activations of movement:

“They talk of throwing a stone into a body of water. The stone and the act of throwing, represents both intent and action. The impact upon the water is the result of that action. When the stone hits the water, there is an immediate and dramatic impact. There is sound and displacement.

But long after the stone sinks to the bottom, the concentric waves of displaced water radiate outward, carrying the impact of the action through time and space. The impact of the initial disruption is carried across different realms by these concentric rings, interacting with the other elements of Creation in synergy” (L. Simpson, 2010: 17).

Is INM a thrown stone with forceful intent, its story lines a forward trajectory; or a radiant wave of another, its stories a circle returning; or all of these? Is our theory-storying likewise? Martineau suggests that INM is “about beginnings, not origins” (Martineau, 2015: 251). Perhaps these beginnings are really renewals. The transformative movement we experienced and can bear witness for may be cyclical, may be seasonal, and INM’s transformations, its revolutions are not complete as long as we re-tell them.
CHAPTER EIGHT

My Closing Words:
Theory-Storying for Decolonial Transformation

Words As Weapons: Gifts from the Ivory Tower

“i am armed to the teeth with words from the ivory tower
and those good Indians told me it’s borrowed power if…
if i talk loud enough
if i talk clear enough
that i would be heard
that for some talking is singing
that for some singing is praying
but i guess that depends on who is doing the talking
and i guess that depends on who is doing the listening”
- Ryan Red Corn, from “Bad Indians” (Red Corn, 2010: 12)

Sub-commandante Marcos, the charismatic voice from the enclave of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) in Chiapas, so close to my home territory yet also as if on the other side of a chasm from ‘home,’ advised, “our word is our weapon” (Marcos, 2001). Conversely, Hannah Arendt suggested that “weapons and fighting belong in the realm of violence, and violence, as distinguished from power, is mute; violence begins where speech ends,” and so “words used for the purpose of fighting lose their quality of speech; they become clichés” useable only for indoctrination (Arendt, 1994: 308). It is the ambiguity of this ability to weaponize words that has long been a preoccupation of mine, that in their significations and enunciation they can be double-edged swords. From my position inside the ivory tower as it is seen, I have long struggled with feeling held hostage by them, if I could only let my braid down to the ground, not to bring up a savior but to escape into the world with others. But I love words, the traitorous English I have, and so I have experienced shame like countless Mestizas, offspring
of Malintzin the maligned mother, the first and worst bad Indian.\textsuperscript{1} I cannot deny the tower, in all its ivory Whiteness, has sometimes felt more like home territory for me than the ground, and the land that bore me. I could stay inside away from the dangers of disclosure and action, withholding my stories, not sharing my imperfect words, fearing they would cut others the wrong way, and that they would then cut me.

But I know where this apprehensiveness comes from. I have always known and long felt how language, naming, words \textit{matter}. Since I was a child and had words injure me more deeply than I then knew. Words I had tried to extricate from my consciousness and rub from my skin. Perhaps this is why I was drawn to Fanon, who so viscerally articulated the interface of language with the embodied experience of racialized subjection - and this, not only in the violence of another’s address (‘Look Maman, a Negro!,’ “Dirty Paki, you’re only good enough to…”), but his own use of language, where “to speak is to exist absolutely for the other” in all the loss of perceived control this entails (Fanon, 2008: 1). In \textit{Black Skin, White Masks}, he considered the need for colonized subjects, especially those with a Western education, to always justify their use of the “civilizing language,” as one’s stance in relation to it indicates the extent of aspiration and assimilation to Whiteness coded as Human (2-3). On the side of their own people, there is derision but in the colonizer something else. Should the colonized quote Marx or Montesquieu he “must be watched...insofar as he might start something” (18). “500 million men and 1.5 billion “natives.” The first possessed the Word, the others borrowed it...” said Sartre. And yet in this “borrowed power” is a source of the colonizer’s apprehensiveness of bad Indians, as one who “possesses a language possesses as an indirect consequence the world expressed and implied by this language,” and so it is “an extraordinary power” to speak and so necessarily subvert that world (2, 21).

I have never been able to dismiss my uncertainties, not only in speaking English, but speaking ‘theory,’ and from the tower, not the ground. Yet I have also experienced the energetic transfer of words exchanged here, of stories told even in this tower that many consider to have banished stories. They have changed me, sometimes imperceptibly at first, or for years afterward, as I now know I had not yet grown into them. I could say that in many ways, and in accordance with the ebb and flow of my frustrations, my anger and my love, my silences and

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Malintzin or Malinche was the Mexica woman who acted as interpreter for Cortez and bore him children, the mythologized ‘first Mestizos.’ For a discussion of Malintzin as a figure of the race traitor in relation to Mestizas, Xicanas and Mexican identity that is resonant with me see Hernández-Ávila, 1997: 242-45.
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speech, I have wavered between two questions that Tully has elsewhere posed: “in what ways does political theory act as an obstacle by contributing to the colonisation of Indigenous peoples, and what resources exist in political theory for supporting the struggles of Indigenous peoples for freedom” (Tully, 2008a: 257)?

I am far from alone in the wash of currents between these questions, which for many demand the division of tower and ground, ‘immaterial’ theory and embodied praxis, valuing community-based scholarship in founded suspicion of ‘research’ as extractive, disdain for any perceived intellectualizing of decolonial struggle, or concern with complicity in the “ignorance and erasure” of Indigenous perspectives in much contemporary critical theory (Owens quoted in Warrior, 2011: 89). I have certainly been challenged by resurgence discourse’s figurative emphasis on enactment and emplacement in land and nation-centered thought (grounded normativities) that in some cases is critical of Indigenous academics perceived to do otherwise. Yet in my engagement with the modalities of Western theory and subversive appropriations of its languages, I have in fact aimed to contribute to upholding what Leanne Simpson considers the need for “interventions into how we account, frame, and tell the truths of the political and cultural lives of Indigenous peoples that move away from a constriction of our intelligence within the confines of Western thought” (2017: 175). I want to challenge any such confines however. I have seen in the work of Indigenous and Western form theorist-storiers, in their different languages, a role for drawing out what thinkers on resurgence have called “identifiable

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2 Recently a major intervention in defense of theory was made with the collection Theorizing Native Studies, edited by Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith. Their introduction to that volume covers the debates and I am in agreement with their assessments. The issues they consider include: the view that post-structuralism as a dominant mode of critical theory negates Indigenous truth and identity claims; questions of perceived non-Indigenous ownership of theory in the form and location of its production; ‘practical’ or ‘needs-based’ theorizing in Indigenous research methodologies (ensuring community needs or direction shapes the project that you undertake, see for example Wilson, 2008:108-10); intellectual sovereignty or isolationism when the aim is deemed by some to be the defense of communities. On the last point they advocate “theoretical promiscuity” to advance the intellectual project of decolonization, addressing for example the view all postcolonial theory presumes the era of former colonial control is over, that feminism is defined by White cis women and Marxism is exhausted by its orthodox varieties (Simpson & Smith, 2014).

3 For example Alfred and Corntassel critique academics who “tend to examine wider phenomena of what is known as pan-indigenism or focus on theories of individual self-identification” as “very few are themselves grounded in real Indigenous community life or perspectives” (Alfred and Corntassel, 2005: 605). My project is pan-Indigenous to an extent and is not grounded in my ancestral community but is centered in my experience of INM and academia as part of the local and diasporic urban Indigenous community here. Renya Ramirez’s idea of transnational Indigenous “hubs” as convergences of activities can provide an alternative view of the need for decolonial projects to be intersectional (see Simpson, Nanibush & Williams, 2012).

4 I have come with Dakota thinker Kim TallBear to remain committed to the view that complex theoretical languages are not necessarily indicative of hierarchy between languages and that there is a “need for precise
directions of movement, patterns of thought and action that reflect a shift to an Indigenous reality from the colonized places we inhabit today” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005: 612).

As the refugitive reorientation of resurgence discourse has challenged me, so too has refusal in the defiance of scrutiny and surveillance, rejecting demands to give evidence and documentation, demands for Indigenous communicability to or with the settler-state and society and its dominant political rationality in ways amenable to colonial governance. Even in discussing practices associated with *Idle No More*, as examples of resurgence’s epistemic and discursive reorientations, I many times became waylaid by anxiety that by even indicating this in the attempt to elucidate colonial apprehension as a problem that resurgence inverts and ruptures, I was surveying them and so collaborating in overruling their implicit and explicit refusals. I remain sensitive to insidious occupations of Indigenous “semantic and material space,” that “naturalizes this occupation through history-writing and the very analytics that are used to know them” (Simpson, 2007: 75). Yet facing a crisis of intentions and possible ethical aporia, gave me the capacity to name my anxiety at the risks and possibilities of any inquiry and disclosure, as one more manifestation of apprehension in the service of dispossession and domination that seeks to silence from fear. Rather than “bizarre” as Shelley Ortner terms it, the scholar’s “refusal to know and speak and write of the lived worlds inhabited by those who resist” (Ortner, 1995: 187-8) may be ethically and politically imperative. Yet in certain contexts to not speak and write of them may also be ethnically and politically defeatist – we must consider the tactical imperative and risks of giving accounts of resistance and resurgence, of storying and re-storying their practices, their movement as such.

As Eve Tuck and Wayne K. Yang have described of refusal, the settler-colonial context compels intervention to reduce the primacy of its “metanarrative” and terminal creeds, while also attempting to evade “theories of change that tacitly endorse settler modernity,” and acknowledge how “academic codes decide what stories are civilized (intellectual property) and what stories are natural, wild, and thus claimable under the doctrine of discovery” (Tuck and Yang, 2014a: 812-3). The risks of telling are distortions and appropriations, and the potential coloniality in

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5 As Gerald Vizenor wrote of the observations of Indigenous peoples in social sciences as surveillance (following Michel Serres), “surveillance is the modernist separation of tribal imagination and the concoction of the other in the ruins of representation” (Vizenor, 1999: 168-9).
both knowing and unknowing: There may not always be “Indigenous interlocutors present to hold the use of Indigenous stories and laws to account,” especially if committing our words to the literate page, in publishing them, yet there is also a risk of “Indigenous thinking not being acknowledged at all” (Todd, 2016: 9). And so, I became interested in the implications for “forms of analysis after” the challenge of refusal (Simpson, 2014: 102). This requires interrogation of the self-appointed responsibility of Western form critical theory to “disclose possibilities” for a better future for all (see for example Kompridis, 2005), but also the sociality and so “exteriority” to the self of any storytelling. I faced my fear of words, of speaking and writing, my desire for authorial control that was always beyond me, as another put it “my writing is always unmoored from me, even when it bears my signature. It begins outside me, is funneled through me, and goes on talking without me” (Moore quoted in Vizenor, 1999: 170). In Greg Sarris’ words, the storywork “baskets keep talking” once woven, once they leave our hands that were never only our own. What then of our intentions in gifting them?

In his 2001 essay “Who Is This We that Gives the Gift? Native American Political Theory and The Western Tradition,” anarchist scholar Richard Day forwarded a critique of racialized or ethno-logical multiculturalism, liberal recognition theory and “Left” universalism’s emphasis on integration, that reifies and totalizes a single polity or society to be included or excluded from, when applied to Indigenous peoples in settler-states. He also considers how even those theorists who challenge the “basic precept” of equality based on one accepted set of norms and values in the Western tradition, as generally ignoring Indigenous political theorists, who in their turn treat this tradition as monolithic and “entirely incommensurable” with their views (Day, 2001: 177). While I would challenge the accuracy of this, even solely based on the thinkers he cites, in his sketch of some affinities between Indigenous and Euro-Western “paradigms” (in regard to sovereignty for example), Day takes the issue of commensurability and assimilatory subsumption of Indigenous theory seriously. He asks who the “we” that “gives the gift” of recognition are, and considers the other “gifts” of colonialism that Indigenous thinkers like Lee Maracle refuse, such as capitalism and patriarchy (185-6), which recall its “darkest gift” of coerced newness that Bill Ashcroft (2007) discusses and I mentioned in Chapter One.6 The metaphor of gifting stuck with me in considering Indigenous ways of knowing-being-doing’s

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6 Audra Simpson (2014) and Carole McGranahan (2016b) have both taken up the metaphor of refusing the “gift” of recognition and citizenship.
‘admittance’ to the Academy, and also the work of theory-storying here as a similarly ambiguous gift to Indigenous decolonial struggles, in which the entry of concepts like resurgence may then be apprehended by a Euro-Modernity that captures its dissent, and so follow the “ever-changing pattern of great liberating ideas that inevitably turn to suffocating straitjackets” (Henderson, 2000: 251). Ashis Nandy expressed the potential for pessimism aptly:

“the emancipatory ideas of one generation are always hollowed out through overuse and misuse, and become for the next generation poisoned gifts, sanctioning new forms of violence and oppression. Human beings, given long enough time, adequate opportunities and a culture of impunity can turn any theory of liberation into its reverse” (Nandy, 2012: 39).

On the gift of Indigenous women’s love in particular, and our bodies as our houses over which we have the right of choice as Maracle has described, Rachel Flowers suggests that if “our gift is received and respected, then the gift binds people together in an ongoing relationship of reciprocity and responsibility. When this gift is rejected or abused, expect our sadness, our resentment, and our rage” (2015: 40-1). Here crucial Indigenous feminist and LGBTQ2S critiques of the gender politics and practices of some thinkers on resurgence like Alfred, spring clearly to mind. Yet how can we ensure our gifts, like Archibald’s storybasket, are received and utilized as we intend? That in our drawing of correspondences between Indigenous and Euro-Western traditions for example, the weaving as I do with Arendt, that this not be construed as a “fusion of their horizons” (Day, 2001: 178), but as according with a principle of self-determination that forms a relationship of reciprocity and responsibility? And this especially (and as with misogyny and gendered violences) in an ongoing “culture of impunity” toward Indigenous dispossession and domination in an asymmetrical public or world in common, as a settler-colonial theatre of apprehension.

In his 1997 essay on cultural appropriation Kulchyski shared a lesson on this with an anecdote of how his then-partner was gifted a mass-produced Pope John Paul II coffee mug by a Dene Elder. He reflected that there is “no straight path from appropriation to subversion,” but rather the “movement from one to the other leaps over and marks a rupture between the logic of the commodity and the logic of the gift” (Kulchyski, 1997: 619). For the logic of the gift to maintain however, depends on goodwill, the acceptance of a host’s responsibilities according to
a law of hospitality, as Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen has suggested of the Western academy ‘welcoming’ Indigenous epistemes into its home in the university (Kuokkanen, 2007). I am still not sure of the ‘welcome’ and hospitality of academia for Indigenous peoples, nor can I simply trust the intentions of the gifts of Euro-Modern or Western modalities of political theory-storying. Yet, I also cannot reject the possibility for Indigenous subversions. Despite our intentions, when we choose to share or gift our stories, this is when we must accept that they are not ever only ours. As Cherokee writer Thomas King has taught, “once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world. So you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told” (King, 2003: 10). So while I must take responsibility for my story as I tell it, I must also accept it could be taken up in ways I do not intend as perhaps many of the stories I have retold here, it may be used as a weapon against me or Indigenous struggles or it may be refused, or ignored. This misuse or abuse may also be perpetuated from within our communities. Nevertheless I can proceed in telling, conscientious of the risks and possibilities.

The re-storying of my title is not only to emphasize the importance of the re- to resurgence, to re-story the settler-colonial present, in storying INM as resurgence - that is, otherwise than narratives of recognition, failed social movement, as refigurative of Indigenous and decolonial lifeways rather than anti-colonial resistance alone etc. - but to address Euro-Western political theory’s disavowal of itself as storytelling, and also to assert story and so theory as central to Indigenous political imaginations and praxis. My intercession is in response to what I have perceived to be an upsurge in a structural/materialist emphasis in conceptions of decoloniality among some engaging resurgence discourse or in its ambit. Perhaps this upsurge is responsive to the rejection of recognition politics and resurgence discourse’s emphasis on enactment and land, with Indigenous storied practices often integral with land and territory, and so story has merely become presumed in this. I have come to believe that theory matters because story matters because words matter - as I have always felt this to be so, but that this must affirmed continuously and never presumed. This is why I found Fanon’s seeming rejection of the power of storytelling to transform reality in *Wretched of the Earth*, like those who do not see the value of ‘theory’ and so story in a time of struggle, or diminish its transformative power in not wanting to “confl ate critical theory with political action” as Wendy Brown put it (Brown, 2004: 13), understandable but disheartening. And so it is to this (re) affirmation I would like to turn.
Decolonization is Also Metaphorical

In 2012 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang published an essay that proclaimed, “Decolonization is not a Metaphor,” countering any assertion that it is appropriate to ascribe decoloniality to anything but the “repatriation of Indigenous land and life.” While the essay was written in response to the “easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship,” it proved a compelling injunction that has been broadly taught and frequently cited. Here they provide a pointed reminder that as colonization is fundamentally about the theft of land and (attempted) elimination of Indigenous peoplehoods, decolonization is fundamentally about the return of land and structural capacities for self-determination. With this injunction they also seek to establish what they call an “ethic of incommensurability,” as the unsettled and unsettling site of solidarity between the aims of decolonization movements and settler or non-Indigenous projects of social justice (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 28). I am also committed to arguing such an incommensurability to those activists, educators and academics who might analogize too readily and easily between Indigenous resurgence practices and non-Indigenous social movements for example, and in the process appropriate them to the “directives” of the latter projects, making Indigenous “inclusion a form of enclosure” (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 3).

I am thoroughly sympathetic to the context of an ethic of incommensurability, as for example long argued in regard to arbitrary or generalizing alignment of different “texts and contexts,” by those thinkers forwarding Indigenous “literary separatism” for example (see Wakeham, 2016). My emphasis on the theorist-storier’s linking and drawing of correspondences, and the patterns of alignment I trace through Chapters Five and Six particularly, may be criticized in this regard. Yet, my effort in describing the problem of colonial apprehension was in part prompted by a concern with inappropriate alignments in regard to telling of Idle No More, and refusal is in part responsive to the risk of appropriation. I would also say that this concern applies to a concept of ‘Indigenization’ sometimes made exchangeable with decolonization, but implying the need to render Indigenous thought coherent for institutional incorporation, scholarly utility and settler education, especially in the context of universities. So I find myself at once in

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7 Though their injunction and the response to it is not unprecedented or unlike that of critical theorist Nancy Fraser’s critique of recognition and identity politics in the 1990s and early 2000s as ignoring or minimizing crucial questions of redistribution for social justice discourse.
impetuous agreement with the immediacy of Tuck and Yang’s injunction, and then cloying uncertainty about the terms or “directives” it also sets up – that is, to “assert what decolonization is not” and then to identify “what it wants,” and how then this must be achieved (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 21; 3). That is, a single decolonial program that places materiality in hierarchal division from imagination and figuration.

Tuck and Yang tellingly open their essay with two quotes from Fanon’s Wretched of the Earth, that decolonization “cannot come as a result of magical practices” and that as a “historical process” it “cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content” (Fanon quoted in Tuck & Yang, 2012: 2). Here my uncertainty becomes more precise: the pervasiveness of historical-materialist denigrations of traditional ‘ethnocultural’ modes of resistance, and an under-appreciation of how many Indigenous practices might for this reason not (always) be intelligible or discernable as political or liberatory action with ‘historical’ meaningfulness by the exacting measure demanded. When practices like traditional dance or song enter the arena of political-historical explanation dominantly oriented to the perception of practices considered proper to revolutionary or ‘activist movements’ (as with INM), the problem of colonial apprehension becomes manifest. Indeed, I would argue that setting measurements for meaningful action along a metaphorical/actual divide (actuality as only structural or immediately tangible, physical, literal, empirically/externally verifiable) might insidiously recapitulate this problem, rather than address Indigenous resurgence’s challenge to it. The assessment of what falls either side of this divide in Western political theory and anthropology has proceeded along the Euro-Modern bifurcation between ethno-cultural and political I described in Chapter Four. This bifurcation then implies a further range of dichotomies like theory/praxis, thought/action, reason/affect, and mind/body that forecloses on wholistic Indigenous conceptions of our lifeworlds and what practices and experiences – embodied, energetic, mental, spiritual, emotional - are crucial to their decolonial regeneration.

While Tuck and Yang caution against and certainly do not seek to “convert” Indigenous resurgence into what they call a “Western doctrine of liberation” (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 21), the vision of decolonization they present still evokes a conception of ‘real’ political action toward of views on indigenization of the academy and post-secondary institutions from inclusion to reconciliation to decolonial. I am with those who prefer to ‘always decolonize.’ On Indigenous peoples ‘burden of education’ in relation to the National Film Board’s relationship with Indigenous storytelling see Cornellier, 2012.
liberation and practices of freedom that excludes and denies many ‘non-Western’ ways of knowing-being-doing. These include those that have been considered a form of “magical thinking” rather than actually transformative as I will return to. Their injunction is centered on ‘metaphorizing’ in the sense of substituting thought for action or theory for praxis.9 They include a number of descriptions of what this sense of metaphorizing entails, including “equivocation,” as in using colonization and decolonization as a “metonym” for other things (“calling everything by the same name”). This prevents attending to the particularities of specific colonial and therefore decolonizing contexts in their view (Tuck & Yang, 2006: 16). Metaphorizing for them can involve a “focus on decolonizing the mind...as if it were the sole activity of decolonization” (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 19). They also suggest it applies to the “settler intellectual who hybridizes decolonial thought with Western critical traditions” (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 16), but it is unclear as to what constitutes decolonial thought in clear distinction from these traditions in their view, and then whether Marxist-Humanist anti-colonial thinkers like Fanon are also at fault.10 Certainly, a fixation on the possible aporias of intellectual decolonization can become a distraction tantamount to tilting at “windmills of the mind,” as Vine Deloria Jr. suggested and I discussed in Chapter Two. What I am at odds with is a narrow association of what they call metaphorizing with substitution, and implying illusion, delusion or fraudulence against incontestable truth, authentic meaning or materiality. This does not adequately appreciate the complex relation of knowledge and power, discourse and reality in not only its disciplinary but liberatory effects.

Setting up metaphor or metaphorical associations as anathema to decoloniality prompts the same trepidations in me as Fanon’s depiction of the colonial destruction of Native ‘cultural resources’ leading to a kind of entropy and the futility of any practices other than counter-violence as tantamount to lethargy or idleness.11 It does so particularly because of the role of metaphor and metaphoric thinking in Indigenous intellectual traditions, storytelling and storied traditions like dance, which Fanon characterizes as an escapist practice in the face of colonial

9 Despite that they also critique Cartesian dualism and Plato’s cave allegory, see note below. See also note in Chapter Three on the Ghost Dance and Fanon’s view of the colonized’s “magical superstructure.”
10 Tuck and Yang’s critique of practices of equivocation and theoretical hybridization seem to require greater specificity on what kinds of comparisons or outside resources they do consider appropriate in regard to articulating decolonial thought for Indigenous-settler contexts. For example they cite Black feminist Audre Lorde against Brazilian liberation theologian Paulo Friere’s concept of conscientization in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, though neither were specifically speaking to contexts of colonization and decolonization.
11 The association of non-Western peoples as inherently living in an externally affective condition to varying degrees, which make them susceptible to colonial subjection was discussed in Chapter 4 and see de Silva, 2007.
violence. Dominant post-Enlightenment, Euro-Western conceptions of modernity, rationality, history, state and reason, have long been contrasted with non-Western tradition, ritual, myth, community, emotion (Dube quoted in Mignolo, 2002: 927) to denigrate and delegitimize Indigenous ways of knowing-being-doing. Storytelling has in this imperialized episteme become seen as a normative knowledge practice of most ‘pre-modern’ or ‘traditional’ societies (for its function in social cohesion and establishing authority), and so hostile to critical action and thinking (Disch, 1996: 4-5). Story has been associated with the *imaginary* in a pejorative sense, as disconnected from and opposed to truth, activity, materiality outside of ‘mere’ subjective feeling and embodiments, disassociated from ‘real life’ or else made to be nothing more than superstructural, the ideological trappings of productive processes and imperatives. Storytelling in this view constitutes what both Fanon and Sartre called a magical practice as Tuck and Yang quote, a form of “ritualistic behaviour” that substitutes symbolic for direct action. When the latter has been confounded or prevented, it functions as a performance of control, a “play of mastery” or “coping strategy that involves making words stand in for the world” (Jackson, 2006: 17-18; also 35).

For the anti-colonial humanists like Sartre and Fanon this supposed ‘metaphoric’ substitution, of storytelling for action, is indefensible. Metaphor becomes a discursive deceit, an iteration of the *colonial* imaginary that would seem to hold hegemony over the psyches of the colonized, a greater tool of oppression than of liberation in the encouragement of the colonized to defer action. This is possible, yet the most troubling passage for me in *Wretched of the Earth* remains Fanon’s depiction of a ceremonial gathering to dance as a cathartic fantasy in the same chapter as Tuck and Yang’s quotations appear, which I will reproduce here, highlighting a particular sentence that has stayed with me since the first, and which I heard traces of in the calls to shift away from INM’s winter practices as dancing in circles, to lining up in blockades as the spring came:

“The dance circle is a permissive circle. It protects and empowers. At a fixed time and a fixed date men and women assemble in a given place, and under the solemn gaze of the tribe launch themselves into a seemingly disarticulated, but in fact extremely ritualized, pantomime where the exorcism, liberation, and expression of a community are grandiosely and spontaneously played out through shaking of the head, and back and forward thrusts of the body… During the struggle for liberation
there is a singular loss of interest in these rituals. *With his back to the wall, the knife at his throat, or to be more exact the electrode on his genitals, the colonized subject is bound to stop telling stories.* After years of unreality, after wallowing in the most extraordinary phantasms, the colonized subject, machine gun at the ready, finally confronts the only force which challenges his very being: colonialism…The colonized subject discovers reality and transforms it through his praxis, his deployment of violence and his agenda for liberation.” (Fanon, 2004: 20-1 emphasis mine).

In a recent article on discursive choices in describing the relations of Israel with Palestine, theorist Mark Rifkin suggests that settler-colonialism is itself an effectual “political metaphor” which is however not to be construed as being in “distinction from some ‘real’ or ‘literal’ state of affairs” (Rifkin, 2017: 25), but a way of storying otherwise (as he presents in that context, otherwise than describing Israel as an “apartheid state”). This draws attention to the distinction of literal and figurative thinking often touted between Western theory and storytelling practices, but also the association of ‘magical thinking’ with non-Western peoples and the ‘savage mind,’ as falsely attributing a causal relationship between certain actions and events or, that thought and other non-corporeal practices like telling stories as having effects in the world in and of themselves, and confusing signs and objects (with knowledge and language meant to represent not construct reality). Practices such as dance understood as transformative in Indigenous theoretical and “onto-epistemic” systems (Martineau, 2015), and the conception of materializing transformations through ceremony fall under this division.

We must consider distinctions in applying critiques of so-called magical thinking between oppressive narratives such as state sovereignty claims operating in colonial discursive formations, and affirmation of decisional authority and liberatory potential in ongoing Indigenous habitations and regenerations of what law scholar Gordon Christie (Inupiat, Inuvialuit) calls a different “normative universe” as conveyed through storytelling practices. Alerting attention to Euro-Western theory and the settler-state’s narrations *as such* should not detract from acknowledging their power to effect action but nor that of Indigenous peoples in “meeting story with story” (see Christie, 2011).
In his *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (2007) theorist Christopher Bracken has forwarded that the ethnocentric racialization of “ideational” thought against knowledge based on ‘reality’ was always a double standard and the denigration of the former has continued, though associations with the ‘savage’ are no longer forthright, the repudiation of postmodern theory’s emphasis on discursive power as logocentric being one example. The constructivist view of “political communities [as] imagined and [the] nation [as] narrated” (Lessard, Johnson & Webber, 2014: 15) being turned against Indigenous peoples also comes to mind. In this, Bracken argues for the reclamation of how, contrary to being non-critical, magical thinking can be considered as crucial to trace the all-too real effects and affects of discourse (academic, governmental, popular etc.). More than its critical faculty, metaphorical or figurative thought, and storytelling as a knowledge practice can *re-figure* our experiences of being in the world(s) we share with others as well as impact decisions to act and transform them. However, the immediacy of Tuck and Yang and indeed Fanon’s challenge in fore-grounding the imperative to direct action, is maintained by the colonial context, as one of “having a knife at our throats” that can cut us literally. So what of words and storytelling in such conditions?

Our experiences of being in the world(s) is always a being with others, is always intersubjective. Anthropologist Michael Jackson describes this as subjecthood in “continual flux” or becoming within the “dynamic interplay of self and not-self” (Jackson, 2002: 13; 30). This generates an imperative to “sustain and synthesize” our selves with a sense of belonging in the/our world, to see ourselves as part of an interconnectedness or continuity greater than us, and also to ascribe to our selves a form of agency. Storytelling is important to both imperatives, in defining and negotiating our individual and collective identities. To tell stories is about arbitrating the vicissitudes of experience and meaning, between self and other, personal and social, agency and structure, internal and external (Jackson, 2002). With experiences of oppression, storytelling can mitigate disempowerment as the prevention of direct action (the stifling power of domination), through an accounting or imagining of events and phenomena otherwise. Rejecting passivity, storytelling becomes crucial to articulate and model the experience of freedom where direct action is deferred for practices of subversion. Its function

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12 The kind of transference of meaning Jackson ascribes to storied practices like dance that give a sensation of freedom (invokes agency, crucially makes it sense-able for the oppressed) might be deemed poetic. This is not at odds with Audre Lorde’s invocation of the poet’s view that “I feel therefore I can be free” against “white father” Descartes’ that “I think therefore I am.” Tuck and Yang quoted Lorde to suggest that “freedom is a possibility that is
in symbolically re/constructing our experiences helps us mediate our intersubjective life “such that no one person or group ever arrogates agency so completely and permanently to itself that another is reduced to the status of a mere thing” (Jackson, 2002: 13).

Fanon and Sartre attributed just such a condition of psycho-affective subjugation to the colonized with knives to their throats, and asserted it could only be dialectically reversed through the ultimate negation of physical violence, a violence that could not be metaphorical. Yet we tell stories to declare and bring into being who we are – and it is crucial not least when confronting those who would assume the power to define and treat us as objects. Storytelling is a practice of self-determination in this sense. As Christie suggests of Inuit storytelling resistive to sovereignty narratives in the Arctic and regenerative of their conceptions of relationship with land, water, ice, non-human animals:

“as with other independent peoples around the world, [they] continued to build and maintain worlds of meaning about themselves, as the power to do so cannot be taken by another (short of complete genocide). This power is at the heart of Indigeneity…a power that encompasses not only authority over telling and retelling but also the power of critical reflection, modification, and world adjustment…as a dynamic meaning-generating community, as people who are alive and fundamentally self-determining” (Christie, 2011: 342).

Yet the re/constructive, materializing or “subjunctive” quality of stories, their capacity to change our frame of reference – to make it so by saying it is so” or believing so, like words, cuts both ways (Lessard, Johnson & Webber, 2014: 10 emphasis mine). The interplay of stories and reality – shaping stories into reality and reality into stories, stories both “making sense of and shaped by the world,” raises the issue of ethical and political judgment in telling as activating stories’ subjunctive and transitive transformative power, not least those acts of the teller themselves as they may configure or order events into story, as histories for future judgment and use by others (13-14, 19).

As I discussed in Chapter Five, for Hannah Arendt the desire to ascribe purpose and explain processes and events in linear-causal, often universalizing and ultimately authoritarian

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not just mentally generated [but] particular and felt” also against the Platonic distrust of the senses as representative of truth (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 20).
terms is part of a pervasive problem of Western philosophy in grappling with intersubjectivity; particularly, human action and its affects/effects in a web of relationality, as constituting the field of politics or political life. 13 Marxist historicism, in the application of teleological principles and materialist sensibility to change through time, is but one example she points to (Arendt, 2007: 13). For Arendt, authorial imposition of such an order on the exposition of phenomena is to narrativize, long disavowed as a kind of storytelling by Western theorists and historians. As Jackson puts it, stories have the potential to either reinforce or transgress boundaries we draw between the “infinite variety of possible human experience” and ourselves in the “seemingly finite social worlds” we conceive of belonging to and must reproduce (Jackson, 2006: 25; also Polletta, 2006). Arendt associates what she describe as the ‘narrative’ form of storytelling with the reinforcement of such boundaries rather than a theory-storying drawing connections, a rhetorical distinction I have employed throughout.

Repressive narratives harden lines of interiority/exteriority that serve to define a dominant selfhood and its world by inferiorizing, degrading and denying reality to that which is Other. This includes those that set up Euro-Modernity as the locus of “truth and humanity,” and those that historicize and indeed mythologize claims to nationhood by settler-colonial states (Lessard, Johnson & Webber, 2014: 7). Such narratives operate to sustain violent typologies, for example “to segregate people on the basis of superficial or supposed differences, to police traffic across borders, to keep migrants and refugees from participating in the life of the state, to ritually outlaw ‘barbaric’ practices and ‘superstitions,’ and to derogate a plethora of emotions, impulses and drives as irrational, delusional, phantasmagoric, infantile, pathological or primitive” (Jackson, 2006: 24).

Jackson calls the effect such narratives have “censorship.” For Arendt the public realm at its broadest is the pluralistic and political space of our appearance to others, where our experiences and identities are externally corroborated or re-formed always in relation to and through the perspectival prisms of others, and is also where we collaborate in the creation and maintenance of shared worlds (Jackson, 2006: 11). To censor stories and storytellers’ public emergence can

13 The Euro-Modern (transcendental) subject/(empirical) object distinction (denying intersubjectivity) created the central epistemological preoccupation for political theory - humans as conscious actors and/or unconsciously acted-upon, sources of representations and ideas of an objective world and/or shaped by them etc. Foucault associates Modernity with the formation of an idea of the Human (“Man”), after Kant as both a subject and object – that the Human is an epistemological concept produced from the desire for stable identity and certainty in knowledge, positing that we could be the source of representations of objective reality (Foucault, 1994: 309; Gutting, 2014).
then be equated with denying their political meaningfulness, yet publicity in any common space of appearance is inevitably conditioned by structural power dynamics that validate certain stories, tellers, languages etc. and censor others, which then reinforces those dynamics in turn. As discussed in Chapter Five, judgment on things that should be shown or should be hidden for a designation of imposed censorship rather than refusal must be considered in regard to the gendered and colonial difference.

In conditions where a common reality of what Arendt called the factual truths of public events (if not shared experience of them) is at stake, when the structural power to shape this reality according to censoring narratives seems interminable, is this the time to stop telling stories? Arendt sympathetically reflected on the impetus of those like Sartre, as a kind of critical-ethical rebellion against Western philosophy’s retreat to the transcendental in its failures to explain and so “stabilize” the dynamic “realm of political affairs” (Arendt, 2006: 228). The Second World War propelled many intellectuals to engage in direct action through the resistance to Nazism and fascism and their all-out assault on factual truths (though by her estimation many turned to collaboration and apologism for the same reason). By surrendering to the “unquestioning commitment to action” of revolutionaries, the existentialists would not solve philosophy’s problem of explanation but at least as Sartre suggested, be able to live without becoming a hypocrite (Arendt, 2006: 8).

However, as ultimately internal dissenters to this philosophy they only reversed “the established hierarchy of thinking and acting” but still “retained the traditional sense of hierarchy itself.” As Steve Buckler summates Arendt’s assessment: “Thinking comes to stand in the service of action; but this philosophically established hierarchy equally insinuates a sense of what action may achieve, whether in terms of revolutionary realisation of the non-alienated society or the achievement of personal authenticity” (Buckler, 2011: 168). Arendt’s characterization of their frustration certainly speaks to the appeal of Marxian variations of existentialism to anti-colonial thinkers such as Fanon in confronting the intractability and adaptability of colonial systems, and so then the appeal of Fanon to thinkers on resurgence. To discursively back-ground or deflect from their structural and material foundations can absolutely lead to a perilous abstraction of decolonization struggle, as Tuck and Yang have responded to.

As Arendt scholar Lisa Disch suggests, her original and pivotal contribution to Western political theory is how her conception of storytelling addressed the supposed impasse or crisis on
“the possibility of critical understanding and its relationship to experience” reached in the first half of the 20th century (Disch, 1996). For Arendt, storytelling as one answer to this impasse is not about finding a representation of reality to which all can agree nor endlessly postponing “the authoritative moment that is necessary to criticism and action,” but to show how critical understanding is a process and ethical judgment is situated in context and experience but not necessarily “standpoint-bound” (Disch, 1996: 2). Considering theory as storytelling provides a way to acknowledge the irreducible plurality of experience but still judge the variable legitimacy or aptness of different stories, terms of description and modes of telling sensitive to distinctions of context and intent. In this and the “eclectic” stylistic features of her rhetoric, including biography to teach by example and poetic devices (Buckler, 2011: 2, 52-4), Arendt was “attacked by social scientists for her use of metaphor as a substitute for empirical research” and also by humanists for her moral “partiality” (Disch 1993: 668).14

This brings me back to the disparagement of figurative communication of ideas such as metaphor. For Arendt, metaphor’s critical capacity is in its “linguistic transference” of meaning to express correspondences – linkages or affinities between felt experiences, memories, events, actions, processes, realms - giving “material form to the invisible” threads of connection and those that traverse perceived boundaries, and can do so without resorting to authoritarian definition or explanation that neither ossifies, absorbs or dissolves difference. Metaphorizing is in this way a form of poetic thinking (Arendt, 2007: 14). As Annabel Herzog describes this, “by transferring to one thing the name of another, [poets] bring to light the affinities between things...To think poetically is to think metaphorically, or associatively, thereby discovering the correspondences between the various experiences of the world and between the different feelings of these experiences” (Herzog, 2001: 177). This also allows the “condensation” of experiences that can make them memorable (Buckler, 2011: 53), not least in conveying their affective textures and not only facts by evoking the feelings they elicited.

Arendt takes up storytelling as both a metaphor for life and the human condition or experiences of being in the world or worlds with others, and also indicates that as a self-conscious and conscientious practice, storytelling can describe the relational field of politics

14 In the preface to her 1968 essay collection Between Past and Future, Arendt indicates that while the essays arise “out of the actuality of political incidents” and that thought must “remain bound” to experience, “such incidents are mentioned only occasionally” in them (Arendt, 2006: 14). This is aligned with the quote at the beginning of Chapter One. Also as to the modulations of her voice through her work, Buckler suggests an “inflection that is peculiarly appropriate to the terrain of politics” (2011: 4).
emergent from this condition of intersubjectivity in a way that reflects and models it. Storytelling principles can contribute to a methodological ethic for the recounting of events, action and movement in ways that do not force consensus when there is no shared understanding yet can be analytical. Storytelling is not contrary to ‘truth telling’ or claims to critical understanding, but does avoid and disrupt authoritarian and deterministic explanation of experience and meaning of common “factual truths,” and this has two lines of importance for political theory in the settler-colonial context of apprehension my story in this dissertation addresses. This is a context where Indigenous peoples experience “two ways of life within the framework of a common and commonly recognized reality” as Arendt phrases it (Arendt, 2006: 232) – Indigenous and non-Indigenous or settler – as structured by asymmetrical power relations and created by processes of domination and dispossession to obscure heterogeneity.

One line of importance pertains to how storytelling can provide a critical function by reporting and committing to memory the factual truths of this “common reality” where there is censorship, and especially where there has been what Arendt calls “organized lying” to support a dominant narrative. This connects to the second line of importance regarding storytelling’s authoritative non-authoritarianism, the capacity (and necessity) to circumvent apprehensive explanation and ascription of meaning to Indigenous people’s storied experiences and practices that unfold in and relate to a common but not shared/still settler-colonial dominated public/reality. This also establishes a line of exteriority/interiority to halt the acquisitive pull of all Indigenous stories into its sphere, diffusing and defusing their difference. To poetically draw correspondences is necessarily a kind of disclosure or making visible in spaces of appearance (Buckler, 2011: 53), however these spaces are plural, with different parameters and layers of intelligibility, not all are shared and those that are common are experienced differently. And so the theorist-storyteller undertaking this linking must consider an ethic, as “a caution about what may not be discounted in acting” (Brown, 2005).

Jackson cautions against “fetishizing” parallels between stories and lives (Jackson, 2006: 19) because there will always also be much more to our life experiences, interiorized and exteriorized to ourselves, beyond what is told or tell-able, a plenitude or excess. But this does not take away from the effectiveness of Arendt’s and many Indigenous theorists’ metaphor (or metonymy) of life as story/story as life, as not all stories are told or tell-able, some are practiced, embodied, silent or withheld. And some may be incomparable or ethically (if not essentially or
‘culturally’) incommensurable, as between many settler-colonial narratives, social justice movements, or Third World anti-colonial theories and Indigenous resurgence stories.  
Decolonization may itself not be only metaphorical, however in suggesting, like Tuck and Yang, that “[u]ntil stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism” (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 19), we must be cautious lest what we assert does “translate into action,” replicates definitions that foreclose on the transformative effects and affects of diverse Indigenous political-cultural practices, like dancing and storytelling as naively magical or phantasmagoric. Further, if we agree to the intangible reality of a coloniality of power in its ongoing discursive, psychological, symbolic and epistemic onslaught against Indigenous peoples, the storyteller’s ability to draw metaphoric linkages - concatenations as Maracle calls them or correspondences as Arendt does - poetic affinities between phenomena, events and fields of thought, action and feeling, fact and memory is a crucial decolonial and imaginative, activity.

Always Dance, Always Transform, Always Tell Stories

“I remember my first words…It was my earliest understanding of metaphor and its place in our lives. I was three and a half then. I have memories that pre-date this image, but no words were ever let go of by me, until this moment.”

-Lee Maracle, from “The Post-Colonial Imagination” (Maracle, 2004: 204).

Links between the importance of metaphoric thinking, prompts to the public-political disclosure of ourselves and witnessing protocol have recently been brought home to me in talk-essays by the late Two-Spirit Kanien’kehaka poet Beth Brant, from her 1995 collection Writing as Witness. In them she reflects on her role as a “native woman who writes, as well as speaks,” and indeed has chosen to speak in a language not her own, to re-make words that have been weaponized against her (Brant, 1995: 49-51). This is a choice that Brant made, despite a deep suspicion and apprehension” of the written word in particular for the damage it has wrought on Indigenous peoples, the thefts it has perpetrated, and the almost-certainty that “everything we write will be used against us,” including by our own. Brant asserts that while writing and speech is “an act of courage for most,” for Indigenous people this choice is one that requires knowingly

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15 While Tuck and Yang include collapsing Third World colonizer-colonized systems with settler-colonial “triad” systems in their critique of equivocation, they still draw connections with anti-colonial Marxian characterizations of decolonization foundational to their argument on metaphor.
opening ourselves to “those who do not love us,” but to also act from a fierce and sometimes raging love that is “greater than fear,” and is then a kind of “revolutionary madness” (53). Once assumed, the gift and privilege of the role of speaker/writer as leader/activator, comes with an acceptance of love as relational accountability, in the sense Alex Wilson (2015, Chapter Seven) has described. Brant links this with a call to bear witness, including for the “sometimes unbearable circumstances of our lives,” and the transformations we have been taught to fear, such as death, to see in them cycles of renewal (70 emphasis mine). Witness involves our openness to listen, to receive story and allow ourselves to be changed in the process, and to then also reject self-loathing, paranoia and forgetfulness, and in remembering who we are, bring acceptance of mystery and the resolution to share our stories and vision responsibly and to the best of our abilities (72). For Brant, vision is like the attunement of the witnessing stance discussed in Chapter Six (Boiselle, 2017): to perceive what has happened, is happening and what is possible; and sharing is to send story and words through the cracks in sometimes violent, despairing, “unlovely,” or “frightening” windows on our world in common, however they may be received: to be “ignored, burned, or found and cherished, carried along by the wind, by a bird, by a woman who retells the stories to her young” (72-3):

“We who we are is written on our bodies, our hearts, our souls. This is what it means to be Native in the dawn of the twenty-first century. Witness to what has been and what is to be. Knowing what has transpired and dreaming of what will come. Listening to the stories brought to us by other beings. Renewing ourselves in the midst of chaos” (Brandt, 1995: 74).

In Brandt’s story I hear Arendt’s, her trials in assuming the role of a public intellectual in dark times from a sense of relational accountability, and my own too, adjusting to the risks and possibilities, and so perhaps courage, of disclosing ourselves through political action, including in speech and writing; attempting to model an ethic that also reflects this uncertainty as a theorist-storier holding a witnessing stance. As Maracle has described of her negotiations between orality and written word, this involves accepting transformation as integral with storytelling in our decisions to act, to speak, to write from our experience, to theorize from life (Million, 2014). Our own transformations as well as in attunement with others’ we witness for:
“We are transformers. We arrived through transformation and our stories are documents of the historical transformations we have experienced. We are expected to carry on the tradition of continuous transformation by re-creating new stories that are connected to our history of story and transformation. We are expected to live our lives as story. We breathe story, tell and re-tell story, we alter our being over and over again throughout our lives based on the creation and recreation of story. The stories we tell address the transformations we have and have not made in our own lives” (Maracle, 2015: 225-6).

When Maracle was asked to consider the concept of a “postcolonial imagination,” the metaphoric imagery her mother evoked in a memory of her first words on a rainy day at three and a half years old returned as a condensation of experience (Maracle, 2004; Buckler, 2011). Like her, I am recalling my first words in this story, that I released in the world that spring following the winter we danced, when I was called on to speak as witness of INM. This would be a flashpoint event in my life, informing the lines I have drawn and links I have traced through these pages, from which I have transformed and continue to. In my re-collection, my remembering, I have come to reassess my fears at ‘standing in’ for someone whose stature shadowed others and certainly mine, that I then believed I could not equal in speech, as one who some may consider initiated resurgence discourse’s movements in his ‘first words’ and for others has gone on to damage them. I have come to feel that while his configuration of words around resurgence may be reckoned as beginnings, leading as activating, they were also renewals of theory-story that came before. They exceeded sole attribution then and so can be regenerated in every re-telling without deference to some notion of originary authorship beyond reproach. Another’s words should not be venerated as authoritative by deprecating others,’ including my own. I cannot stand-in for anyone, I must take responsibility for my words, my stories, as while they have never only belonged to me, once uttered or written, they leave my only control, which is to initiate or reinitiate, to activate or reactivate their transformative power.

Of course it is a struggle to be optimistic that this power and our imaginations will tend to decolonial transformations. The degree to which Indigenous subjectivities have been reformed, “changing the way we understand and respond to the world” (Mack, 2011: 299), makes it difficult to conceive of utterly rejecting the apprehensive terms of enunciation that have
subjected and attempted to enclose us. On this I recall an affecting comment that Taiaiake Alfred made once at another conference I attended a decade ago that “we can no longer say we stand firmly on Turtle’s back.” Yet storytellers like Brant, Maracle, Leanne Simpson and Thomas King remind us that Indigenous people have never only stood, but have always *danced* on this Turtle’s back, through times of feasting and fasting, light and dark, in the winter of 2012-13, as every winter before. Indigenous ways of knowing-being-doing and telling have “undergone numerous transfigurations” by colonialism, including the introduction of literacy to orality (Brandt, 1995: 72), “but in all the tellings of all the tellers, the world never leaves the turtle's back” (King, 2003: 1). We can story survivance, resistance and resurgence through the cracks in windows on our realities, darkened by coloniality - to honor our pasts, meet our present needs, *inflect* our futures (Doerfler, Sinclair & Stark, 2013: 295). And “when we re-tell stories in the context we inherit,” they can become guides to these processes and “in this way we find freedom from oppression; we create dreams from obstacles, and derive hope from besiegement” (Maracle, 2015: 219). That rather than escapism or deferral of action, storytelling gives us “a lens through which we can envision our way out of cognitive imperialism, where we can create models and mirrors where none existed, and where we can *experience* the spaces of freedom and justice” (Simpson, 2011: 33 emphasis mine).

Anyone who participated in the movements of *INM*, reclamation, blockading/protecting, strikes/fasts, marches/journeys, rallies, teach-ins, forums at universities, debates across kitchen tables or comment sections, remember how you felt. We can recall our experiences of freedom in the circle of the flash mob/round dance, we can bear witness respectfully, *for* decolonial transformation. For this I have tried to listen and re-tell these storied practices carefully and well. I have come full circle in this dance and so my own self disclosure in a world we have in common, with all the risks of one unshared, of unfair judgment, appropriation, rejection or ignoring by those who may not love us, all its possibilities including subversions. Though much has remained the same, much has changed, not least in the process of telling, and you have now heard this story and are yourself witness to its transformations, and so also my own. With this I return to the last of my first words, imperfect, incomplete and uncertain, let go that day in spring and later committed to page with such apprehensiveness, what seems now long ago and like

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16 Comment made during a session at the First Annual Meeting of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2009.
yesterday at once. They are words I have grown into as I have lived the lesson I did not then realize they held, but I am now more ready to receive and share: “with our backs to the wall we must never stop telling stories” (Aguirre, 2014: 203).
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