

**Integrating Fluid, Responsive, and Embodied Ethics:
Unsettling the Praxis of White Settler CYC Practitioners**

by

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BA, University of Victoria, 1996

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

This thesis explores and seeks to unsettle the tenacity of white settler privilege in child and youth care (CYC). I first acknowledge the significant leadership of Indigenous and nonwhite activist-scholars to address the ongoing overrepresentation of Indigenous families across colonial systems in which CYC practitioners work. This qualitative study interrogates how white settler CYC practitioners approach issues of colonial and systemic racialized violence targeting Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.

Experienced, politicized frontline practitioners working in the CYC field were invited to examine how they understand, name, reproduce, contest, and struggle with white settler privilege in their practice. My study findings are organized along four themes that attend to systemic issues and the difficulty of challenging dominant white norms and conventions in the CYC field: (1) working in colonial violence and racism; (2) white settler fragility; (3) power and privilege; and (4) troubling allyship in the CYC field. The findings explore the complex individual and collective ethical responsibilities of white settler CYC practitioners and formulate responsive, embodied ethics rooted in solidarity and an anticolonial, antiracist, intersectional praxis.

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to *Tsiilthinkii*, late Ron Marshall;

to the short and powerful lives of Bobby-Jo, Clifford, Cynthia, Rita-Mae, Donny, Jumbo, Trevor, Kyle, Stacey, Tanya, Madelen, Derek, Bruce, Monica and Clayton;

to my daughter, adopted kids, nieces and nephews, cousins, aunties and uncles, and my granddaughter;

and to all the young hearts that I have had the blessing and honour of walking alongside.

Let Me Begin in A Good Way

As I moved forward with my graduate school program, my commitment to antiracism, social justice, everyday decolonization, and solidarity/allyship continued to grow, creating an imperative for a thesis focused on white privilege in child and youth care (CYC). I am a white, cisgender woman (she/her/hers) who has spent the last three decades working as a frontline practitioner in the field of CYC while living on the stolen territories of the Lekwungen, W̱SÁNEĆ, TʼSouke, and Pacheedaht peoples. Both my work as a white settler CYC practitioner and my kinship ties to Pacheedaht and W̱SÁNEĆ Nations have activated a deep awareness of the “interpersonal, political, and colonial dynamics” that inhabit the intimate folds of life (Hunt & Holmes, 2015, p. 169). Thus, attending to my responsibilities to the ancestors and peoples of these territories and of my kin relations, along with those whose lands my biological settler family has occupied for generations, I have focused this research on critical, politicized praxis and white settler privilege in CYC. In taking up critical, politicized praxis, I look to Loiselle, de Finney, Khanna, and Corcoran’s (2012) definition of doing CYC as an ethical commitment to “politicized, critical, and radical social change work alongside children, youth, families, and communities” (p. 180).

I would like to begin with acknowledging the embodied space from where my own theorizing has been generated (hooks, 1984). My white settler/occupier ancestral lineage connects me to Ireland, Scotland, and England; my occupier roots have been on Turtle Island for three to seven generations, depending on the ancestral line. I use the word *occupier* with intention here, as Mi’kmaq activist and educator Sajek Ward (2015) claims that settler is a term that is too politically and historically barren. He argues that Canadians are occupiers of Indigenous homelands and must, because of this occupation, acknowledge and take

responsibility for the colonial crimes we have inherited and continue to enact. Speaking to white occupiers, Ward (2015) powerfully states, “Indigenous people cannot turn [their] backs on [their] ancestors and forget the genocide of 100 million Indigenous people and the stealing and abusing of [their] children because you feel inconvenienced by its hurt. We have to acknowledge the history of colonization” (Ward, 2015, n.p.). It is with humility and the responsibility to enact colonizer repair that I acknowledge my own occupier lineage. I cannot be separated from my ancestors’ journeys, nor from the violent impacts on the peoples and lands of Turtle Island.

Canada is a settler colonial state. Settler colonialism is defined as a “persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/colonizers/settlers come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to disappear the Indigenous peoples that are there” (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013, p. 12). In settler states, settler colonizers come to stay and move to eradicate the Indigenous peoples; “settler invasion is a structure, not an event” (Wolfe, 1999, p. 163).

White people have a long history of turning our backs on our ancestors; systemic white supremacy requires that we do. The *hwulunitum*¹, the hungry ones in *Hul’qumi’num*² (Flowers, 2015, p. 34), arrived on Turtle Island with colonialism as a cloak and racism as their armour. The atrocities committed by colonization, rooted in racialized systemic power imbalances, are part of the invisible history of Turtle Island (Duran, 2006). White people must acknowledge the atrocities and instances of genocide that contribute to the soul wound of the Original Peoples, in order to honour those whose lives were stolen (Duran, 2006, p. 22). This is especially important and salient given the recent release of *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (2019c). The report,

¹ *WENITEM*, the greedy ones (Andrew, 2015) is the same word used by Sto:lo people and relations along the Fraser River.

² *Hul’qumi’num* is one of the languages of the Coast Salish peoples. Its literal translation is “a woman of the land or Indigenous woman” (Flowers, 2015, p. 33).

grounded “in international and domestic human and Indigenous rights laws, including the Charter, the Constitution, and the Honour of the Crown” (National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019b, p. 168), demonstrates the hard truth that “we live in a country whose laws and institutions perpetuate violations of fundamental rights, amounting to a genocide against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people” (National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019a, para. 3).

Ancestral Land Occupation Acknowledgement

My ancestors were hwulunitum (greedy ones). As part of my process with this thesis, I decided to locate my lineage more deeply. I spent time on ancestry.ca and spoke with my 88-year-old aunt, my parents, and my daughter. One of the most profound comments came from my daughter, who has blended Indigenous ancestry from Pacheedaht, WSÁNEĆ and Yakam nations, and white occupier ancestry. One day she said to me, “Mom, when I introduce myself, I never know what to say about your side of the family.”

One branch of my family arrived and occupied Hartford, Connecticut in 1620, originally the territory of the Podunk peoples, who now identify—because of the impacts of disease, war and forced separation due to colonization—as the Mohegan. My ancestors moved north to Abenaki Territory (Northern Vermont), where my great-grandparents were farmers, and later relocated to Mohawk territory (Montreal). My paternal ancestors occupied and continue to live in Mi’kmaq territory, close to the Elk River Nation, in New Brunswick.

As I read and researched about white supremacy, white settler privilege, and the continued impacts of colonization, I had photographs of my ancestors around me, and I allowed my research and the photographs to move me into an art piece. The photos of my great-great-grandparents and great-grandparents visually connect me to my colonizer past—a past that

locates me in the present of continually benefitting from the dispossession of the land and life of Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour. I chose to put photos of my maternal great-great-grandparents and great-grandparents on a canvas. After the photos were on, I painted the canvas white. I wanted to “whitewash” the photos to symbolize the way whiteness washes over Turtle Island. I left my ancestors’ eyes free of paint to symbolize the need for me to see and feel the impacts of my ancestors’ proximity to the genocide, violence, and oppression that they participated in, and that I continue to participate in. I wrote over the pictures and white paint in red. I chose red because it is the colour of blood when it hits oxygen, and because red symbolizes new beginnings and my gratitude for the teachings I have received from my late mentor, Ron Marshall, Tsilthinkii.

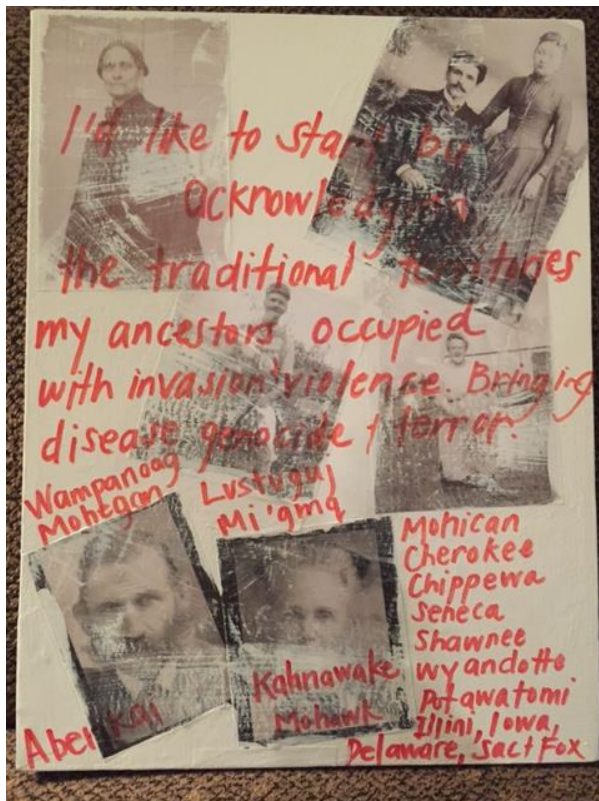


Figure 1: Hwulunitum ancestors.

I wrote:

I'd like to start by acknowledging the traditional territories that my ancestors occupied with invasion and violence. Bringing disease, genocide and terror.

Wampanoag, Mohegan, Mohican, Cherokee, Chippewa, Seneca, Shawnee,

Wyandotte, Potawatomi, Illini, Iowa, Delaware, Sac & Fox, Abenaki, Listuguj

Mi'kmaq, Kahnawake Mohawk.

Explicitly Naming Whiteness

In the explicit naming of my own lineages, along with locating myself within systems of whiteness and white supremacy, I heed the plea of critical, politicized CYC scholar-activists: “If we do not name it, how will we work collectively to change it?” (de Finney, Palacios, Mucina, & Chadwick, 2018, p. 377). The legacy of unfounded racial difference based on physiology and biology has had devastating consequences for Indigenous and Black peoples and people of colour, while these false constructs and ideas have served to elevate white people (Kivel, 2002, p. 16). The concept of whiteness, rooted in racial superiority, is entrenched in the foundational structures and values in Canadian society (Saraceno, 2012, p. 253). Whiteness masks racism in the settler state of Canada with attachment to ideas of “niceness” and “multiculturalism.”

Prior to the invasion of Turtle Island, there had been a long history of exploitation and violence against “inferior” people within Greek, Roman, and European Christian traditions (Kivel, 2002, p. 15). White people came into existence as powerful European groups socially and scientifically constructed those who were Black, coloured, nonwhite, or not the right kind of white as inferior in order to establish power and control over them and their lands and resources (Steyn, 2015, p. 3). The foundation of the settler state required and continues to demand that Indigenous peoples be erased and made into ghosts (Smith, 2012; Tuck & Ree, 2013) in order to ensure control over lands and resources. As such, for white settlers to claim and control land,

“the logic of genocidal appropriation” has dictated that white people become the rightful inheritors of all that is Indigenous—land, resources, spirituality, and cultures (Smith, 2012, p. 53).

Whiteness is not only a historic racial and social identity; it also dominates our contemporary moment (DiAngelo, 2018; Watson, Howard-Wagner & Spanierman, 2015). Critical scholars have exposed whiteness as a social construction and contested identity (Watson et al., 2015, p. xii). Whiteness can be defined “as a positionality of privilege systemically promoted by a racially organized world” (Steyn, 2015, p. 3) and is complexly entwined with other social locations—such as class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and more (p. 3). Whiteness continues to be an adaptable, frequently changing, mutually constituted relationship, as the privilege of one relies and feeds on the exploitation of the other, creating a parasitic interdependent relationship between white and nonwhite³ peoples.

Consciously Centering Whiteness

In doing this research, I wrestled with both the profound irony that interrogating whiteness also recenters it and with it, my own voice as a white settler CYC practitioner. It is inescapable that this work will assert a dominant white voice and center my own whiteness, and that of my participants and of my field (Jafri, 2012, para. 10). As a white settler practitioner-researcher, there is no way for me to problematize and challenge white hegemony without engaging it head on. I echo the acknowledgement of DiAngelo (2018):

I have a white frame of reference and a white worldview, and I move through the world with a white experience. My experience is not a universal human

³ I have intentionally used the term *nonwhite* throughout this work. This decision was made as a conscious choice to center the racialization of whiteness. However, doing so is problematic and may move the pendulum of acknowledging whiteness too far beyond the intention of this work.

experience. It is a particularly white experience in a society which race matters profoundly: a society that is deeply separated and unequal by race. (p. 1)

My whiteness is held together both by the settler colonial state I live in and by my own unexamined and internalized pillars of whiteness (p. 3). My blindness to my own racism and internalized settler colonialism is always a factor and can prevent me from understanding “the world whites have created” (Mills, 1997, p. 18). This is an inevitable impasse for me. With this in mind, it is essential to note that throughout this thesis I use we/us to refer to white settler practitioners as a deliberate choice to create accountability and as a call to engage white settlers in meaningful conversations, action, and the heart work towards unsettling ourselves and our practice.

Although from my position of being a white occupier/settler it is necessary to expose the white centering and to contest white settler privilege, and it is essential for me to acknowledge that the examination of the impacts of white settler privilege and whiteness is not new. For generations Black and Indigenous people and people of colour have theorized, spoken about, advocated, written on, taken action against, and given up their freedom and lives to contest the violent injustices of white supremacy. For centuries Indigenous and nonwhite people have probed white people to turn and look at themselves. I acknowledge that I can complete this work without facing the kind of systemic discrediting, denial, backlash, pain and violence that nonwhite scholars face every day for speaking about these same topics. This work is deeply indebted to the historic and current active resistance and resurgence of Indigenous peoples, Black folks, and activists and scholars of colour (Ahmed, 2004, 2007, 2012; Blackstock, 2008; Coulthard, 2014; Daniel, 2016; de Finney, 2015; Du Bois, 1903/2015; hooks, 1994; Hunt, 2014;

Lorde, 1984; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015, 2017; Mills, 1997; Palmater, 2015; Razack, 1998, 2015; L. B. Simpson, 2017; Smith, 2010; Vowel, 2016).

Unsettling Pedagogy

I have framed this thesis within an “unsettling pedagogy”—premising that white settlers cannot just theorize about liberation and decolonization but must embody it, starting with ourselves (Regan, 2010, p. 19). A pedagogy of unsettling must occur alongside connecting our logic and feeling—head and heart—as a fundamental part of the decolonizing process (p. 12). Guided by Ahmed’s (2004) concept of the “double turn” (para. 59)—a requirement of white people to stay implicated when critiquing whiteness and continuing to take responsibility for the legacies of colonialism and racism “as histories of the present” (para. 59)—D’Arcangelis (2017) calls for *radical reflexivity*. On its own, self-reflexivity can escape its critical momentum by asserting whiteness and muddying the structural inequities whiteness creates (D’Arcangelis, 2017, p. 4). Thus, I have engaged a combination of self-reflection alongside the liability and responsibility as white settler practitioner to collectively confront and dismantle colonial structures (p. 5).

Intrinsic to this research is my own implication in the white settler problem and my responsibility to take action. Namely, it is my belief that we as humans on this planet are all connected—to each other, to the lands, to the waters, and to our ancestors. Keeping this in mind, I center Indigenous scholar Jeannine Carriere’s reflection: “If we don’t acknowledge our own self in the research process, then [we] will always have a piece missing” (as cited in Kovach, 2010, p. 108).

Reflexivity is not a singular or universal component but an active process that is infused in the total research (Hamdan, 2009, p. 380). As a white settler practitioner, I am an insider to

this research project. And since I am also the researcher, I am also the outsider in collaborative conversations with practitioners. These overlapping, dual roles have exposed parts of my identity unknown to me and required a *reflexivity of discomfort*—the need for me to examine myself outside my comfort zone (Hamdan, 2009, p. 378). This is a requisite for disrupting my biases exposed with participants, some of whom are from the same view of the world as I am.

Therefore, I include my own radical self-reflexivity and queries throughout this thesis. These “asides, personal intrusions, theoretical provocations, and sometimes unanswerable complications” (Hall, 2003, p. 7) are essential for radical reflexivity as a researcher. During my research I recorded journal entries, wrote poetry, and created art to probe my own relationship with the research questions and to process the stories and truths that were shared with me. I have included some of these in italicized sections which will be used to reveal my own vulnerability in not-knowing and my willingness to interrogate my own white settler privilege (Regan, 2010). My research is thus situated within a critique of my own decolonizing struggles through critical personal narratives (Regan, 2010); I use this approach to ground myself and promote transparency and accountability.

Ethic of Responsibility-Based Truth Telling

In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s (2015b) executive summary, Justice Murray Sinclair articulated clearly that all Canadians need to interrogate the Indian residential schools’ legacy as a Canadian problem and not merely an Indigenous one. What is needed, Sinclair emphasizes, is a collective act of reflexivity on the part of the settler population. White settlers can somehow ignore, deny, and avoid the systemic problems of settler colonialism and white supremacy that created and continue to disseminate violence towards Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities (Skott-Myhre, 2017). CYC practitioners

work across the field of human and social development in applied contexts, such as early childhood education, child protection, youth justice, health, education and in human service community-based settings. With this in mind, it is crucial that our field considers how white settlers working in CYC implicated in the continued violence to Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities? What role do we play in perpetuating these violent systems? Why is it important to interrogate the white settler problem (Epp, 2003; Regan, 2010) and white settler privilege in CYC?

This research is located in a call for justice, acknowledging and supporting the need for new pathways to Indigenous resurgence that are rooted in an “ethic of responsibility-based truth telling” (Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Cornassel, 2014, p. 4). It is both crucial and critical to probe how white settler CYC practitioners approach issues of colonial and systemic racial violence in our work with children, youth, families, and communities. As white settler CYC practitioners, how do we examine and hold our collective histories and responsibilities? (Snelgrove et al., 2014).

Grounding in an ethic of responsibility-based truth telling led me to design a study where I invited practitioners who identified as critical and politicized and were grappling with white settler privilege in their praxis into collaborative dialogues. It was important for me to hear first-hand about experiences of doing CYC work in the field under the constraints and realities of practice. As a practitioner and researcher, I wanted to highlight the wisdom, transgressions, learning, and disruptions of whiteness that other practitioners were engaged in. The collaborative dialogues on white settler privilege with advanced critical, politicized CYC practitioners took place with practitioners working across a vast spectrum of applied contexts, including early childhood development, education, health, child protection, and nonprofit community services.

These practitioners directly impact the daily lives of children, youth, families, and communities and therefore their practice presents a salient site of inquiry for exploring white settler privilege. Additionally, understanding CYC practitioners' engagement with white settler privilege may assist in shifting the narrative in the field towards examining the white settler problem.

The central question I sought to answer in this research was: *How do practitioners understand, name, reproduce, contest, and struggle with white settler privilege?* Connected to this question were two subquestions: *How do we unsettle the frontline practices of white settler practitioners? How do critical white settler practitioners enact a decolonial praxis?*

The intention in asking these questions was to name, challenge, and trouble the dominant whitemain normalcy in CYC. This research, then, is intended to disrupt, unsettle, and reframe white settler CYC praxis. Other research has shown that critical examination, dialogue, and action in regard to whiteness can lead to noteworthy individual and collective change (Lund & Carr, 2010, p. 233). The discussion of white settler privilege and ongoing colonial practices are essential to meaningful decolonial/anticolonial and antiracist research and practice in CYC.

In the next chapter, I identify the white settler problem in CYC through a critical literature review of the key concepts that inform my theoretical framework. I define white settler privilege and outline critical, politicized praxis. Additionally, I examine the interlocking power-over ideologies of heteropatriarchy, neoliberalism, and settler colonialism while further outlining the colonial foundations of the child and family service field. Following, I outline the colonial foundation of CYC, address the current-day structural inequities of our field, and specifically examine whiteness and white supremacy literature in CYC along with calls to decolonize.

Chapter 1: Unsettling the White Settler Problem in CYC

In seeking to address the necessity to unsettle the white settler problem CYC, I was guided by Paulette Regan's work *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (2010). Her scholarship links theory and practice in a call for a praxis emphasizing the truths of our history of violence and genocide while exposing the settler Canadian "peacemaker myth" (p. 14). Through her reflections on her involvement as a witness in hearings for residential school survivors, Regan discusses the need for ethical witnessing—which she describes as listening with a decolonizing ear and heart—to honour and center the truths of Indigenous peoples. Additionally, Regan articulates that her most profound learning came through times when she navigated "unfamiliar territory, culturally, intellectually and emotionally" (p. 18); she claims that this powerful space of not knowing may provide answers to begin unsettling settlers. She also suggests that as settlers we are required to start research with ourselves and then ethically and honestly engage as "conscientious socio-political agents in our society" (p. 24). It is from these ideas that I launch into exploring literature that unsettles the white settler problem in CYC.

In the settler colonial state of Canada, land theft, racialized poverty, ongoing traumatic consequences of residential schools, and colonial laws and policies that work to assimilate Indigenous people while denying Indigenous sovereignty have impacted and continue to impact generations of children, youth, families, and communities in drastically harmful ways that meet the United Nations criteria for genocide (de Finney et al., 2018; Monkman, 2019; National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019b; Simpson, 2017; Skott-Myhre, 2017). It is important to begin this chapter by acknowledging that

for Indigenous people the past is a painful chronicle of broken treaties, stolen lands, Residential Schools, and the Indian Act. For non-Indigenous people, the past is a celebrating story of settling lands, nation building and helping unfortunate “Indians” to adjust to a new life. Yet this problematic history is not in the past: it sits with us in many places—government offices, board rooms, negotiating tables, churches, hospitals, classrooms, and community halls. History is still alive. (Regan, 2010, p. 20)

This history is alive and exists within CYC. While CYC practitioners engage in work on lands that continue to be colonized (Hunt & Holmes, 2015, p. 4), “the state continues to propagate crimes of colonization” (Kouri, 2018, p. 18) through child protection policies and practices, Euro-Western ideological supremacy, oppressive residential care institutions alongside “recognition politics, and widespread resource extraction and environmental racism” (p. 18).

In this chapter, I outline the conceptual framework that frames this thesis. My critical review focuses on scholarship that links the necessity for research that unsettles white settler privilege in child and youth care (CYC) and illustrates the white settler problem in the field. I explicitly name the systemic racialized and colonial contexts in which the field originated and which it maintains. In the following sections, I highlight and examine ideas, concepts, and theoretical frameworks that I used to frame my analysis of the dialogues I had with CYC practitioners. I begin by defining white settler privilege through looking at the phrase’s components.

Defining White Settler Privilege

Settler. Language is a political action. How do non-Indigenous people living in Canada who “form the European-descended socio-political majority” (Vowel, 2016, p. 14) define

themselves? According to Métis scholar Chelsea Vowel (2016), *settler* is a relational term that assists her in keeping dialogues more focused than does using the term white (p. 16). Vowel expresses that using the term white unsettles many white people and undermines communication, so, in the spirit of “give and take” (p. 16), she uses the term settler as much as possible. She articulates that doing this strategically as a commitment of compromise, to “not offend” her white audience (p. 16). This approach is in direct contrast to Ward (2015), who claims that settler is too barren a term and is disconnected from the truths of genocide and colonization. For this thesis, I engage the label *white settler*. In some ways, I align with Vowel’s give-and-take rationale by using the word *settler* instead of *occupier* (Ward, 2015), which I used to locate myself. It is, however, of critical importance, in this study and beyond, to name whiteness, to locate white settlers as racialized, and to challenge “white dominance, normativity and privilege” (Watson et al., 2015, p. xviii).

Vowel calls attention to the system of power and privilege situated in whiteness throughout her book *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Issues in Canada*. She identifies that under multiculturalism, the settler state of Canada has collapsed cultural diversity into four categories: white anglophone settler, white francophone settler, Aboriginal people, and newcomers (p. 68). Vowel is clear that none of these categories are tidy. For example, Black families who have lived on Turtle Island as long as any white family are often categorized as newcomers, and the link to and existence of slavery is denied and erased. In addition, the homogenous one-size-fits-all federal policies for Indigenous peoples ignore the vastness and diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities (p. 67).

Given that no categories are tidy, it is problematic to simply silo people into racial categories. Yet, the desire to complicate or minimize whiteness too often results in denial of its

power. I therefore chose to stick with the problem of whiteness as a pervasive, elastic social formation. While my methodology includes radical reflexivity, power analysis, and a commitment to “justice-doing” (Reynolds, 2014), Ahmed (2004) encourages a “double turn” (para. 59) for white subjects to stay implicated in our roles and responsibilities in the histories of racism as histories of the present, while turning away from ourselves towards others. According to Ahmed, this double turn is not adequate alone to unsettle whiteness but provides an opportunity for racism to be exposed and perhaps can create the circumstances for other kinds of work (para. 59). It is with the responsibility to both current-day and historical systemic racism and colonialism that I locate whiteness and combine it with the concept of settler.

White privilege. McIntosh (1988) popularized the term *white privilege* in her seminal article “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women’s Studies.” McIntosh describes white privilege as an invisible backpack of unearned assets that white people rely on daily but are oblivious to. White privilege has evolved to be defined as a status provided by a system created by white people, for white people, with white people in mind (Packnett, 2018, para. 5).

McIntosh’s conceptualization of white privilege has been criticized for oversimplifying intersecting analyses of oppression. It is argued that looking only at white privilege can fail to address an analysis of intersecting oppressions such as Indigeneity, gender, class, and ableism (Jafri, 2012, para. 7). With this critique noted, this thesis deliberately centers race, whiteness, and the privilege of white settlers. Although race is not the only privilege one can have, it is the most commanding (DiAngelo, 2018; Jafri, 2012; Packnett, 2018), leading to significant benefits in terms of economic, social, political, and cultural safety, capital, and mobility. White privilege allows white settlers to ignore or be uneducated about the white supremacist foundation

and oppressive frameworks that have created our very existence in settler countries such as Canada. Even though white privilege underlines social and political values and economic systems and is entrenched in the legal frameworks of Canada (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017; Saraceno, 2012), white people are typically ignorant of its destructive and violent impacts.

Settler privilege. Settler privilege is also systemic, structural, and based in white supremacy; however, it is far more concealed and cunning than white privilege (Gilio-Whitaker, 2018, para. 2). Settler privilege exposes the core of the Canadian identity and questions the legitimacy of the settler state and settlers' entitlement to the land (para. 5). Settler privilege denotes the unearned benefits of living and working on Indigenous lands while gaining unequal benefits accrued through citizenship rights within the settler state (Jahir, 2012, para. 6). These privileges are provisional to nationality, class, gender, and migration status. The racialization of poverty, underemployment, and systemic inequities (para. 6) arguably deny many nonwhite people full settler privileges. Indigenous scholar Jodi Byrd (2011) borrows African Caribbean poet Kamau Brathwaite's term *arrivants* (p. 20) to signify those people forced to Turtle Island as a result of European and Anglo-American violence through global colonialism and imperialism.

Robin DiAngelo (2018) explains that there was no concept of "a white race before the need to justify the enslavement of Africans" (p. 91); she adds that "abduction and enslavement" (p. 15) forced African people to Turtle Island. Further, it is imperative to comprehend that outside of slavery many nonwhite people are diasporic and brought to the settler nation state of Canada through capitalism, exploitation, settler colonialism, and state and racialized empire building (Walia, 2013). This racialized empire requires other colonial projects—"such as enslavement, low-income work in agriculture and the highly trained technical expertise of professionals educated overseas, and displacement and migration due to war and economic

devastation—to bring dispossessed people onto seized Indigenous lands” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7). Importantly, there are many possibilities for transformative networks between diasporic nonwhite people and Indigenous peoples that build connections of resistance and resurgence and do not center whiteness (L. B. Simpson, 2017). These networks create space where “mutual co-resistors” (L. B. Simpson, 2017, p. 35) amongst Indigenous and nonwhite activists, scholars, artists, and transformational change makers can connect away from “the white gaze” (Razack, 1998, p. 15).

White settler privilege. White settler privilege, then, conjoins white privilege and settler privilege by naming the established system created by white people, for white people, privileging white people who concurrently receive unequal citizenship benefits while profiting from living and working on stolen Indigenous lands.

Situating Critical, Politicized CYC Praxis

Positioning this thesis within critical, politicized CYC praxis, I outline the CYC literature that supports the necessity to address white settler privilege and the white settler problem in CYC. There have long been calls in CYC to engage in critical and/or political praxis. Jennifer White’s (2007) definition of praxis—“theory and practice, [as] an ethical, self-aware, responsive and accountable action” (p. 226)—has become a central concept in CYC discourse. This definition seems to anchor us as we move in research and practice during times of “unprecedented levels of complexities” (White, 2015, p. 505). Various CYC scholars echo this deepening analysis of the structural inequities that systemically marginalized children, youth, families, and communities experience (de Finney, 2015; de Finney et al., 2018; Gharabaghi, 2017; Gharabaghi & Krueger, 2010; Kouri, 2015, 2018; de Finney, Dean, Loisel & Saraceno,

2011; Loiselle et al., 2012; Newbury, 2010; Skott-Myhre, 2017; Skott-Myhre & Skott-Myhre, 2010; White, 2015; White, Kouri, & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2017).

There is no definitive outline or agreed-upon approach on how to navigate critical and politicized praxis in CYC. Within CYC there are different perspectives, ideologies, and theoretical orientations that contribute to the imperfect, messy, and complex conceptualizations of critical and political praxis. Critical, politicized praxis in CYC is an evolving process, requiring us to bring presence and heart into the deepest gaps and wounds in our communities, structures, and systems. The authors of “We Need to Talk About it!: Doing CYC as Politicized Praxis” outline shifting frameworks of critical relational praxis, which they assert are designed as “deliberately and importantly evolving, situated, and context-specific” (Loiselle et al., 2012, p. 200). Gharabaghi and Krueger (2010) call for the critical analysis of structural inequities as essential in situating ourselves as practitioners/researchers and actively engaging as conscientious, socio-political agents. Additionally, scholarship by Kouri (2015) states that there are sociocultural and intersectional analyses needed that situate gender, critical race theories, and anticolonial agendas, among others, to respond to current day challenges in the lives of children, youth, families, and communities (p. 613). Further, Saraceno (2012) calls for solidarity as a strategy to enact a decolonial praxis and an ethic of social justice with an anticapitalist lens.

In “An Ethos for the Times: Difference, Imagination, and the Unknown Future in Child and Youth Care,” White (2015) voices the need for a commitment to the unsettling discomfort of practicing CYC during times of supercomplexities (p. 505). Questioning the reciting of territorial acknowledgements as a simplistic practice, White suggests that it leaves out “a more explicit naming of whiteness (p. 499), as well as racism and the violent practices of invasion. Through embracing the concept of politicized praxis, White rejects “the limits of individualized,

decontextualized, and apolitical interventions” (p. 507) and troubles the concept of neoliberalism. She instead asserts the necessity of thinking creatively by responding to challenging, complex, and uncertain circumstances (p. 505). She encourages knowledge grounded in land and histories with an awareness of the globalized world we live in with its unprecedented levels of displaced peoples and an unceasing movement of “information, knowledge, technologies, products and capital” (p. 503).

Outside of CYC, Hunt and Holmes (2015) discuss a decolonial queer praxis that necessitates that we align ourselves away from white supremacist thinking and systems and connect with a more humble and responsive way of being in relationship with each other and the territories we live on, while not appropriating Indigenous knowledges (p. 168). Hunt and Holmes ask, “How do white settlers become informed by Indigenous world-views and systems of knowledge while taking responsibility for white privilege and shifting power relations?” (p. 168). From the discussion and demand for critical, politicized praxis from scholars, I move to briefly describe the colonial and racialized foundations of the child and family service field in which CYC is located.

Colonial and Racialized Foundations of our Child and Family Services Systems

“Why is nobody paying attention to the actual history?”
(Kirsten-Lee, as cited in de Finney, 2014, p. 14)

The voice of teenage knowledge holder and wisdom speaker Kirsten-Lee in Sandrina de Finney’s vital and narrative-shifting work with Indigenous girls “*Under the Shadow of the Empire: Indigenous Girls’ Presencing as Decolonizing Force*” (2014) articulates the need for white settler practitioners, and other white settlers, to learn our history. Through this chapter, I have highlighted other voices of these present-day wisdom and knowledge holders to uphold

resilience and truth speaking. This also illustrates my own ethic of “truth listening” (Barkaskas & Hunt, 2016) alongside my commitment to disrupt dominant whitestream CYC praxis.

Patterns of submission and domination are embedded in colonial ideologies that have shaped child and family systems, including legal, child welfare, education and health systems (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017; Saraceno, 2012). By the end of the 20th century, the “best interest of the child” had become firmly embedded in our laws and policies (Fairbairn & Strega, 2009, p. 158). Individualizing the best interest of the child, rather than contextualizing children’s lives in connection to significant relationships and community, alienates children from core community and cultural relationships (p. 159). Combined with Eurocentric concepts of the ideal white nuclear family and a state agenda of assimilation, this alienation and individualism formed part of the basis of the violent and destructive state-sanctioned reserve and residential school systems.

In 1883, the colonial project of Canada, under the leadership of John A. Macdonald, outlined a plan to “kill the Indian in the child,” and established the residential school system (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015b, p. 4). The control, dominance, and indoctrination of Indigenous children began with the state-sanctioned theft and incarceration of generations of Indigenous children. Residential schools lasted for over 100 years and separated children from their families, communities, and lands. Through white supremacist and Christian ideologies, these schools were meant to destroy any connection to family and culture while indoctrinating Indigenous children into white settler ideologies (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015b). From 1913 to 1932, the deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, aimed to “get rid of the Indian problem” with the objective to continue until all Indians that had been assimilated into Canadian society (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2016).

The atrocities of colonial systems such as residential schools are underwritten by the cradle-to-grave colonial policies of the Indian Act (Johnson, 2012, p. 30). Under the Indian Act, no aspect of Indigenous peoples' lives has been left uncontrolled by the white settler state: First Peoples' bodies, social and economic organizations, political structures, spirituality, and cultural fabric have all been targeted for various forms of genocide (de Finney, 2014, p. 12).

Interlocking Power-Over Ideologies

Settler colonialism, neoliberalism, heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity, and white supremacy are the interlocking ideological frameworks that produce and uphold white supremacist political systems, institutions, and services that CYC practitioners work from and in. Next, I will define these terms and probe how these ideological frameworks intersect with critical and politicized praxis in CYC.

Settler colonialism. The structure of settler colonialism is amplified in simple, everyday activities that erase, negate, minimize and reject the sovereignty, knowledge systems and inherent rights of the First Peoples of these lands. The invasion of Turtle Island centered on claiming new lands and amassing economic profits from natural resources. For colonizers, fewer Indigenous people meant less barriers to claiming these lands (Cavalieri, 2013). Continued settler colonialism and “colonial practices of cultural disenfranchisement and economic and political exclusion” (de Finney, 2014, p. 13) are intensifying, targeting Indigenous children and youth and creating “newer waves of residential internment, each worse than the previous one” (p. 13).

Neoliberalism. CYC practice is rooted in these ideologies of neoliberalism which center the experiences and knowledge of white, Eurocentric, wealthy, heterosexual, male knowledge holders (Gharabaghi, 2017; Skott-Myhre, 2017). Neoliberalism can be described as “a political ideology that emphasizes individual responsibility” and management of the self and nuclear

family without acknowledgement of systemic barriers to equity and without dependence on governments for assistance in reducing, ameliorating or eliminating disparaging outcomes (Fairbairn & Strega, 2009, p. 158).

In neoliberalism, the dogmas of universalism and individualism are foundational, and these concepts also sustain the foundational base of white supremacy (DiAngelo, 2018; Mills, 1997). Universalism claims that everyone is the same, that all people have the same reality and potential, while measurements of what is normal are based solely on a white, male, able, heterosexual model (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 59). Child and youth care established itself as an applied human service profession which embraces a strength-based, developmental, holistic and ecological approach to working alongside children, youth and their families in a broad spectrum of settings (Pence & White, 2011, p. xv). It is generally accepted that the field of CYC is established on the theories and principles of developmental psychology (Skott-Myhre, 2013, p. 28). The child developmental framework of ages and stages, defining how childhood growth is collectively labelled, is still the dominant framework in early years programming and remains the norm by which child development psychologists and theorists assess universal development (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 57).

Alongside universalism, individualism was embedded in the foundational dream of the *new* homeland for white occupiers/settlers (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 59). According to individualism, an individual simply has to work hard enough, and they will make it; there are no systemic or structural barriers, only individual failures. Individualism relies on an invisible raceless identity, where white people and their cultural norms and values are considered universal to all human experiences (Thobani, 2007). In our current neoliberal state, for instance, poverty, legal issues, educational gaps and child welfare concerns are constructed as the result of individual failings,

and as the responsibility of the individual to fix (Fairbairn & Strega, 2009, p. 158). Individualism can be seen across CYC. For example, currently, CYC's central tool for conceptualizing children's development and interventions in context is Uri Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (White et al., 2017, p. 59). Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1992) has been highly visible in child and youth care literature and pedagogies as a dominant framework through which to understand the interacting and reciprocal role of multiple influences on children and youth's development (White, 2007, p. 238). In Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, the child is nested in a series of intersecting systems representing influences such as family, neighbourhoods, school, family, health care, and culture that impact a child's development. In this model, the child is the focal point of analysis, and external structures and sociocultural and historic forces are minimally integrated into interventions or factored into the training of CYC practitioners (White et al., 2017, p. 59). Neoliberal individualism permeates how human services construct "at risk" populations. For instance, in the child welfare field there remains a prevalent belief that minoritized children and youth end up in residential care facilities by happenstance or as "the exclusive result of individual failings" (de Finney, Dean, Loiselle, & Saraceno, 2011, p. 362). Meanwhile, the residential care system and other systems of state care train practitioners in service delivery models that "help clients 'fit' and 'rehabilitate' into normative standards of health, wellness, development and family" (p. 363). When clients fail to perform or "measure up," they are subjected to increasingly punitive state interventions, including child welfare and legal investigations.

Heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity. For centuries the colonial state has employed heteropatriarchal and heteronormativity to secure supremacy over both land *and* Indigenous and nonwhite people (de Finney, 2014; Hunt, 2015; Sisters Rising, 2017; A. Smith, 2010; L. B.

Simpson, 2017). Heteropatriarchy, built on a socially constructed gender binary, solidifies heterosexuality and patriarchy in social systems that are observed as normal and natural, and in which other expressions of sexuality, gender and power are observed as unusual, deviant, and repulsive (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 13). Heteropatriarchy seeks to “destroy, control, manipulate differences into hierarchies that position white, straight, cis-gendered males as normal, and everyone else as less” (L. B. Simpson, 2017, p. 129), thus reinforcing the gendered social hierarchy—patriarchs rule the family, elites of the nation-state rule their citizens. Moreover, the gender binary positions maleness and masculinity as more important than female and femininity while erasing any variance (L. B. Simpson, 2017, p. 123). Male dominance is further enforced through legislation, such as the Indian Act, where all genders are male property, subordinate just like the land, the animals and the resources (L. B. Simpson, 2017).

Colonialism demanded the enforcement of a hetero/cis-normative gender binary through Euro-colonial gender hierarchies “imposed on all Indigenous children at residential schools” (Hunt & Holmes, 2015, p. 165). At residential schools, children were divided by the gender binary—male and female—and forced to adhere to strict Christian gender roles, doctrine and beliefs. For example, regardless of the gender roles that existed in their own communities, girls were forced to do domestic work while boys learned manual labour (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015b). This state enforced gendered division of education and labour alongside gender biases entrenched in the Indian Act led to the erosion of matriarchal systems, the loss of women’s leadership roles in Indigenous communities and the ongoing genocide of women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people (National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019b).

Nonwhite and Indigenous 2spirit, 2SLGBTQQIA⁴ people and women live at the dangerous intersection of damaging gender and race formations, and thus, experience gender violence not only as a tool of patriarchy but also of one of racism and colonialism (A. Smith, 2010, p. 1). These ideologies have grave consequences for children and youth across the gender spectrum.

White supremacy. Charles Mills (1997) defines white supremacy as “the system of domination by which white people have historically ruled over and, in certain important ways, continue to rule over non-white people” (pp. 1–2). With certainty, Mills claims white supremacy has been the “unnamed political system that created the modern world” (p. 1). According to Mills, white supremacy is a power structure, both informal and formal, full of socioeconomic privilege, and standards for the distribution of material wealth and opportunities (p. 3). It is the “overarching political, economic and social system of dominance” that continues to promote whiteness as the ideal for all of humanity (DiAngelo, 2018, pp. 28–29).

Critical white studies scholar DiAngelo (2018) emphasizes that white supremacy underwrites our current western settler culture, which has located white peoples and all that is connected to them as supreme (p. 33). DiAngelo stresses that using the term “white supremacy” is important,” as naming it changes the conversation on racism by making white supremacy a visible system and locating the locus of change directly on white people (p. 33). DiAngelo definitively situates herself within white supremacy, arguing that her membership in the “superior group” stemmed from her own psychosocial development that was “inculcated in white supremacy culture” (p. 69).

⁴ 2SLGBTQQIA refers to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual people.

With my own psychosocial development steeped in white supremacy, I now consider the myriad ways in which I carry white hegemony into my practice. How does white supremacy impact the practice of white settler practitioners? How do the proselytized, often unnamed and unconscious, white supremacist origins of CYC impact nonwhite children, youth, families and communities?

These structural inequities and systems of domination continue to be reinforced through laws, policies and practices and are often taken for granted by white folks and unseen for their racial privileging (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 1). Mid-twentieth century ideologies, including concepts of the cis- and hetero-normative gender binary, “modernity, universalism, individualism and positivism” (Pence & White, 2011, p. xvii) remain central in CYC literature, alongside humanist therapeutic approaches that center individualistic interventions (White et al., 2017).

Current Day Manifestations of the White Settler Problem

“It’s true ’cause it’s not getting better through the ages.”
(Danielle, as cited in de Finney, 2014, p. 14)

While the colonial state of Canada spent half a billion dollars celebrating its 150th “birthday” in 2017, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal held a third noncompliance hearing with the federal government (Palmer, 2017, para. 1). This noncompliance filing was a result of the federal government not having followed through with the 2015 Human Right Tribunal ruling to fund Indigenous children equally to other Canadian children (Gillezeau & Ansloos, 2017, para. 2). First Nations children on reserve receive less funding than their Canadian counterparts: 30% less in education funding, and 22% less in child welfare payments; further, while Canada’s child poverty rate is 12%, it is 50% for Indigenous children (Blackstock, 2015). The Auditor General’s (2011) report on a decade of federal policies for First Nations further exposed that basic, subsistence needs for life—clean drinking water, education, adequate housing, and child

welfare—are all severely and radically substandard for First Nations (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2011, “Conditions on First Nations Reserves,” paras. 1–2). In its fifth legal order against the state, the Human Rights Tribunal stated that the denial of access to the same services to on reserve Indigenous children was “a striking example of a system built on colonial views perpetuating historical harm against Indigenous peoples, all justified under policy” (Meyer, 2018, para. 3). These historic harms manifest into current day genocide that “has been empowered by colonial structures, evidenced notably by the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop, residential schools and breaches of human and Indigenous rights, leading directly to the current increased rates of violence, death, and suicide in Indigenous populations” (National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019b, p. 50).

These policies continue to drive state-funded structures that mark and adversely impact Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families and communities (de Finney et al., 2018, p. 28). The Canadian child welfare system has had, and continues to have, devastating and tragic impacts on Indigenous and nonwhite people (de Finney et al., 2018; Kline, 1992). There has not been an end to the targeted paternalistic, state-sanctioned effects of residential internment of Indigenous children over decades, including residential schools, Indian hospitals, day schools, the sixties scoop, and the present-day millennium scoop (de Finney, 2014). Today’s active millennium scoop speaks to the mass removal of Indigenous children from their homes and communities by the child welfare system (A. Turner, 2016). While Indigenous children and youth make up 7% of the population, they represent 48% of the children in government custody across Canada (A. Turner, 2016). These numbers reveal that there are currently more Indigenous children removed into government care than at the height of the residential school era (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015b).

The staggering state removal of Indigenous children from their homes is documented to be overwhelmingly due to neglect (Bennett, 2004; Vowel, 2016). In cases involving Indigenous children, neglect is shaped by three inter-related structural factors: poverty, substandard housing and substance misuse (Bennett, 2004). The impacts of neglect, inter-generational trauma, systemic poverty and social segregation are amplified by “political, cultural and territorial disenfranchisement” (de Finney, 2015, p. 170).

The above documentation of the current daily manifestations of ongoing settler colonialism on the lives of Indigenous children, youth, families and communities makes unexamined and undisrupted white settler praxis problematic while placing minoritized children, youth, families, and communities under colonial control and gaze within systemic whiteness. How has whiteness been examined in CYC literature? The following sections outline the literature in CYC that addresses whiteness, white supremacy, and calls to unsettle the field.

Speaking Whiteness in CYC

*So, they're all, teachers and stuff, like, oh talking about racism is too hard, it confuses the kids, so we should not do that to them, like we're too dumb to understand what happens to us every day? I think it's more like an opposite situation, like I mean they don't want to talk, or they're scared about racism because they're the group of power. They don't give us . . . credit that we understand and yeah, we **need** to talk about it!*

(Priya, 16, social justice activist, as cited in de Finney et al., 2011, p. 375)

Hans Skott-Myhre, a leading critical theorist in CYC, engaged in the discussion of white supremacy with his article “Seeking a Pass: White Supremacy and CYC” (2017). Skott-Myhre challenged the concept of “good” white people looking to transcend the “brutish and ignoble colonial practices of our ancestors” (p. 13) and outlined the requirement to take responsibility for current racialized injustices. He argued that white peoples’ material status, along with roles in higher education, government, and business, are based on the current economic system of capitalism that exists because of slavery and colonialism. Skott-Myhre stressed that the

rationalization for the genocide of land and bodies is based in a system that values financial profit and technological gains about life (p. 13). In confronting his own white privilege, Skott-Myhre acknowledges his own pain as his first worry and questions a “kind of narcissistic investment founded” (p. 15) his own white privilege. He goes on to call on white CYC practitioners to be “accountable to our own privilege in real and material ways” (p. 16). Additionally, Skott-Myhre encouraged us to be more comfortable using terms like white supremacy while demanding for reconciliation programs to be concurrent with material compensation. Skott-Myhre raises the critical issues of naming the power structure of white supremacy that CYC is embedded in. He does this by modelling his own acknowledgement of his privilege, locating his internalized resistance to his own privilege while also naming historical slavery and colonialism as phenomena white practitioners benefit from daily.

Kiaras Gharabaghi (2017), another leading CYC scholar, named the whiteness of the field of CYC, while not explicitly naming white supremacy as Skott-Myhre had, in his widely quoted article in one of the most accessed CYC journals. Gharabaghi questioned the predominance of whiteness in the field and asked, “Can we change this? Can we become less white?” (p. 8). While there are a number of initiatives in the field to address diversity, racism, and oppression, none, according to Gharabaghi, challenge CYC practice, because the white experience is deeply, historically embedded in CYC practice, which draws almost exclusively on white institutions, structures, processes, and policies and perpetuates social injustice based on race (p. 8). Gharabaghi questioned how CYC can shift its own whiteness without a radical shift in who and what CYC represents. He recommended that we “open our professional infrastructure to intentionally recruit members of racialized communities” (p. 9) and also to disseminate the voices of racialized staff, undergraduate students, and young people involved with CYC

practitioners, to welcome them and invite them to challenge our whiteness. In this regard, Gharabaghi does not go far enough in asking white practitioners, instructors, and professors to challenge our own whiteness, and instead looks to racialized and Indigenous people for solutions to the overrepresentation of whiteness. It is clear he does this to resist centering whiteness and demands “a new movement of inclusion, radical politics and engagement with communities that have been structurally, procedurally, and in every other imaginable way cast aside to the margins of our profession and society as a whole” (p. 9). Gharabaghi and Skott-Myhre’s naming and examination of whiteness and white supremacy in CYC raise important questions for my study: How can we structure safety for Indigenous and nonwhite students, practitioners, and faculty in CYC? How do white CYC practitioners engage in the work of decentering whiteness and addressing white supremacy in the field?

Further, in response to Gharabaghi’s article, self-identified West Indian/Indo-Caribbean CYC academic Saira Batasar-Johnie (2017) wrote: “Where do racialized people fit in the field of child and youth care? Do we continue to conform, ignore and assimilate to the ‘whiteness,’ or do we begin to speak up and express that something is not how it should be?” (p. 9). Batasar-Johnie expresses her frustration at the lack of representation of Black and Brown professionals in position of power and privilege in the field of CYC and in the academy more generally. Speaking frankly about her hesitancy to address whiteness and racism in the field, she states, “I did not want to be the one who made an entire room of white people feel uncomfortable, feel embarrassed, and feel unwanted . . . the way I have felt every day of my life” (p. 6). She stresses that “we do a lot of talking about inclusivity, diversity” but that this does little to address the “racism and ignorance” that are real hallmarks of CYC (p. 7). She asserts a need for a shift in the pervasive whiteness that is entrenched in the academy and in the upper levels of the professional

hierarchy of our field (p. 7). Batasar-Johnie draws attention to the realities of the profession where there are “full-time white staff and management with ‘diverse’ part-time staff” (p. 8) and underlines the importance for minoritized communities and students to see themselves in course context, instructors, fellow practitioners, and supervisors. Batasar-Johnie’s voice and articulation of her experience of racism in CYC directly link to the duty of white settler students, practitioners, and faculty to address the white problem (Harvey, 2007) while getting out of the way, truth listening (Barkaskas & Hunt, 2017), and respecting the diverse voices of Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners and colleagues.

Johanne Saraceno (2012) also took up dominant whiteness in CYC from her vantage point as a CYC practitioner, instructor, and former graduate student. Her seminal paper, “Mapping Whiteness and Coloniality in the Human Service Field: Possibilities for a Praxis of Social Justice in Child and Youth Care” used cartography to map out power structures of whiteness and coloniality in the human service field. Saraceno illuminated how human services are embedded within dominant Eurocentric ideologies, rooted in whiteness, coloniality, capitalism, and gender oppression. According to Saraceno, the concept of whiteness, rooted in racial superiority, is entrenched in structures and values in Canadian society. White Canadians, writes Saraceno, tend to ignore the racist foundation and oppressive frameworks of their very existence as a country. Even though “white privilege is charted into our legal code” (p. 253), she asserts that we need only study the Indian Act to see an overt example of white privilege and colonial ideals that “protect white dominance through systemic disenfranchisement and marginalization of Indigenous people” (p. 253). She argues for looking to the margins of the field while also interrogating accepted norms to expose how they perpetuate social issues (p. 259). Saraceno also outlines possibilities for a praxis of social justice in CYC that includes

strategies such as collective responses to individually identified problems, solidarity, and adopting an ethic of justice and a commitment to a socially just praxis (p. 248). Saraceno calls for white practitioners to engage in critical attention to everyday interpersonal interactions and habitual responses (p. 263) and argues that examination of the centering of whiteness and power inequities in institutional structures can help rectify overrepresentation of certain racial groups in state care and justice systems. Saraceno goes on to quote Bordo (2008), who stresses that “white people, even those who theorize with sophistication about ‘cultural difference’ and the perils of ethnocentrism, are often clueless when it comes to the practical, concrete ways race matters” (p. 410, as cited in Saraceno, 2012, p. 263).

CYC faculty Jin-Sun Yoon (2012) names three “elephants”—points of silence and denial—in child and youth care: Eurocentric worldview, western cultural hegemony, and racism (p. 169). Yoon addresses the structural, systemic, and institutional forms of racism and discrimination entrenched in the field (p. 174). She troubles the current practice of focusing on “problems and risk factors” (p. 175) in minoritized groups, stating that these frameworks perpetuate “racialized pathology” (p. 175). In problematizing the continued efforts to “help” Indigenous, immigrant, and queer folks who do not assimilate easily, Yoon asserts that there must be a stern change towards scrutinizing whiteness and heteronormativity in the field. This, she states, would need to incorporate a consistent examination of power and privilege to avoid repetitive lateral violence among practitioners and academics (p. 175). Yoon calls for courageous conversations in the field of CYC to address the elephants in the room and asks, “when will we in Child and Youth Care see the elephants that threaten the very future of those with whom we work?” (p. 177).

From the literature, it is clear that unsettling the white settler problem in CYC requires that white settlers examine their own social and professional location and privilege and engage in messy work that may require becoming unhinged and uncomfortable. It requires that white settler practitioners become unsettled.

Calls to Unsettle CYC

CYC has had a legacy of inviting critical perspectives to unsettle established norms and approaches (Pence & White, 2011, p. xii); however, even with this critical invitation, the field is never acquitted or removed from our colonial history (Little & Walker, 2012; Loiselle et al., 2012; Skott-Myhre, 2006; White, 2015). There has been mounting literature and discursive theorizing in CYC work encouraging an integration of decolonizing and social justice praxis (de Finney, 2014; Little, 2011; Loiselle et al., 2012; McCaffery, 2010; Newbury, 2010; Pence & White, 2011; Skott-Myhre, 2006; White 2007, 2015; Yoon, 2012). Coincidentally, there are demands from Indigenous and nonwhite CYC scholar-activists to interrogate white, Euro-Western, psycho-social notions of relational practice and the biases, injustices, and inequities that continually reproduce daily racial and colonial violence (de Finney et al., 2018). For example, scholar-activists de Finney, Palacios, Mucina, and Chadwick (2018) recently asserted the importance of “unsettling settler systems” (p. 34) that have purposely targeted Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families and communities. They argue that in CYC, we need to move beyond “relational band-aids” (p. 34) and center “the political, economic, and sociocultural inequities that produce ongoing settler violence” (de Finney, Moreno, Chadwick, Adams, Sam, Scott, & Land, 2018, as cited in de Finney et al., 2018, p. 34). These scholar-activists call on CYC practitioners to not merely respond with individualized practice actions but rather to expose

interventions from dominant systems that colonize and cause daily harm to their communities (p. 34).

As white settler CYC practitioners, we cannot render our roles as inherently benevolent and unproblematic (de Finney et al., 2011; Skott-Myhre, 2005; White, 2015). Helping professions are founded on, and deeply benefit from, the forced assimilation of Indigenous children, families, and communities by the dominant white, Euro-Western state (Skott-Myhre, 2005). White settler CYC practitioners may express our outrage at the immense injustices experienced in particular by Black and Indigenous youth, families, and communities across Canada (Gharabaghi, 2017, p. 7). However, there are no initiatives in the field that confront child and youth care practices that, according to Gharabaghi (2017), “draw almost exclusively on white institutions, structures, processes and policies and that aid and abet in the perpetuation of social injustice based on race” (p. 7). The historic objective to control and dominates bodies, minds, and spirits in order that they conform with the interests of the nation (Skott-Myhre, 2005) is still intact. With this white hegemony foundational to CYC practice, white settler practitioners must probe our assumed innocent and benevolent position of noble and self-sacrificing front line workers who are “caring for” the most marginalized and vulnerable children, youth, families, and communities (de Finney et al., 2011, pp. 374–375).

To what degree are white settler practitioners complicit in the daily social/cultural/political harms and violence done to Indigenous and racialized children, youth, families, and communities? (Skott-Myhre, 2013; White, 2015). As white settler CYC practitioners, we are all implicated and work in human service systems that harm people. Given the whiteness of CYC, Gharabaghi (2017) enquires what the field has done to resist the enormous inequities and injustices impacting Indigenous and racialized young people (p. 7) and

questions whether “residential schools in Canada actually ended” (p. 8). He stresses that residential programs operate today that replicate residential schools, for example, by removing and displacing Northern Indigenous youth to Southern facilities with all white staff, including CYC practitioners (p. 8). Gharabaghi also draws attention to the predominance of whiteness in CYC from the professional infrastructure, membership in professional associations, policy decision makers, and in agencies and organizations that are led “predominantly by white people, who write our job descriptions and who set the parameters within which we practice” (p. 7). How, then, can we in CYC move away from the myth of the white saviour that perpetuates white settler CYC practitioners’ roles as solely “helpful” and “caring” (Kouri, 2018, p. 22)? Our roles in the helping and care profession of CYC cannot be limited to everyday acts with individuals, but rather require that we involve ourselves in political action and advocacy (de Finney et al., 2011; de Finney et al., 2018).

In building a framework for unsettling CYC, I have looked to scholar and activist Vikki Reynolds’ (2014) work on justice-doing, a “response to the suffering, indignity, and violations of social justice” that provide the context of much CYC work (p. 128). Reynold’s justice-doing ethics alongside her solidarity theorizing (2014) and collective sustainability of critical, politicized practitioners (2012) have been central to my conceptual framework and methodology. This research has provided space for what Reynolds terms “messy, fluid, emergent dialogues” (p. 134) with practitioners to bring forward ideas, terms, and concepts for white settlers to move towards unsettling and enacting solidarity in practice. One pathway for this has been through discourses and scholarship on decolonizing CYC. Linking to one of my research subquestions, “How do critical white settler practitioners enact a decolonial praxis?” I look to the CYC literature on decolonizing.

Decolonizing Praxis in CYC

Many CYC scholars are discussing and calling for multiple decolonizing strategies in the profession of child and youth care (de Finney et al., 2018; Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016; Kouri, 2018; Saraceno, 2012; Skott-Myhre, 2013; White, 2015; White, Kouri & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2017). CYC scholar-activists de Finney, Palacios, Mucina, and Chadwick (2018) incite a call to decolonize relationality (p. 34)—the foundational building block of CYC praxis. They challenge CYC professionals to do this by fostering daily “practical, political and economic choices that support the safety, well-being, integrity, and sovereignty of Indigenous, racialized immigrant, and migrant children and their families” (p. 34).

According to Cree/Métis CYC scholar-educator-activist Shanne McCaffrey (2010), Indigenous people and white settlers “are still two worlds apart, with differing values and principles, ways of knowing, doing and being” (p. 345). McCaffrey writes with honesty about the reality of ongoing “systemic and direct discrimination” (p. 343) within the criminal justice and child welfare systems. She asserts that the “tentacles of colonization” have “terrorized and subjugated” Indigenous peoples through atrocities for centuries (p. 343). McCaffrey suggests creating an entirely different standard to make assessments and allocate resources “in consultation with the family, wisdom keepers, the community, and advocates” (p. 345).

Jin-Sun Yoon (2012) further articulates the need to decolonize CYC, which first requires, according to Yoon, having a historical perspective divergent from dominant white Eurocentric discourses. Then, she stresses that decolonization emerges from within, expressing that “we must decolonize ourselves” (p. 178). According to Yoon, the process of personal decolonization is a lengthy and laborious commitment, and “if we feel no pain, then we are only intellectualizing” (p. 165).

CYC scholar Scott Kouri (2018) troubles the decolonizing of CYC lead by white settlers and taught to white settlers by white settlers. Kouri advocates for a theoretical understanding of anticolonialism in CYC that is necessary in order not to replicate colonial harms. Kouri highlights that the core standards of CYC are entrenched in Euro-Western ideologies, which must be unsettled by white practitioners in order to interrupt their transmission to new generations of white children, youth, and families. He also upholds the argument by Indigenous scholars Tuck and Yang (2012) that decolonization requires the repatriation of Indigenous lands and sovereignty (p. 23).

Conclusion

This chapter affirms the need to situate CYC research within the context of unsettling white settler privilege and the white settler problem (Epp, 2003; Regan, 2010). It included a discussion on current and historic structural inequities and colonial foundations in child-serving professions in the settler state of Canada. In addition, it defined key forces that are embedded in the foundations of our child-, youth-, family-, and community-based services, including settler colonialism, neoliberalism, heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity, and white supremacy. I discussed CYC literature that addresses whiteness and white supremacy along with calls to decolonize. I provided a context and literature around unsettling discourses and specifically accented the voices of Indigenous and nonwhite CYC scholars, with a focus on white scholars' calls for white accountability in practice. I explored literature that unsettles white settler CYC to clarify the conceptual lens I have used throughout my study on whiteness in practice. These concepts have provided a conceptual and ethical framework by which to map out my study and that guided my data collection and analysis. The subsequent chapter will focus on the methodology I developed that integrates these conceptual frameworks.

Chapter 2: Methodological Map

The concepts and theories I outlined in the previous chapters guided the development of my research methodology, including my ethics and methodological map. Core to my methodology are ethical commitments of justice-doing, being a white settler disrupter, being in conversation with critical, politicized CYC praxis, enacting resistance, and examining white settler privilege; I outline these in this chapter. To reiterate, my central research questions were: *How do practitioners understand, name, reproduce, contest, and struggle with white settler privilege? How do we unsettle the frontline practice of white settler practitioners? And how do critical settler practitioners enact a decolonial praxis?*

Driving my research process is an ethical and theoretical commitment to unsettling settler colonialism through what Loiselle, de Finney, Khanna, and Corcoran (2012) define as a transtheoretical approach to CYC (p. 180). My methodology is steeped in process-driven research that centers the complexities of multiple truths, power, ethics, and relationships. My goal was to design and engage in research as an open, interactive, and collaborative way of knowing (Lather, 1993) alongside practitioners. My methodological plan addresses the key issues of unsettling, ethics, and power while also supporting a critical and “radically reflexive” (D’Arcangelis, 2017, p. 1) research process.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework is shaped by several intersecting factors, including my theoretical focus outlined in the previous chapter, my key research questions, my ethical commitment to researching in a critical and collaborative way, and my approach to data collection and analysis. I describe each of these in depth below.

In *Research as Resistance*, Brown and Strega (2015) focus on research as praxis, reflecting on how inventive and critical theories applied to research are adjusted according to considerations from practice (p. 9), thus keeping research reflexive and in relationship with practice. Theory, then, “should emanate from what we live, breathe, and experience in our everyday lives” (Hurtado, 2003, p. 216). Reynolds (2010a) articulates theory as a system of ideas to explain something and states that theory can be generative, dynamic, and collectively defined, and can change through reflection and revision (p. 31). Echoing this, Leanne Simpson (2014) states that

theory is generated and regenerated continually through embodied practice and within each family, community and generation of people. Theory isn’t just an intellectual pursuit—it is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence and emotion; it is contextual and relational. Theory is intimate and personal, with individuals themselves holding the responsibilities for finding and generating meaning within their own lives. (p. 7)

As I locate my theoretical framework, I have engaged these concepts of theory to craft a transtheoretical framework (Loiselle et al., 2010, p. 180). I included theoretical perspectives that situate, problematize, and think beyond dominant Eurocentric frameworks as a power-imbued colonial social formation. These theories and perspectives include queer theory (Alexander, 2014; Butler, 1990; Hall, 2003; Morland & Wilcox, 2005), critical race theories (Du Bois, 1903/2015; Dunbar, 2014; Fanon, 1967; hooks, 1984, 1994; Lorde, 1984), poststructural and intersectional feminisms (Cannella & Manuelito, 2014; Deliovsky, 2010; Hankivsky, 2014; hooks, 1990; Lorde, 1984; Romero, 2018; Strega, 2015) and decolonial, anticolonial, and Indigenous theoretical orientations (Absolon, 2011; Carlson, 2016; Jones & Jenkins, 2014; L. B.

Simpson, 2014; L. T. Smith, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

The engagement of a critical theoretical framework responds to the call of many Indigenous researchers for allied settler research to be rooted and engaged in critical, emancipatory, and holistic methods (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2010; L. T. Smith, 2012). Absolon (2011) beckons for humankind to rouse from “the colonial trance and rejoin the web of life” (p. 31). As a white settler/occupier researcher, this research called on me to enact my role as ally/accomplice, an accomplice being “a person who helps another commit a crime” (Indigenous Action Media, 2014, para. 2). Accomplices are thus willing to put themselves on the line and be transparent in their agenda; they are developed through established trust and consent, not motivated by personal guilt or shame, and are “compelled to become accountable and responsible” (para. 22) to one and other. (I discuss the role of accomplice further in “Troubling Allyship” in Chapter 3.)

My ally/accomplice role is highlighted in my responsibility to participate in awakening from the colonial trance through a research lens that upholds ethical commitments and engages in power analysis, radical self-reflexivity, and decolonizing/anticolonial research.

Ethical Commitments

This research takes a solidarity approach that holds the inquiry process to the “ethics and practice of activist solidarity and in line with an ethic of justice-doing” (Reynolds, 2014, p. 127). Reynolds (2012) acknowledges that justice-doing is an “imperfect project” (p. 18) of seeking to practice from a place that draws on our collective ethics of social justice. Reynolds (2010) centers an engagement with ethics as a generative part of theorizing (p. 31). She advocates for justice-doing in our counselling practice, community work, and research and outlines guiding intentions for this process, including centering ethics, doing solidarity, naming power, fostering

collective sustainability, critically engaging with language, and structuring safety (2012, p. ii). Along with justice-doing, Reynolds (2008) advocates for an ethic of resistance that requires that we name unjust problems and respond with collective responsibility (p. 5). In naming the white settler problem in CYC and white settler privilege while embracing critical, politicized praxis, this study sought to enact our collective responsibility to challenge the “social context that upholds and tolerates” (p. 5) the effects of genocide, ongoing colonial violence, and racialized poverty.

I have been compelled to enact an ethic of justice-doing in all facets of my life, including research. This methodology is couched in my own ethical becoming and evolving. Ethics are a continuing process of being and coming undone. My long-term engagement in community work has critically shaped my ethical framework, commitments, and stances regarding academic research. Reynolds’ (2012) first guiding intention of justice-doing is centering ethics (p. 21). How did I situate ethics at the core of my research? How did I integrate ethics in a fluid, responsive, lived embodiment of my deepest held beliefs and values? And how does that shine through in my study?

Ethics intersected with power throughout my methodology. Brannelly and Boulton (2017) call forth an ethic of care as a way of “thinking about [research] that frames an analysis of politics, privilege and power to guide researchers to respond ethically in complex and/or extraneous research circumstances” (p. 2). My ethical stance required “an ongoing aliveness, a genuine connectedness with people, and a presence of spirit” (Reynolds, 2012, p. 21). It called on me to have “a knowing-in-the-bones that [my] work matters” (p. 24). In compromised times of unprecedented levels of complexity, we are challenged to live ethically (Shotwell, 2016; White, 2015). Alexis Shotwell (2016) calls forward the concept of aspirational solidarity, “a

solidarity based on collective concepts of worlds that do not yet exist” (p. 105). The basis of aspirational solidarity is formed through “ethical engagement as a relational practice of responsibility” (Monture-Angus, 1995, as cited in Shotwell, 2016, p. 51). Shotwell declares that this is the time for “renewed relationship to memory and renewed practice of forward-looking responsibility” (p. 52). I consider this research as interwoven with these concepts and a move towards unsettling pedagogy (Regan, 2010) with white settler CYC practitioners.

Power

Power is a foundational focus of analysis in critical race, queer, poststructural, and intersectional feminist and decolonizing/anticolonial methodologies (Carlson, 2016; hooks, 1994; Potts & Brown, 2015; Brown & Strega, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2014). As a white settler researcher, it is imperative that I acknowledge systems of white supremacy, both institutional and interpersonal, and locate myself in a position of white settler privilege as a producer and owner of knowledge.

In the article “Rethinking Collaboration: Working the Indigene-Colonizer Hyphen,” Jones and Jenkins (2014) articulate that they do not reject collaboration between Indigenous and colonizer researchers; rather they suggest an uneasy, unsettled relationship grounded in the colonizer researcher’s accountability to “learning *from* difference, rather than *about* the Other” (p. 471, emphasis added). I have kept this in focus when I engaged with Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners. Not only is power circulated and mobilized between participant and researcher, it is located within the research questions themselves and the greater institution of academia. Power lies in and with the dominant white settler voices in research. Throughout this research process, I kept queries of power central in my mind: How do I ethically disrupt/trouble

this discourse? How do I unsettle unequal power relations and structures in research? How do I trouble my own power and privilege?

Even though my intention was to focus my research on unpacking white settler privilege and assumptions as they shape applied practice with children, youth, families, and communities, it was essential that I be aware of the risk of recentering whiteness in my critical, politicized praxis. Has my research taken space or given space to Indigenous and marginalized voices (Kovach, 2010)? It is essential to acknowledge the potential for recentering whiteness and to navigate this power dynamic as central to the integrity of this research, as I touched on in the first chapter. I locate myself in a position of a systemic-power holder and have sought feedback and guidance to ensure that my work is done in a “good way” in the eyes of my family and communities (Kovach, 2010, p. 52).

Anticolonial/Decolonizing Research

In a commitment to uphold the theorizing of Indigenous scholars about decolonization and anticolonialism, I engaged in “analytic practices of refusal by rejecting research based in damage-centered stories, research rescue, and pain tourism” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 811). Instead I concentrated my research on troubling the colonizing gaze and examining white settler privilege (p. 815). Along with centering myself and my white settler identity, I invited discussions of discomfort and disruption through identifying the white settler problem beside white settler privilege within the context of CYC critical, politicized praxis, and settler colonialism. By honouring the specific call for decolonization to be about land repatriation (Tuck & Yang, 2012), Indigenous nationhood building, and resurgence (Coulthard, 2014; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015, 2017; L. B. Simpson, 2017; Vowel, 2016), I have also looked to anticolonial theory to guide my research.

CYC practitioners and researchers unfamiliar with anticolonial theory may believe their work is ethical, however, it can bolster settler moves to innocence (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016; Steyn, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Anticolonial methodology produces concepts of social justice while acknowledging the junction of new repressive forms of power created despite endeavours to decolonize (Cannella & Manuelito, 2014, p. 4). Anticolonial research seeks to correct colonial oppression; settlers engaging in anticolonial research need to guarantee that their actions do not emphasize colonial dominance (Hart, Straka, & Rowe, 2017, p. 334). Settlers can do research in anticolonial ways by researching their own group, challenging overt and covert colonial oppression while upholding Indigenous people's self-determination and self-governance (p. 333). Critical race, feminist, antiracist, and activist methodologies focus on exposing power dynamics, hegemony, and hierarchies, with emphasis on the relationships between the personal and the political; they provide important guidelines for anticolonial research methodologies (Carlson, 2016, p. 4).

Radical Reflexivity

As I land in graduate school, I am kin to a lineage of Indigenous peoples. My daughter's father was Bobby-Jo Jones of Pacheedaht, W̱SÁNEĆ, and Yakama lineage. When our daughter was two, he passed away in a work-related accident on the west coast. Prior to and following his departure, we raised our daughter with intimate ties to her Pacheedaht and W̱SÁNEĆ families. In the process of living, loving, and growing, I have been profoundly changed by these relationships and the immeasurable gifts of witnessing our daughter knowing her connection to her family, community, culture, and land. Through the process of raising our daughter, I have been dedicated to my own unsettling. I am a settler by birth and biological ancestry; I cannot erase the white settler privilege I walk in the world with. By qualifying knowledge from my own

life experience, I can recognize other truths (Brown & Strega, 2015, p. 4). This validity is birthed from using my own subjectivity and personal experience—as a white practitioner, as a mother to an Indigenous daughter, as a cousin, aunty, niece, and grandma to our Indigenous relations, and as a community member—to intersect with those of my research participants (Kimpson, 2005, p. 74). Exposing my ethical, personal, and political positions reveals my “explicit consciousness” about how I structured this research (Kimpson, 2005, p. 75). Additionally, centering my own subjectivity as the researcher reflects my research design and how I came to the results, and highlights the relationship between my self as researcher and the participants (Strega & Brown, 2005 p. 3).

Methods

Participant recruitment. I circulated my invitation (Appendix A, Appendix B) to both self-identifying white advanced practitioners and self-identifying Indigenous and racialized or nonwhite advanced practitioners who describe their work as critical and politicized and who work alongside youth, families, and communities. I had intended to send the invitation to the CYC graduate listserv, CYC.net, and through other professional emails (YSPN—Youth Service Provider Network; Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health; Child and Youth Mental Health; Youth and Family Counsellor Association) and social media. I had also intended to extend my invitation to people currently in practice who could support a snowball and word-of-mouth effect of recruitment. However, within 24 hours of setting up a public Facebook page for participants to confidentially contact me to participate, and sending the invitation through one listserv, I had nine participants. The remaining two participants approached me personally, one after hearing about the project and engaging with me about the topic. I needed to thank others but let them know I had reached the capacity of participants for this project. It was very obvious by the

response I received that there was a significant interest from practitioners to discuss white settler privilege in CYC.

I specifically and purposefully recruited practitioners who identified as advanced, critical, and politicized; thus, I left out practitioners who did not. The lenses of newer practitioners and practitioners who do not identify as critical and politicized were left out; this is a limitation of this research. It was my focus to engage with explicitly politicized practitioners who had experience in the field and who were open to troubling their own white settler location and practice, and in the case of the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners, were interested in speaking to white settler privilege in the field.

Knowledge holders. I had collaborative conversations with seven self-identifying white settler practitioners and one practitioner who self-identified as a white settler, but who in the interview acknowledged their nonwhite ancestry. Of the seven self-identifying white settler practitioners, four identified as male. In addition, I had collaborative dialogues with three self-identified Indigenous practitioners and one self-identified nonwhite practitioner. Each of the practitioners had been in practice for three or more years with children, youth, families, or communities in Canada and also had relevant curiosities and questions about unsettling themselves and the praxis of CYC. The practitioners who participated in these collaborative dialogues came from a vast range of locations and focuses in the CYC profession: early childhood; middle/high school and college education systems; health; community service nonprofit organizations; and child protection services. All of the practitioners I spoke with were contending with either the impacts of white settler privilege (Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners) or processing their own white settler privilege (white settler practitioners) and how to contest systemic whiteness in practice. Throughout this work, the practitioner with mixed

ancestry aligned themselves to their proximity to whiteness and for the purposes of this study chose to identify as a beneficiary of white settler privilege. Nonwhite practitioners were also deeply contemplative and responsive to questioning their settler privilege—despite being of the diaspora.

My intention in having conversations with Indigenous or nonwhite practitioners was to honour their significant knowledge and contributions within a white-dominated field, with the explicit intent to disrupt myself and my discussions with white settler practitioners while challenging the centering of whiteness. It is of course problematic to label practitioners in racialized categories of white, Indigenous, and nonwhite. None of the practitioners in the study troubled these categories overtly; some of the subtleties are discussed in the meaning making chapter. This lack of troubling categories illuminates the imperfect design of this research, while also acknowledging the realities of the racialized world in which we practice and research, where these same racialized identity categories are reproduced in social services.

Knowledge collection. Unsettling white hegemony extends to a need for white settler researchers to develop research designs that are congruent with decolonizing and anticolonial values and principles. As a white settler researcher, I am curious about how we are working to unsettle not only our practice, policies, and institutions within CYC, but also how we generate knowledge and research about these issues. In order to address my methodological commitments to a critical, collective, unsettling research process, I opted for an approach to data collection that was collaborative and rooted in the experiences of advanced frontline practitioners: I used collaborative, semistructured, in-depth dialogues.

This method of collaborative dialoguing centered the practitioners' praxis experiences. I provided participants with some questions and themes I had been grappling with and invited

them to consider these ideas prior to engaging in our conversation (Appendix C). I invited the practitioners to review the questions so that they would have insight into my thinking. I also indicated to the practitioners that these questions could help guide our collaborative dialogue, however, I let them know that my biggest goal was to allow for an organic, collaborative discussion guided by their insights, reflections, and queries.

The collaborative dialogues took place in different locations based on the participants' needs, geography, and comfort. My primary concern was that the locations were confidential, comfortable, and convenient for participants. Participants met with me on campus, in my home, in participants' homes or office spaces, in my car overlooking the beach, over the telephone, and through Skype. Conversations were confidential and participants were reminded that they could withdraw at any point without any consequences or explanations. For in-person conversations, I brought snacks or we shared a meal together prior to or following the recorded portions of our conversations. At one participant's home, a plate of fruit and muffins along with tea was beautifully set out for me when I arrived. I gifted each participant with a small present—made by me and/or a member of my family—to thank them for sharing their time, knowledge, experiences, ideas, and stories with me for this study. This gifting was an essential part of my ethics to honour my participants' contribution to my master's thesis and the discussion of white settler privilege in CYC.

Each conversation had its own rhythm, pulse, and direction. For some, the list of questions was a helpful, loose framework to hold our conversation; with other discussions, the questions provided the practitioners with a guide for their own inner process prior to our engagement and a platform to spring from. The broad themes and guiding questions allowed practitioners to provide detailed examples from their practice experiences and engage in

emergent conversations that generated in-depth insights about topics such as working in violent systems, speaking truth to power, the good white person, the white saviour complex, decentering whiteness, leveraging power, troubling being a settler ally, and intersectionality.

In all of the collaborative discussions, the practitioners and I engaged in a conversation between colleagues, while both being aware that the discussion was generating knowledge for my research project. Each conversation started with me asking participants where they would like to begin. In many instances, the topic discussion began prior to the recorded session and on occasion I would ask practitioners to repeat their wisdom “for the record.” Collaboration was woven throughout the dialogue process. Establishing collegial and respectful relationships was essential to my methodological approach of building the collective sustainability of critical, politicized practitioners (Reynolds, 2012).

I was humbled by each of the participants’ truth speaking, internal struggle, and grappling with power. Some of the Indigenous and nonwhite participants expressed fear of retribution from speaking about white supremacy, racism, and power. This was a very real concern for these practitioners working in systems maintaining whiteness; it also spoke to the very real daily impacts of settler colonial violence and racism these practitioners live with. I was sincerely impacted by the discussions of daily racial silencing, obstruction, and violence experienced by the Indigenous and nonwhite colleagues/participants. Not that any of this was a surprise; it was, however, beyond courageous for them to trust me with their current lived realities of being impacted by racism enacted by our white settler professional peers.

Considerations. Participant confidentiality was assured through the use of pseudonyms and the altering of any identifying information in the data analysis and reporting. A number of participants expressed concern about confidentiality. I am aware of the many overlapping

relationships with participants in the CYC community and particular participants were concerned that what they shared could be identifiable by individuals or agencies that knew them. With the potential cross-over of relationships and fears of retaliation, the conversations, analysis, and writing has required respect, humility, diligent confidentiality, and professionalism. When reporting on the outcomes of our collaborative discussion, I have been very conscientious of the participants who requested increased anonymity and protection from the very forces that we discussed in this research. In addition to not using identifying details, one of the means I used are the pronouns they/them/their when referring to all participants, unless the information was salient to a gender analysis.

Meaning Making

In order to absorb and synthesize the content in the collaborative dialogues, I used a critical thematic analysis approach, which I applied through the critical, transtheoretical lens described in previous sections. Clarke and Braun (2017) describe thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (‘themes’) within qualitative data” (p. 297). It is considered “a canon of qualitative analytic approaches” and provides accessibility and allows for theoretical flexibility in analyzing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77).

Through transcribing the conversations and spending time familiarizing myself with the information shared in the collaborative conversations, I absorbed myself in the active reading and rereading of the conversations, looking for meanings and patterns prior to beginning to conceptualize organization (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Within the procedures for thematic analysis, I paid particular attention to the dynamics and themes related to my study, including those of power, silences, the difficulty in challenging dominant white norms and conventions,

and systemic and historical issues. Following this initial familiarization, I began an initial coding of the data—analyzing and organizing them into meaningful groups within and across interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). From these groups of meaning, I drew out broader and central themes, while also paying attention to what I was cutting out or what did not fit with other themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). These central themes were racism and colonial violence; power and privilege; white settler fragility; and troubling allyship. I edited by combining, separating, and letting go of themes while linking them with supporting data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). I solidified and simplified the themes and organized them with rich examples and accompanying narratives that assisted me in creating an ethical map of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92) that connects to my research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93). Once the themes had been set, I shared them and invited a response from all of the practitioners in the study. I heard back from six practitioners regarding the themes. One white settler practitioner commented, “Your emerging themes certainly resonate with me as true and consistent.” There were no suggestions to change or adjust the themes.

Following the completion of the Meaning Making chapter, I emailed all the participants and invited them to let me know if they would like to read the chapter, provide comments, or indicate missteps. Of the eleven practitioners, nine requested a copy of the chapter—three Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners and six white settler practitioners. Practitioners had various comments, like: “I trust your words”; “I’d love to read the chapter, however I have no concerns about it going to your committee for review whenever you feel it is ready.” A few let me know they were too busy to read the chapter but were confident I had represented their voice and approved my going forward. Two white settler practitioners thoroughly read the chapter and provided comments. One affirmed that my representation of their voice was “correct and

accurate” and expressed that I had “balanced academic research with the lived examples provided by those you interviewed.” The practitioner to review the chapter commented that they were “so impressed by the way [I] weave the stories of [my] participants with [my] own narrative and dense theoretical literature.”

Following the practitioners’ validation, I created an ethical map (Figure 3) as a visual representation of possible pathways white settler practitioners may take to unsettle themselves; it will be discussed further in the final chapter. This analysis has been filtered through the transtheoretical approach described in the previous section, while acknowledging my biases and limitations to the best of my ability as white settler researcher/practitioner in CYC.

Challenging Truth/Validity/Reliability of Dominant Whitestream Research

Leanne Simpson (2014) argues that education systems are “primarily designed to produce communities of individuals willing to uphold settler colonialism” (p. 1). The hegemony of the dominant white worldview is academically held as the “most legitimate way to view the world” (Strega, 2014, p. 201). Western enlightenment epistemology—established by white, European, male elites—claims there is only one truth and it is formed through “the application of a rigorous scientific methodology by a rational, neutral, and objective subject to the study of an object clearly positioned outside of himself” (p. 202). This white hegemony rests upon concepts of universal truths, individualism, and liberalism (p. 199). As we enter times of super-complexities (White, 2015), we must invite research that takes us away from these purity measures (Shotwell, 2016).

According to intersectional feminist Audre Lorde (1984), “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (p. 1). Hence, in furthering social justice research, there are persuasive arguments to contest using “the master’s methodologies” (Strega, 2015, p. 200).

There is a relationship between generating knowledge and the action of doing research (p. 200). Forging this relationship between knowledge production and research by challenging the centering of whitestream academic authority, troubling white entitlement to people's stories and lives, and questioning the privileged position of white analyses to answer problems that primarily impact nonwhite people is the foundation of this research. As I seek to engage in pedagogy of unsettling, how will this study answer to ethical integrity, transparency, and accountability? How then should this research be judged? What might be some criteria for evaluating its value, trustworthiness, and usefulness? To answer these questions, I look to a solidarity and a poststructural/intersectional feminist approach to research.

Reynolds (2014) outlines a solidarity approach to research rooted in the ethics of justice-doing. This approach, which she created for her PhD thesis, requires not researching people who are exploited, and engaging frontline workers as consultants and editors. It resists contributing to dead knowledge and seeks to produce research that takes action. The solidarity approach invites researchers to cultivate communities of cultural consultants, references our work extensively, and resists appropriation. Utilizing accessible language and providing space for research to make our own discomfort and fear public are calls of the solidarity approach to research. These recommendations within Reynolds' solidarity approach provide a framework to assess the usefulness of the more politicized, critical, collaborative research on which I embarked.

Intersecting the solidarity approach, Strega (2015) details standards to assess feminist poststructural research. Our research, according to Strega, must be assessed on the political consequences and its practicality in producing "progressive, anti-oppressive politics in marginalized communities" (p. 229). Strega suggests that poststructural feminist research needs to be "reconstructive as well as deconstructive" and have "social justice validity" (Deyhle and

Swisher, 1997 as cited in Strega, p. 229). As a part of the poststructural feminist research standards, we are required to ask ourselves and detail not just “about whom” but also “for whom” is our work (p. 229). Strega recommends questioning whether we have been able to “speak truth to power” in language and formats that are accessible (p. 229). In addition, Strega details the necessity to consider our own complicity in systems of domination and subordination (p. 229).

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) is credited with coining the term intersectionality in her scholarship examining discrimination cases against Black women; her seminal work exposed racism and patriarchy’s linked impact on Black women’s lives (Daniel & McElligot, 2016, p. 38). Crenshaw marked the contemporary untangling of feminist and antiracist discourse (Romero, 2018). According to Crenshaw (1989), “the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 153). Most prominently, intersectionality disrupts simplistic approaches to race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship and obliges us to expose systems of oppression (Romero, 2018, p. 60). Intersectional research includes the examination of the cross-section of privileges and power imbalance—including antiracism and class politics (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 40).

The above outlines a solidarity, poststructural, and intersectional feminist approach to research which set some of the guidelines to ensure accountability, transparency, and ethical integrity in this study. In addition, engaging with current literature ensures this study is held accountable to critical theories and Indigenous analyses of white hegemony and white settler privilege to avoid reproducing normative or dominant framings of whiteness.

Additionally, I have ensured there are opportunities for participants to provide feedback and shape the research conversation. This happened through organic, collaborative exchanges guided by the participants, with an opportunity to have participants review my understandings and themes to make sure I accurately captured their sharing. I required myself to be explicit about the limitations of my research framework, identifying my own blind spots and the questions I did not ask, outlining who was included in the study and who was excluded, and detailing how I did my data analysis. In addition, the research can be measured on how it can take action, beyond mere intellectual engagement with the idea of unsettling whiteness in CYC. My research addresses and answers to an unsettling pedagogy. These steps and questioning ensure that my study has transparency, accountability, relevance, and ethical congruence.

By no means does this research claim purity, as dominant whitestream research does. Shotwell (2016) troubles the concept of purity and claims “we are not ever pure. We’re complicit, implicated, tied in to things we abjure” (p. 7). Shotwell challenges us to acknowledge and face this “compromised living” (p. 7) that requires we make ethical concessions towards impurity. This impurity in the research process is messy, and it troubles the conventional academic institution, which ignores structural inequities and fails to recognize the “historically, socially, and culturally constituted nature of knowledge” (Strega, 2015, p. 208). Instead of purity, we need to generate better practices of remembering and responsibility for “our placement in relation to the past, our implications in the present, and our potential creation of different futures” (Shotwell, 2016, pp. 7–8).

In the next chapter, I discuss some of the vast, rich wisdom that was shared by critical and politicized CYC practitioners about white settler privilege. I have attempted to capture some

of the depth of knowledge I was gifted by passionate practitioners grappling with unsettling whiteness in themselves and in CYC.

Chapter 3: Meaning Making

Setting the Stage

It was a spring morning when I arrived at their house, nestled back into the trees, off the main road. It was our first conversation. I travelled a fair distance to meet the practitioner, and I was late. Very aware of my negligent time management, I arrived at their home with some treats, only to discover a full display of fruits and pastries with coffee and tea prepared. They had set an inviting landscape for our conversation. In the close background their children and grandchildren were getting ready for their day with send-offs and goodbyes. This conversation, about white settler privilege in practice, wasn't tucked in a corner.

As the home settled into quiet, we engaged in a heartfelt conversation about the ongoing daily realities of working with children in the midst of colonial violence and racism. This day, I was grateful for the opportunity to speak with an Indigenous child and youth care (CYC) provider who, after decades of CYC work, continues to be a fierce advocate, full of power, passion, and dedication to the children in their family, community, and beyond.

We spent about an hour and a half in their home recording our conversation, which followed an emergent path, guided by their reflections, responses, and ideas. Afterwards, we ventured out to share a meal at a small oceanside restaurant. We continued to discuss white settler privilege and the impacts of pervasive whiteness in frontline work with children. It was at this point that they wanted to know more about me. What brought me to this work? Where was I situated? It was my time to be the subject of the conversation. As I was invited, I answered their queries.

We spent time together until they had to attend to other obligations. It was this day, through the slower pace of connecting over breaking bread, sharing struggles and ethics, and

being by the ocean, that has helped guide me when reflecting, processing, and analyzing the gifts of these collaborative dialogues. (field note, 16 March 2018)

Each of the collaborative conversations I embarked on for this project allowed me to have compassionate and disruptive discussions while connecting with practitioners in meaningful ways to honour their knowledge, struggles, tensions, and experiences with white settler privilege in the CYC field. Central to each of these dialogues was relational ethics. The words of an Indigenous Gangulu woman from Queensland, Australia, assert the importance of relational accountability: “If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come here because your liberation is bound up to mine, then let us work together” (Lilla Watson, as cited by Lilla: International Women’s Network, 2009, p. 1). This statement is shared throughout Indigenous-settler scholarship and allied activism and locates the importance of relational ethics. Foundational to this study has been the concept of “centering ethics” (Reynolds, 2012, p. 21) that dictates situating respect, humanity, and generative awareness at the center of research. Ethical engagement is rooted in a relational practice of responsibility (Monture-Angus, 1995). This is not a finite process; ethical stances are never complete and unproblematic because each context is ever shifting and redefined, and we, as practitioners and researchers, are continually seeking knowledge (Reynolds, 2010b). It is with the framework of relational ethics that I endeavour to make meaning of the collaborative dialogues generated in this study.

In this chapter, I outline the key themes I identified during my data analysis of the collaborative dialogues I had with four Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners and seven white settler practitioners. Through the process of making meaning of the collective of conversations, I sought to answer the question: *How do practitioners understand, name, reproduce, contest, and struggle with white settler privilege?* Connected to this question were two subquestions: *How do*

we unsettle the frontline practices of white settler practitioners? How do critical white settler practitioners enact a decolonial praxis? In the process of meaning making I engaged in the practice of “leaning in” (Reynolds, 2013, p. 52)—inviting both my own and our collective accountability while monitoring my own compliance to whiteness. I attempted to demonstrate my own accountability and challenging of whiteness in italicized sections throughout this section that denote my field notes, reflections, and poetry.

Through a critical thematic analysis of the interviews, along with my personal field notes, I generated four main themes that relate to systemic issues and the difficulty of challenging dominant white norms and conventions in the field of CYC: (1) working under colonial violence and racism; (2) white settler fragility; (3) power and privilege; and (4) troubling allyship. Within these key themes, practitioners explored the complex, embodied individual and collective ethical responsibilities of white settler CYC practitioners. I share the gifts from the collaborative dialogues with tremendous respect and gratitude for the commitment and depth of analysis each practitioner shared in our conversations and embodies in their evolving daily work. Their dedication, passion, and perseverance to unsettle white settler privilege in CYC praxis was apparent throughout each of the conversations.

In our collaborative dialogues, the seven white settler practitioners and I examined our “epistemologies of ignorance” (Steyn, 2012, p. 8). Melissa Steyn (2012) explains that “epistemologies of ignorance” expose how ignorance is both a function *of* and functional *in* racialized societies; they are at the heart of the complicity that keeps systemic racialization in place. As I demonstrate in the following sections, in sharing their reflections and stories the white settler practitioners displayed a commitment to challenge and disrupt their own and systemic epistemologies of ignorance. Systemic white settler privilege, whiteness, and white

supremacy thrive in spaces that deny or attempt to erase our epistemological ignorance.

Therefore, throughout my findings, I made a conscious and deliberate choice to amplify the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners' voices because, as a white settler practitioner working in nonprofit and government settings stated, "I don't have to experience this everyday." It was a clear commitment of all the practitioners in this study to disrupt white settler privilege and what Paulette Regan (2010) refers to as the ongoing historical amnesia that perpetuates "denying, erasing and forgetting" our own history as colonizers while pathologizing the colonized (p. 6).

Theme 1: Working Under Colonial Violence and Racism

With the theme of working under colonial violence and racism and in my process of meaning making, I explored the question "How do practitioners understand, name, reproduce, contest, and struggle with white settler privilege?" All of the practitioners—Indigenous, nonwhite, mixed ancestry, and white—who participated in this study articulated and acknowledged the settler colonial structures they work within. The white settler practitioners shared stories about the constraints of practice that regimented program requirements and simplified "clients" into "requirements" that serve to "screen out difficult" or complex clients rather than meeting youth and parents "where they are at." They spoke about witnessing "Indigenous folks accessing services" but not "asking for help" because, as one white settler practitioner cautiously observed, "they are so fucking afraid" and it is "really harmful" to attempt to "make someone fit into a mold" that does not factor them into its making. According to an Indigenous practitioner with extensive experience in CYC who is an outspoken survivor of Indian day schools⁵, "there has never been an end—from residential schools, to day schools, the

⁵ Starting in 1920, the settler colonial state of Canada established 700 Indian day schools. It is estimated that 200,000 Indigenous children attended these federally operated schools, and many who attended report experiencing extensive trauma by those entrusted with their care (Government of Canada, 2019, para. 1).

sixties scoop, child welfare, health care, to current-day policies, programs, and removal of our children, it goes on and on.” They went on to say the colonial structures even show up in the paperwork and policies for programs they run serving children in their community. The practitioners’ contributions to this research reflect critical social services literature that demonstrates that colonial and racial violence has not ended, and its impacts on Indigenous practitioners, Black practitioners, practitioners of colour, and children, youth, families, and communities are incessant.

The Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners all stated that the colonial systems they work in continually override Indigenous and nonwhite ways of knowing, doing, and being. In addition, they shared their lived experiences of being impacted by racism and colonial violence “daily” themselves, and “seeing the same” done to the Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities they work with. One Indigenous practitioner working in an educational setting spoke forthrightly of the Canadian myth of being a peaceful country while it denies and forgets the systemic racialized violence experienced by Indigenous, Black, and nonwhite people. She asserted,

Everyone wants to be “Canada, yeah, yeah! We are the greatest place on earth!” But we aren’t. And when you question this “Rah, Rah, Canada!” spirit, and you say, “I need you to realize what Canada has done to people of colour in general,” you are met with denial, and power.

The tension inherent in celebrating a colonial state was pervasive throughout my conversations with Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners: They all identified the ceaseless denial of racial and colonial violence by white settler practitioners and the burden placed on Indigenous and racialized practitioners through its silencing.

It was clear from the dialogues that working in settler colonial institutions and systems embedded in white supremacy impacts Indigenous, Black, and nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities in very real and violent ways. For instance, an Indigenous CYC practitioner working in a community-based agency spoke of the intersection of settler colonialism, racism, and white supremacy. They expressed how white settler practitioners' own pain can reassert this violence:

Settler colonialism to me is you are participating in the ongoing colonialization of not just Indigenous people but all nonwhite people that have come in because of your white supremacy. But you just keep reenacting it because you've been taught to, and you don't want to see anything outside of yourself because it would be too painful.

This practitioner questioned, "are we hiding when we say white privilege when it is actually white supremacy?" As a self-identified mixed Indigenous and settler practitioner, they interchanged the use of "them" and "we" when referring to white settlers, demonstrating both the importance, and the limitations, of identity categories. As previously noted, this has been a limitation in this research—identifying practitioners as white, Indigenous, and nonwhite and not exploring the complexities and intricacies of blended and mixed racialized identities. The practitioner suggested that "we want to call it white privilege because we want to whitewash the supremacy that we have." This practitioner focused on how whiteness is reenacted "systemically" through "everyday practice." This reflection is supported by literature that identifies settler colonialism's encouragement of white settlers to cut off, turn off, numb out, and ignore the impacts of systemic violence while "colonial power is imprinted on Indigenous bodies in a myriad of everyday ways" (Razack, 2015, p. 201).

To exemplify this point, white settler practitioners spoke of the general lack of knowledge and understanding of white settlers of the lives of Indigenous people and the historic truths and continued atrocities of colonialism. One white settler practitioner who works in child welfare worked with “foster parents who were uneducated” about Canada’s history of genocide. The white settler practitioner observed, “I mean, I still had foster parents that didn’t know anything about residential schools. They just don’t know. Let alone the fallout of them and the 60s scoop or anything like that. They would literally say, ‘I have never heard of this matter of residential schools.’” The Canadian settler state, with unprecedented numbers of Indigenous children and youth in care (de Finney et al., 2018; Kouri, 2018; Vowel, 2016), primarily places Indigenous children and youth in white settler homes and white settler facilities (Gharabaghi, 2017; Skott-Myhre, 2017). White settler practitioners—foster parents and beyond—are undereducated in colonialism and racism (Edwards, 2018). As a white practitioner stated, they had more “concrete” understanding of their “privilege” in terms of their own “maleness, misogyny and violence” than their “colonial violence.”

Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners also spoke to the lack of accountability by their white settler colleagues to acknowledge and take responsibility for their unconscious enactment of violence. An Indigenous practitioner maintained that

there’s always excuses, that . . . settlers have had for a long time. Right? “But I treat all families the same” or “I can’t change the way these things work.” Then they blame the system. No, but WE are the system.

This Indigenous practitioner highlighted the need for white settler practitioners to stop excusing their compliance and participation in the colonial and racial violence that is enacted by virtue of their roles at the front line of social services.

White settler practitioners also articulated the violence they participate in and witness towards Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities. One white settler practitioner stated that “awareness of [their] own violence” is connected to “how and what the legacy of settlership means from a male perspective.” The male white settler practitioner discussed interlocking gender and settler colonial violence through “husbandry and husbandry of land.” A white settler practitioner working in an educational setting stated that “every year racialized students” share stories with them “from middle and high school of a white teacher” attempting “to bring awareness of systemic racism” through physically demonstrating and pointing out select Indigenous and Black students and students of colour by “saying something along the lines of, ‘you, you and you’ are not going into higher education.” The practitioner went on to state the “unbelievable violence” in this act of using nonwhite students to demonstrate systemic racism while simultaneously entrenching those beliefs.

Another white settler practitioner with experience in the nonprofit sector and government contextualized the violence of systemic racism:

And when you think about who primarily goes to school to become teachers, it is primarily white people, at [Child and Family Services] in policy and research everyone is white. That is where all the programs for child and youth mental health are coming from. If you think about the people that are producing the knowledge and producing the policy, they are all coming from a white perspective and lots of the time probably haven’t done any sort of work or had to confront their own white privilege.

This practitioner went on to share that they had been involved in “reviewing different programming” as part of their work. Their final report identified “gaps in programs” related to cultural and racial differences, socioeconomic disparities, and differently abled bodies. In the

feedback from their first draft, the practitioner received feedback that warned “careful” in regards to their identification of gaps, giving the distinct impression that their ideas were “not welcome.” They shared the following:

I’m sorry, but some of those programs [were] assuming that everybody spoke the same way, that everybody spoke the same language, that everybody was the same culture, that everyone had a parent at home with them to do work with them.

White settler practitioners identified the “very Eurocentric, Western norms” that we are educated in and that underlie the frameworks and assessments we use to evaluate children, youth, families, and communities. Beyond the “layers of institutional and academic knowledge” steeped in “Eurocentric views,” white practitioners identified their own “compliance” and their “lack of power” to make real substantive systemic change. White practitioners repeatedly commented on being dedicated to change and to this work, but still found it “difficult” to enact change within organizations and institutions. In fact, at times white settler practitioners shared that they were perceived as “the problem” if they spoke up about racism or the impacts of colonialism on children, youth, and families. One participant said, “Critical practitioners need each other, need community” in order to address and dismantle systemic injustices.

All of the participants acknowledged working in violent systems, but the impacts of that violence were described as housed very differently in the bodies of Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners. Indigenous and nonwhite participants expressed the harrowing discomfort they felt bodily and spiritually when colonial violence and systemic racism impeded their work. “It is unnerving” being the only Indigenous or person of colour in a work space, shared one nonwhite practitioner. They stated further, “I always feel out of place.” A number of Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners spoke about “experiencing racism” alongside “the experiences of racism”

by children, youth, families, and communities, with one stating, “it wears us down” physically. Listening to the four Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners describe the struggle with white settler privilege enacted “by their colleagues” onto them and onto the Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities they work with was fiercely impactful.

While a self-identifying “educated white male” settler practitioner described the impacts of working in colonial violence and racism and their understanding of white settler privilege and the complexities present from a “very intellectual way,” another white settler practitioner acknowledged their “incredible privilege” and also their “trepidation and some nervousness” around discourses of Indigeneity; they articulated as a “white [person] not wanting to be a part of that [colonial] violence, but sometimes [they] are just by the nature of wearing [white] skin.” As Elizabeth Grosz (1993) asserts, “bodies are essential accounts of power and critiques of knowledge” (p. 196), and practitioners’ accounts of embodied and at times disembodied knowledge fostered a palpable tension across their accounts of practice. These differences showed up repeatedly as frustration and exhaustion among the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners. I noticed a marked contrast between the visceral, embodied impacts of colonial violence and racism described by the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners and the often cerebral intellectualizing of white settler privilege by white settler practitioners, myself alongside them. This contrast highlighted one of the pivotal and crucially important differences of how interfacing with systemic colonial violence is divergent for differently racialized practitioners and is a tension held throughout this work.

The white settler practitioners in this study reflected their own compliance and implicated themselves within the structures of whiteness. One shared that “we try to create people that are the right kind of citizen” and are “super complacent” when we try and “make people ‘normal.’”

While white settler practitioners expressed not wanting to “create model citizens for the colonial plan,” they also struggled with pressures to “just be nice” and “just go sit in that nice little chair and do your job, collect your pension and be nice like ‘everybody’ else” and “all of the people working there are white.” One white settler practitioner, who worked largely in the nonprofit sector, reflected that their “white privilege” revealed itself to them in working with families that were using substances; they expressed a “very distinctive different experience” working with Indigenous families than non-Indigenous families. They identified that their “knowledge of colonization, residential schools, and intergenerational violence” could inform their assumptions about how an Indigenous family “might be functioning.” The practitioner went on to trouble their own “fatalist future” mentality they recalled when working with on-reserve families. This existed alongside a “resistance to external government interventions that remove children from Indigenous communities” and the practitioner’s experience that “taking [children] away from the supports they do have is deeply unethical and an act of colonization.” The practitioner wove together their white settler privilege entrenched within systemic whiteness. It was an honest account of the complexities of white settler privilege which they troubled from their practice experience.

The practitioner’s account reflects what Sara Ahmed (2004) articulates as the “double turn” (para. 59)—a requirement of white people to stay implicated when critiquing whiteness and continuing to take responsibility for the legacies of colonialism and racism “as histories of the present” (para. 59). This was further exemplified by a white settler practitioner whose CYC work has taken them across the field in various practice locations and who acknowledged the limits to examining white settler privilege, whiteness, and their own racism. When talking about their own awareness of their white settler privilege, the practitioner stated,

I feel really aware that I skip in and out of understanding or levels of understanding, ability to integrate or shift my own perceptions, my own racism, my own patterns of thinking. It comes and goes.

As white settler practitioners, we are born into white supremacy and have internalized that thinking (Harvey, 2007). The insight of this white settler practitioner encapsulates this tension—the daily, material, embodied impacts of white settler privilege on Indigenous, Black, and practitioners of colour—which white settler practitioners do not contend with.

While white settler practitioners critiqued whiteness, they also indicated their own sense of powerlessness to change daily acts of colonial violence and racism in the field. An example of this was given by a white settler practitioner working at a community agency as an outreach support worker. They highlighted “an ethical dilemma” involving an Indigenous parent, their white settler supervisor, and their workplace team. During one supervisory team meeting, the white settler practitioner shared about the new family they had been referred. The practitioner told their team that they had made a strong initial relationship with this new family, which was headed by a “fierce” Indigenous parent. The practitioner further described the Indigenous parent as “engaged and committed.” During the meeting, their white settler supervisor—a former child protection worker—recognized the family name and proceeded to disclose confidential information learned in the supervisor’s previous position. When the practitioner challenged the supervisor on their boundaries, the supervisor told her she was “a bleeding heart.” The practitioner stated, “we are supposed to be on the side of the [parent]” but the program they worked in didn’t integrate “how colonial violence” and the “basic intersection of domestic violence, mental health and addictions, let alone colonial violence impact children, youth, and families’ lives.” The practitioner indicated that they repeatedly witnessed the impacts of

pathologization and hypervigilance on Indigenous, nonwhite, homeless, and economically disenfranchised program participants. Even when attempting to challenge the supervisor's violation of professional ethics, the white settler practitioner was seen by their white settler supervisor as too aligned with the Indigenous parent, and their advocacy in support of the parent was interpreted as being a "bleeding heart" and in response they felt "super silenced." And, while the practitioner was made the problem by the supervisor and team, there were no consequences for the supervisor.

This practice example exposes systemic power imbalances that limit the ability of white settler practitioners to challenge white settler privilege in their work. As these examples continued to be raised in the collaborative dialogues, I became curious about how the "racial veil" (Du Bois, 1903/2015, p. xiii) that prevents white people from seeing Black and other nonwhite people as fully human (Holloway, 2015) is perpetuated, consciously or unconsciously, by white settler practitioners, supervisors, and the system.

The impacts of working in violent systems. Practitioners shared very real impacts of working in systems rooted in racialized violence. An Indigenous practitioner who works in a community agency declared that despite working with "a lot of trauma and heavy content," the most difficult part of their work is practicing "in a system that is so broken, inconsistent, and incongruent" with their own values and worldview that it creates dissonant reactions. W. E. B. Du Bois (1903/2015) used the term "double consciousness" (p. 5) to describe the internal conflict for nonwhite people navigating life within the confines of whiteness; originally, Du Bois referenced double consciousness in regard to the epistemic conflict that exists for many people of African descent living in North America (Moore, 2005, p. 751). Throughout our conversations, Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners reiterated the scope and impact of the embodied stress

they experience in relation to dominant whiteness. As one Indigenous practitioner emphasized, “I feel like I experience [colonial violence and racism] alongside my clients. It is an exhausting uphill battle.” A nonwhite practitioner continued “because what ends up happening, it wears us down. It wears down our spirits.”

Vikki Reynolds (2012) identifies this kind of attack on practitioners as the “spiritual pain” (p. 21) of the work. Reynolds (2012) stresses that “when we are not able to enact our ethics, we experience spiritual pain” (p. 21). She defines this as “a discrepancy between what feels respectful, humane, generative” and working in circumstances that demand we defy the very beliefs and ethics that brought us to the work (p. 21).

According to Reynolds (2014), spiritual pain can be responded to with relationships of solidarity that help us hold close and enact our collective ethics. A white settler practitioner working in a community agency whose mandate and values did not align in their practice illuminated the strong neoliberal and white supremacist ideologies deeply rooted in the organization. Over and over this practitioner witnessed racism and the screening out of people from programs. The practitioner struggled with the white feminism that masked the organization when really, they shared, “there was a lot of push to help people who are just really easy to help: they show up; they had a decent enough income; they can engage in programs; and you know we help them learn skills, they are really keen to learn.” The practitioner experienced spiritual pain when they were unable to support Indigenous, nonwhite, and street-entrenched people to access programs because of the incongruity of the agency’s mandate and values. The practitioner’s critical, politicized lens was ineffective to initiate change in the agency, and they left because of these issues.

The constant confrontation of racism and colonial violence never escapes the Indigenous and nonwhite participants. Yet, despite the “dehumanizing” impact of working in these systems, they remain because of the desperate need for representation of Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners for the young people they deeply care for. As a nonwhite practitioner expressed,

It can be dehumanizing 100% but what about the kids that walk through the door? What is it like to be seen by a face you can see yourself in? There is nothing wrong with white people supporting children and youth of different cultures, but I think there needs to be an effort to have people who have that experience of racialization and have the experience of othering, because that changes the way you connect with someone.

Current CYC literature echoes the need for representation of Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners in the field and asserts the need to dismantle the colonial violence and racial logics under which we are all working (Edwards, 2018).

My *Hwulunitum* Roots in Practice

Out of all the themes, this one was the most rupturing to my own white settler location. As a white settler practitioner for close to three decades, listening to Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners discuss the impacts their “colleagues” have on them “daily” was piercing. It challenged my own practice and the reality that I had not, prior to this research, had conversations with colleagues or practitioners of colour, Indigenous or Black about the impacts of racism and white settler privilege.

As I further examine my hwulunitum roots, I am aware of the multiple levels at which my ancestors participated in the process of colonialization and racial oppression. Through this process I grew more intimate with my colonizer story. So much of my ancestry has been ignored, forgotten, or denied by myself and my family. The erasing of my occupier past allows for a lived

ignorance; somehow, I wasn't connected to my ancestors in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1620 because I didn't know about them. I ignored and denied my ancestral belonging to the dominant white colonizer group. The denial of this lineage continued to invoke an ignorance that is embedded in white settler privilege. As a white settler on stolen and occupied Indigenous lands, I have the privilege to not think about it. How could such ignorance become so mundane, and unquestioned? How does this amnesia to my occupier lineage impact my practice? In what ways has my white settler privilege coopted me into compliance while I benefitted from ongoing land dispossession, colonial violence, and racism?

My own disruption and unsettling are at the center of this work, and my understanding is always moving and imperfect (Reynolds, 2010b). I am not separate from other white settler practitioners. I cannot and do not claim increased consciousness or redemption from engaging in this research.

I was a young white settler when I went to work on reserve for the first time. I had not been trained in CYC. In fact, I came to the work through an intimate partner relationship, with a women's studies degree. I had been educated in systems power analysis, which assisted me to look beyond the conditions in the community. In my role as a youth recreation coordinator, I routinely spent days on end in nature with Indigenous and white children and youth. My colleague and co-coordinator was an Indigenous young man from the community. I recall a conversation with my colleague before we began our first summer session with the communities. I boldly discussed our "duty to report" should a child or youth disclose sexualized or physical violence. I recall an initial conflict between us, and then my colleague's chilling quiet. As the years went on and I gained a deeper relationship with my colleague and the community, I began to witness and experience the lack of police reactions to violent incidents, the perpetual power

the child welfare system held over people, and the lack of collaborative practice with any outsider or outside agency. I witnessed and experienced the erasing of Indigenous voices, the objectification of cultural knowledge, the exploitation of land and bodies. While no child or youth ever disclosed violence to me, I was left knowing that even though I had established profound connections and relationships with the children, youth, parents, and Elders, I was a white settler woman who followed white ways of being and doing in practice without realizing the subtle and overt impacts of my daily practice actions.

Theme 2: Power and Privilege

All eleven of the practitioners discussed their relationship to power and also the intersecting systems of power in which they work. There is research from a variety of academic and practice disciplines highlighting the importance of identifying power and privilege (Ahmed, 2007; Arvin et al., 2014; Carlson, 2016; Strega, 2015; Reynolds, 2014). According to a white settler practitioner, “it has always been about power. Who gets to amass the power and privilege has always seemingly been the driving force behind decision making.” As CYC practitioners we must be cognisant that there are “complex and slippery power relations” at play when working with others’ pain (Ahmed, 2012, as cited in de Finney et al., 2018, p. 33). Yet, CYC practice is too often “positioned in a vacuum, unimplicated in reproducing unequal power relations” (Jeffrey, 2005, p. 421). Addressing power “requires a commitment to complex analysis and letting go of wanting everything to be simple” (Reynolds, 2010, p. 53). To contest the white-washing of their practice, the white settler practitioners frequently described what could be called a “critical consciousness” (Watt et al., 2009, p. 102) on a personal and political level to develop a deeper awareness of their power and white settler privilege.

In this section, I share some of the complexities that practitioners discussed around their experiences within interlocking power-over systems and their own power and privilege within those systems. I explore four subcategories related to this theme—intersecting power and privilege; your position is intimidating; troubling consciousness; and learning language to speak to power—and provide practice examples of identifying, addressing, contesting, and negotiating power and privilege in the field of CYC.

Intersecting power and privileges. There was an acknowledgement by the CYC practitioners that although whiteness was central to our discussion, we could not ignore the intersecting power and privileges that coexist in the field. While practitioners did not want to lose sight of the impact of whiteness and white settler privilege, the majority discussed the need for an intersectional analysis in CYC, with a focus on class and gender. A nonwhite practitioner articulated clearly that “it’s not just race; it’s gender; it’s age; it’s intersectionality” that is needed in CYC. This statement correlates to vast scholarship that draws attention to the importance of intersectional analysis, including theories of critical and fourth-wave feminisms, antiracism, queer theory, class politics (Romero, 2018, p. 40), and ableism.

While acknowledging the intersecting structures of power and privilege, the practitioners also embarked on critical analysis of the capitalist system alongside the neoliberal “developmental milestones” that are both taught in CYC and practiced in the field. Practitioners articulated that we measure children, youth, and families by these frameworks that continually “center whiteness” and aim to “produce productive citizens.” Scholars White, Kouri, and Pacini-Ketchabaw argue that these measures perpetuate the existing system and contribute to the capital gains of the state (White et al., 2017). Practitioners also identified the educational and professional racial disparity of the field. A number of the white settler practitioners saw one site

of their CYC practice as the postsecondary classroom, where there are “very few Indigenous folks.” A white settler practitioner reported that “at least half the class is racialized” (practitioner was identifying Black students and student of colour) depending on the diploma or degree program, where the degree program “tends to be less racialized.” Further, a white male settler practitioner stated,

I think the discourse of CYC has been race blind. I think there is a new generation of practitioners with race consciousness and gender analysis, but the reality is that racism is deep, and sexism is deep, and misogyny is deep.

The intersection of gender and race was salient in the meaning making of the collaborative dialogues. Four of the self-identified white settler practitioners identified as male, and they reflected on the white male privilege they experience and witness in the field. One shared about the privilege disparity:

As a male in child and youth care I am a minority, but when you look at location in conferences, higher-level academic positions, it’s all male, it’s significantly male. I see privilege thrown at me in child and youth care all the time.

Additionally, these practitioners recognized that as white-male-identifying settlers, they have been taken “more seriously” professionally and received “increased career opportunities” and advancements in comparison to their female and nonbinary identified colleagues. These practitioners described the “real” embodied patriarchal constructs “rooted in the field of CYC.”

For example, one said:

I link back to those hetero, white, male-dominated norms, that power. That is still considered the norm and what we are trying to fit children and youth into, these boxes that link to capitalism and neoliberalism, to be a productive citizen. We are trying to

create people that are the right kind of citizen, to ultimately perpetuate the system, contribute to the capital gains of the state.

The above statement by a male white settler practitioner links patriarchal norms and capitalism. Indigenous, nonwhite, and white practitioners acknowledged that there are material limits working in a capitalist system that prioritizes “outcome measures over relationships” and also over justice. According to one Indigenous practitioner, the values of the capitalist system are divergent from the values of Indigenous communities:

You have to build relationships. And we have to, we, as much as I don't like “we”—the colonial word—are built on relationship. The system is perpetuating the inability to make relationships and sustain them. Like your job is here and you do this and then you're gone. It's the capitalist system, where you are on the move for a better location, a better job, better paid, but you aren't making those fundamental relationships within Indigenous communities.

This Indigenous practitioner, who worked in a bureaucratic institution, contested the use of the term “we” that “homogenizes” Indigenous people into one group and insisted it is not enough to have “known an Indigenous person once.” Even with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, there are distinct Nations, and practitioners “need to know the local people” from the territories in which they work. This practitioner also wanted to convey that Indigenous people's diverse, nondominant ways of being and knowing in terms of building trust and relationships are inconsistent with the capitalist system. The lack of time and process allotted for relationship building in practice was echoed by a white settler practitioner working in the North, who discussed the “high turnover” and lack of practitioner retention in the human services field. They had worked for seven years in a community surrounded by three First Nations and two Métis

settlements. The practitioner reported a high turnover of practitioners in the communities and said that usually “young” white settlers “from the South” arrive and “within a month they leave.”

“Your position is intimidating.” Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners spoke directly about the unexplored and unacknowledged power and privilege that white settler practitioners hold in their roles with children, youth, families, and communities. One Indigenous practitioner clearly identified the need for white settler practitioners to learn the truth about their power and not personalize the attitudes and behaviours of Indigenous or nonwhite children, youth, parents, Elders, or colleagues. They explicitly name the power that white settler practitioners carry in their bodies while making moves to innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012). An Indigenous practitioner demanded:

So, that is where the risk is (for white settlers), learning the truth. And the truth is, you do have power, that you do intimidate. “But no, I’m just trying to be nice, to be kind.” No. It’s not even YOU, it’s your position. Take the YOU out of it. Your position is intimidating. You have to take YOU out of it. Don’t have hurt feelings and work on it some other way.

Speaking frankly, this Indigenous practitioner detailed the need for white settler practitioners to assess their power from the perspective of their position of power. They encouraged white settler practitioners to productively process their discomfort and emotions “away from their work.” This practitioner challenged Ahmed’s (2004) idea that emotions are more than a private construct; Ahmed argues that “emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries of bodies and worlds” (p. 117). This practitioner’s focus on the “intimidation of the positions” white settlers hold also touches on the theme of white fragility, which is explored in further depth in the next section.

There was an acknowledgement by white settler practitioners to “be aware of the power you hold” in roles as CYC practitioners. For example, one white settler practitioner who had worked in child protection addressed the power they have in “male Eurocentric” structures that exclude people through processes, language barriers, and cultural stereotyping. They said:

We have a lot of power at child services. There are parts of our act that we can use, small print in legislation that says I can go into anyone’s house and for up to 48 hours and there’s really nothing a parent can do about it. Checks and balances and then courts get involved. And the court systems are biased, for immigrants too. It’s very Eurocentric. And people that come from other cultures and places across the world don’t get a fair share and representation in the court system. There’s language barriers and process barriers. I have worked in child protection now for six years, and criminal justice for seven years, so I have an understanding of the lingo. But if you are new to it, you just have no clue.

This white settler practitioner went on to explain the importance of “breaking down those barriers by building trust” and continually engaging in “forming relationships” to acknowledge the “constant undertone” of power imbalance. They described using their understanding and power with settler colonial language to both influence the courts and educate and advocate for the families they work with. They stated: “I think the biggest thing is being aware of the power you hold” and went on to share with me a story that allowed them to have an embodied experience of their power. While working in northern communities as a protection worker, they were required to bring a young Indigenous person to their parent. The young person had been living in a community hours away with another family, and because of safety issues needed to be

transported back to the other parent's community. This was an extremely remote community, accessible by barge in the summertime and an ice bridge in the winter. They described:

It was the middle of December. The young person was under 12. Famous last words of a child or youth: "Yes, I know what my parents' house looks like." They didn't. Anyways, I got to the reserve and knocked on the first door I saw, and said I am looking for so and so. They said it would be ten minutes down the road. So, I went ten minutes down the road and I found an aunt that knew where the parent was. So, I piled the aunt into the vehicle to try and find the parent. Within about twenty minutes of me being in the community, it was known that there was a white man with a young person trying to find their parent, and by the time we got to the parent's house, there was twenty people in the house waiting for me. And they were all terrified that I was going to take this young person away. There was literally twenty people in the house making sure I didn't take this little person away. All the generations had had some sort of involvement with residential school, I think two had had involvement with the sixties scoop. So, that's the context they were coming from.

The white settler practitioner went on to say, "I never learnt so much in my career about the power I had when literally twenty people were worried I was taking this child way."

It is particularly salient within this subtheme to note that many of these reflections are from white practitioners working with Indigenous clients, reinforcing the role of white people helping and in power, while nonwhite people are the clients. While working with a young Indigenous person in a group setting, a white settler practitioner questioned their unconscious racism and the ways that they were "still blind" to their own racism. They shared that they were working with youth doing scenario-based teaching for practitioners on how to work with young

people. The role play involved an Indigenous youth facilitator—who had not been identified as Indigenous—living in residential care and an Elder who was attending the workshop. The practitioner described the Indigenous youth facilitator as a delight to work with, and also noted that the young person seemed to be really struggling. The practitioner went on to explain what happened during the scenario-based training:

In the training scenario, the Elder asked the young person, “When I look at you, I wonder if you are Indigenous. May I ask you if you are Indigenous?” and they said, “Yes I am” and it opened up a conversation about Indigenous culture. And after the debrief, the youth said, “Nobody has ever asked me that.” I felt so incompetent, I felt so ignorant. I just felt so, ugh. I, so I, dishonoured, I missed, dishonoured is not the right word. I negated this woman. And that connection for her was so important.

As the practitioner reflected on this significant experience, they commented about the chance to examine “how does [their] own racism, how does it exist?”, to take responsibility for their own inaction and struggle “in [their] head” knowing a “person isn’t white” but being unsure if identifying race would be “racializing them,” and the importance of “naming whiteness” and “talking about white supremacy.”

Troubling consciousness. A white settler practitioner discussed seeking mentorship with other white settler educators and practitioners dedicated to examining their own white settler privilege and power. The white settler practitioner identified their dedication to “troubling consciousness” (Chapman, 2013, p. 182) and looking at their part in the continued racial violence they encountered in practice. Many of the white settler practitioners maintained that their own critical analysis in CYC did not occur until graduate school. One white settler practitioner stated, “In my undergrad I was learning skills and trying to apply them. Then it

wasn't until grad school, where it was like, 'Oh wait! Everything I have been doing is oppressive.'”

Critical, politicized CYC scholars and practitioners are seeking to disrupt romanticized, feel-good narratives of “benevolent human service interventions” (Palacios, 2017, as cited in de Finney et al., 2018, p. 33), and they recognize and address the “deep ethical fissures at play in our work” (p. 33). There has also been recent discussion in CYC aimed at troubling consciousness (White, 2015; White et al., 2017). Chris Chapman (2013) asserts “that people journey with pain, uncertainty, and identity destabilization when implicating themselves in oppression, to cultivate a ‘troubled consciousness’” (p. 182). Further, Chapman notes, troubling consciousness intersects with Du Bois’ (1903/2015) notion of double consciousness and with Judith Butler’s (1990) troubling of identity. With the recent inclusion of troubling consciousness in CYC, students are learning that “the elegant theories and tidy frameworks they are learning in university do not always adequately prepare them for constructively responding in the face of uncertainty, power, structural violence, colonial relations or institutional hierarchies” (White et al., 2017, p. 54).

A white settler practitioner teaching in higher education and involved in community youth work described their struggle regarding how to prepare CYC practitioners to “challenge the norms or policies or just participation in this colonial system” when as a “novice practitioner” they never “thought of disrupting these norms” which they identified as “the neoliberal models expected of them in the field.” The practitioner identified the “stages of development” and acknowledged that it’s “very hierarchical” and that often as “novice practitioners, you follow policy, you look to supervision, contain and control behaviours.” The practitioner advocates for “critical education” early in CYC training. As a CYC educator, the

practitioner highlighted the choice that white settler practitioners have in contesting structural violence and oppression that is pervasive and experienced continuously by Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners, children, youth, families, and communities. The practitioner discussed their journey to trouble consciousness in practice—“essentially looking at our part in these violences” and identifying our participation in “oppressive” practices. The importance of troubling consciousness is supported by Chapman (2013), who describes

the doubling-over of consciousness by which [we] come to recognize [ourselves] beyond our intentions and rationalizations, and by which [we] come to recognize [ourselves] as someone who represents and actively perpetuates things that [we] find abhorrent. It is incredibly destabilizing to have [our] identity troubled this way. This cannot and should not be avoided. (pp. 195–196)

Learning language to speak to power. As the white settler practitioners above shared, racism is likely to happen in practice. White settler practitioners expressed that we likely act out racism that goes unidentified and causes harm. An Indigenous practitioner called these incidents “flare ups”—systemic racism, acted out individually, collectively, or institutionally by white settlers. There were a number of ways that white settler practitioners discussed speaking truth to the flare ups they are conscious of witnessing and that they encounter in practice.

As white settler practitioners, we recounted that there were times in practice when we “missed” our racial biases, when as white settler practitioners we were “blind” to the experiences of nonwhite participants in our programs and services. The collaborative dialogues provided an opportunity for me to engage in these thick, honest, and transparent conversations with the participants, and together we worked to expose our own racism in practice. A white settler

practitioner working in group programs with youth reflected on their racial learning during one of our dialogues:

The last project I worked with there was a young trans youth who was Indigenous. But I didn't even know they were Indigenous until they asked me for a job reference for a position that involved his Indigenous identity. Otherwise it never came up and I, in retrospect, did I shut it down, did I negate it, did I ignore it? I don't ask, I assumed I knew. And so, how have I perpetuated a violence against this young person?

This practitioner reflected in the moment with honesty and truthfulness on their own racial learning and expressed that "it is nice to have space like this, where I can own that and figure out how to stop" inflicting unconscious racism.

Further, a white settler practitioner spoke about the requirement to learn language to address racism. They recounted being part of a conversation where white settlers were saying "I didn't own slaves; it is my ancestors, not me," and the white settler practitioner shared:

It wasn't until afterwards that I was reflecting on the conversation. Yes, but you are still benefitting from it. I think I need to find the language: *You are benefitting* (emphasis added). You are employed here, so you are on stolen land, so you are directly benefitting from that colonial legacy. You are benefitting because of the hiring practices, you know, it is racist practices. We consciously and unconsciously hire certain people, so you are benefitting from that. In the same way that I benefit by being paid more as a male.

Another white settler practitioner articulated the need to flip the narrative from Indigenous issues to a "white systems problem." They expressed that they now make efforts to reframe health disparities and anti-Indigenous racism with comments such as, "Can you believe in this society, we have so many inequities, and look at this privilege! I wonder where that comes from?" They

went on to state that they have been “reframing these conversations about power” with their coworkers, and are always looking to identify power when it comes up in practice.

Ongoing recognition and analysis of the power we carry as white settler practitioners is essential in navigating human services and postsecondary structures that are rooted in the systemic erasure of Indigenous identities and realities. Our ability to assess our power and privilege moves us towards unsettling ourselves rather than pathologizing the children, youth, families, and communities we work with.

Theme 3: White Fragility

Across all of the interviews, the theme of white settler fragility, including my own, was highlighted as central to a discussion of whiteness in CYC. White fragility, according to Robin DiAngelo (2017), occurs as a result of the smallest racial stress, generating “emotions including anger, fear and guilt and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and withdrawal from the stressful situation” (p. 2). DiAngelo further defines white fragility as “white racial control” (p. 2) and the defence of white benefits generated by emotional discomfort and anxiety grounded in the conceptualization of whiteness as superior and entitled. Erinn Gilson’s (2011, 2014) scholarship states that white fragility is not a weakness but rather an active performance of invulnerability (p. 862). Both bell hooks (1989) and Audre Lorde (1984) suggest that feeling bad about racism or white privilege can cause a white person to assert self-centeredness, which then puts them back in the center (p. 7). hooks protests that white guilt is performative and contributes nothing to actually undoing whiteness (as cited in Ahmed, 2004, p. 7).

The good white person. In “An Ethos of Our Times,” Jennifer White (2015) suggests that “the move to explicitly name whiteness and racism, while a step in the right direction, is somewhat problematic, though, as it may have the undesired effect of positioning the author as

‘the right kind of white person’ or ‘the good white person’” (p. 3). If white settler practitioners cannot discuss our moves to be seen as the good white practitioner and fail to see ourselves within these dynamics, White continues, “we cannot stop participating in racism” (p. 72).

Before I get into discussing the reflections shared by white settler practitioners around their investment in being “a good white person,” I want to share a poem that I wrote after transcribing the collaborative dialogues with Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners. While during the conversations I was not aware of my white settler fragility, in listening to the recordings I could hear my voice in moments speed up and talk over Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners. In the recording I could hear my subtle moves to position myself as understanding and convey that I “get it.” As I listened, I could hear the quiet discomfort in my voice. I witnessed my own white settler fragility and deep unconscious pull to be the good white person.

Revealed

*I breathe in your words
Hold space for your wisdom,
Pain, confidence, knowing*

*I don't wince to move away
But I hear my voice, change,
Go faster, talking over
Wanting somehow to convey
“I'm on your side”
My fragility, my white fragility is alive
My own discomfort exposed*

*To shapeshift white supremacy
I must feel my own shame
See my own fumbblings
Own my mistakes
I've talked over, moved to innocence, escaped
I've cried, deflected
OH, NOT ME! I AM NOT THAT WHITE PERSON!
But I am, I am all shades of whiteness*

Moving from my own vulnerability and unconscious desire to rescue, I saw myself connected to white settler practitioners looking to disrupt our own white settler privilege and

white settler fragility. My fragility was brought to light several times as the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners discussed the impacts of working with the “good white person” archetype; they all noted that experiencing “the good white person” is a “daily” and almost “expected” reality. The good white person archetype: presents like the “right kind of white person”; wants to look like a “really good white person” who is “not overtly racist”; often has “mined the most from Indigenous communities”—with regards to knowledge and culture—and is “touted by other white people as good white person for it”; and this archetype “still goes to their [home]” and never has to truly confront or challenge their privilege. The Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners continually highlighted the everyday acts of ignorance, violence, and aggression they experience co-occurring beside the children, youth, families, and communities they walk with, often perpetuated by their white settler colleagues. One Indigenous practitioner shared the dangers of naming race and even calling attention to racism in their workplace, despite working within a system serving primarily Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, and families. They shared:

I cannot use the word “race” or “racism” in my work because the backlash is so huge. I would be hauled into the [supervisor’s] office the moment I pointed that out. There have been times when I have been forced to go “Are you basing that on my race?” And the backlash is HUGE. The cost is high. It wrecks relationships with white colleagues at work, because good white people are not racist and how dare I insinuate that their practice is at all based on race.

Literature addressing racism concurs with this practitioner’s experience. According to critical race and intersectional feminist scholar Ahmed (2017), “when you speak about racism, you become the one who caused damage” (p. 179). The literature also links good white people to

colour-blind claims that exempt them from “further involvement or responsibility” in racism or colonial violence (DiAngelo, 2017, p. 81). Further, the literature illuminates that by not acknowledging race, white settlers engage “settler moves to innocence” in attempts to alleviate settler guilt and responsibility and rescue settler futurity (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3).

The conversations with white settler practitioners revealed that most were caught in a “good/bad binary” (DiAngelo, 2017, p. 71) that individualizes systemic racism. This binary claims that only bad people are racist, while good, moral white people cannot be. Each of the white settler practitioners offered reflections of their own reckoning of the good/bad binary, reporting practice stories where they struggled to be the good white person. They recounted a desire throughout their CYC career to be seen as “nice” and “good” and not one of those “bad white people.” One white settler shared that they call this “nice people’s racism.” Another white settler practitioner expressed an awareness of when their “gross good white person” shows up wanting to be seen for having done their antiracism work. White settler practitioners also denounced their impulses and inclinations to fall “on the good side” of white. Further, it was acknowledged by a few that they had received professional systemic benefits, including greater repute and advancement, for their “good behaviour.”

Literature further suggests that an invisible white hegemony is embedded in our psyche and professionalism as white settler practitioners, and that entrenched ideas of having a “good heart” and “good intentions” are not enough to navigate structural inequities and obstacles (Aronson, 2017, p. 39). The helping professions are ingrained with “the belief that we know what good is, are good, and can instil good in others” (Blackstock, 2008, p. 28), and hence “there is little meaningful conversation about our potential to do harm” (p. 28). As articulated by the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners in my study, it is essential for white settler practitioners to

understand how they perform white settler fragility, and that the more comfortable a space is for white settlers, “the more likely it will be violent for [people] of colour” (Applebaum, 2017, p. 873). While Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners expressed this reality for themselves, they were most concerned about these same impacts to the Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities they work with.

White saviour complex. Many practitioners discussed white saviours with whom they work. The foundation of the helping fields is built on the white saviour complex. Anderson (2013, as cited in Aronson, 2017) defines the white saviour industrial complex as “the confluence of practices, processes, and institutions that reify historical inequities to ultimately validate white privilege” (p. 36). Brittany Aronson (2017) explains that “ultimately, people are rewarded for ‘saving’ those less fortunate and are able to completely disregard the policies they have supported that have created/maintained systems of oppression” (p. 36). Paulo Freire (1970/2000) wrote extensively about the white saviour complex, presenting it as a form of oppression of the other. The white saviour complex has been identified as the need for “first world countries” to save the rest of the world and the inherent need for colonizers to rescue the other (D. Turner, 2018, p. 4).



Figure 2: White saviour complex.

The triangle shown in Figure 2 (source: @nowhitesaviors Instagram 8 November 2018) visually captures the root causes and impacts that create the outcome of the white saviour complex. These root causes are discussed throughout this thesis, namely in the literature review and findings.

Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners in this research challenged the white saviour complex. The following reflection by an Indigenous practitioner demands the attention of white settler practitioners. In it, the Indigenous practitioner names the white saviour complex embedded in the child welfare and child and youth mental health systems and treatments, along with white settler practitioners' pathologizing of families and communities rather than having an analysis of the systemic barriers based in colonialism and racism.

I think the whole child welfare system is built on the white saviour complex. It is that whole ontology. What is good, right, and just is white. The home is nuclear and white, the whole system is built on these ideals. It's so incommensurable. And these removals continue to happen, and it's all built on the white saviour. And it's the same as child and youth mental health. Oh, here you are, white saviours, why don't you put on your hat! But really, slow your roll with your CBT [cognitive behavioural therapy] and your trauma-informed focus and back up and see that right now you can't do this work. There's too much in this child's life to do that work; it will not happen. So, don't sit and complain about the parents not doing what they need to do. The parents are dealing with so many things. This is the hardest thing to talk about with my co-workers: this is ongoing systemic violence.

This Indigenous practitioner clearly articulates how the white saviour complex upholds the child welfare and child and youth mental health systems. This observation is supported by the

literature. With ever-increasing numbers of Indigenous children encountering the state through child welfare programs, it is vital that practitioners attune to the ways in which the “identification of some people as deviant, helpless, vulnerable, and incompetent shores up the construction of other people as helpful, charitable, and necessary” (de Leeuw, Greenwood, & Cameron, 2009, p. 290). The investment in maintaining the “helpful” white practitioner identity was continuously identified by the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners in this study, who explicitly named the harm perpetuated by their white settler colleagues’ lack of antiracism and anticolonial knowledge and understanding. Another Indigenous practitioner stated:

I encounter a lot of white saviours [practitioners]. Great hearted, well meaning, that want to come in and save us. That’s not what we need. You can’t save us. I don’t need saving. I need you to stand with me. I need to not be questioned after I have given my professional opinion, after I’ve said something like I am telling you they are practicing their culture, and I am asking you to listen to me and not question the kids, because you have power. Stop questioning the kids.

This practitioner was discussing the information they share with white settler colleagues in regard to cultural practices. The practitioner described working to protect children and youth from the invasive questioning and “demands” by white settler colleagues and instead to respect the information they share only as the Indigenous staff member who has “local relationships” and “cultural understanding.” Additionally, this practitioner identified the centuries-old narrative of white settler women as saviour of less fortunate, less educated, less liberated nonwhite women (Razack, 1998, p. 5) enacted through their privilege and a lack of respect for cultural privacy. Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners echo the literature in expressing that it is imperative that we examine “who are the saviors and who are the saved” (Razack, 1998, p. i) to disrupt even the

subtle colonial power relations played out in CYC.

White settler participants shared both their own stories of enacting the white saviour complex along with how working within these systems propagates, promotes, and maintains the white saviour complex. A white settler CYC participant working in health care shared a story about a time when they were “unable to provide appropriate service to an Indigenous youth” because of their “own judgement” and “racism.” This practitioner asserted that this was not an isolated incident with themselves or their colleagues at the time. They indicated that this situation was entrenched in the continual reframing of whiteness at their work location and within the field:

When I first started there I can clearly remember, a 14-year-old Indigenous girl came in, and she was pregnant. And when we got the pregnancy dipstick back, I had this forlorn look on my face, because I assumed it was terrible news. I was like, oh god you are 14! What are we going to do? Do you need a referral? Or you know, there was this heaviness. And she was so HAPPY. So happy. She was like, I can't wait to tell my mom. And I had, even thinking about it now, I was just so unable to compute. I had so many opinions and ideas about what was right or acceptable. I was so unable to give her care in a way that fit for her at all. So, there's just a million ways we didn't include community in the way we worked with the youth. We were not at all aware of our own biases or thinking, our own whiteness. It just wasn't a part of the conversation at all.

The practitioner repeated “There's just a million ways we were not at all aware of our own biases or thinking, our own whiteness.” They reflected on being a practitioner in health care “working with Indigenous kids that would come in, and just how fucking unaware I was.”

Another white settler practitioner working in child welfare advocated for renouncing the

white saviour complex, asserting that Indigenous communities know themselves what they need and what is required to support their families best:

And not being the rescuer or the saviour. The families know how to keep themselves safe. The community is the ones that live that life and know that world. They are the ones that will know how to keep the children safe. Not the academic that turns up just because he has a couple letters behind his name. They aren't the ones. It's the people that are there on the ground that live it every single day. It's the people that know the histories. I have no doubt about that. The ones that understand the culture, they know the history, they have the knowledge of the traditional practices and everything. Those are going to be far more valuable.

This statement is reinforced by the scholarship and insight of Cindy Blackstock (2008), renowned Indigenous child rights advocate. According to Blackstock, there is increasing evidence that “Aboriginal communities, when provided with adequate supports, develop the most sustainable socio-economic improvements for children” (p. 33). She goes on to emphasize that the helping professions continue to assert that the current Eurocentric system of helping Aboriginal children, youth, families, and communities is the best response (Blackstock, 2008) despite clear evidence from numerous national and international studies that it has devastating outcomes for Indigenous and nonwhite families.

Microaggressions. Critical race theory scholars describe “racial microaggressions” as “subtle forms of racism that exist in daily life, which may be hard to pinpoint as racism, but cause harm, nonetheless” (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012, p. 446). Microaggressions can be seen in behaviours such as “crying, physically leaving, emotionally withdrawing, arguing, denying, focusing on intentions, seeking absolution and avoiding” (DiAngelo, 2017, p. 119). Most of the

white settler practitioners spoke of experiences they had either being in proximity to racial microaggression, acting out a microaggression unconsciously, or intervening in an act of microaggression. Below, a white settler practitioner working in a community-based organization spoke about systemically accepted microaggressions and the pull to work from a “simpler and tidier” uncritical approach. The practitioner’s solid analysis of power and their previous antioppression work allowed them to become acutely aware of their participation in microaggression:

Doing a lot of work with Indigenous women that are leaving violence in a system that favours a white, middle-class woman leaving violence. There is an extraordinary power in my [white] body; whether I want it there or not, it is there! So, being able to own that and work with it and acknowledge it and not live in innocence.

The practitioner went on to say that sometimes they think

how much *easier*—but it wouldn’t be easier, but in many ways it would be simpler and tidier if I just showed up, helped the people easy to help. If someone wasn’t easy to help, just blame them. That is what the system does—it could be around homelessness, child apprehension, etcetera, if you are not engaged in services, you are the problem. If you don’t “show up” the ways the ticky boxes (program requirements captured on forms with small boxes to screen people in, or importantly here, out of service) want us to, those people are problematic, not the system. (description added)

The practitioner went on to share that their supervisor always “validates [their] practice approach” when they discuss people and situations they are having a hard time with: “Even if [their approach] was harmful,” they were supported to make the client the problem. This practitioner highlighted the foundation of microaggressions that exist in the field, allowing white

settler practitioners to “not challenge” our privilege or each other and to sidestep the messy and pervasive analysis of systemic violence.

All of the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners explained ways they had experienced microaggressions by their white settler colleagues, as well as microaggressions they had witnessed directed towards children, youth, families, and communities. They each detailed interactions when these microaggressions occurred interpersonally, one on one, and in collective environments, such as in meetings or trainings. One Indigenous practitioner working in a system serving children, youth, and families articulated the impacts on themselves sitting in circle when their white settler colleagues were processing the emotional impacts of learning about settler colonialism and all its violence.

It is not my job to make you feel better for what your people did to my people. Like why am I sitting here with a bunch of white people crying about how bad their people were to my people? But it wasn't my people, because I'm from somewhere else and colonialism impacted us differently. It's not even my people. And I have to sit there and listen to them crying about how bad their people were. Well, don't just cry there. Do something. Read some stuff. Grab some knowledge. If you have some questions in the middle of that, I am so happy to talk with you. But you have to make the first step. And I am not enabling you to sit there and cry. And if that makes me mean, I'm okay with that.

The Indigenous practitioner graciously addressed the need for white settler practitioners to educate themselves on the history and the current daily impacts of settler colonialism and racism without expecting, demanding, or covertly seeking to be educated and rescued by Indigenous and nonwhite colleagues. Several practitioners also spoke to the impact of “white women tears” (Accapadi, 2007; DiAngelo, 2017, p. 131). This term refers to all the ways, “both

literally and metaphorically, that white fragility manifests itself through white people's laments over how hard racism is on us" (DiAngelo, 2017, p. 131). When white women cry over racism, the act recenters attention on them away from educating and dismantling colonial violence and racism. "Whether intended or not," DiAngelo (2017) says, "when a white woman cries over some aspect of racism, all the attention from everyone in the room goes to her, demanding time, energy, and attention from everyone in the room when they should be focusing on ameliorating racism" (p. 134). Thus "the white female gaze often sustains rather than disrupts white supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy" (Razack, 1998, p. 15).

Theme 4: Troubling Allyship

A few of my guiding questions inquired about being an ally, advocate, or activist, including the following: *Are you an advocate or activist in your life? How are you an ally?*

While speaking with the practitioners about allyship in practice, each of them, from their various experiences in life and practice, troubled the concept. One white practitioner recounted that although "there is problematic pieces" to "non-Indigenous people" being allies, as white settler practitioners, "when we get upset with someone we are not [labelled] as an angry person of colour." Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners articulated the necessity for Indigenous practitioners to be "trusted," "respected," and seen as "knowledgeable" in their field. As demonstrated in previous themes, throughout the collaborative dialogues it was clear that often Indigenous practitioners experienced anti-Indigenous racism from their white settler colleagues and so-called allies. When asked to define white settler allies, an Indigenous practitioner responded:

An ally? Someone who, I don't even know how to explain that. Don't stand in my way.

Don't stand in front of me. Don't stand behind me. Stand with me, and with me is trust in

what I am saying and doing and how I practice.

Antiracism literature supports this Indigenous practitioner's statement. Paul Kivel (2002), for example, talks about what racism means for people who are white and outlines how to work for racial justice. He describes being an ally as "an ongoing strategic process in which we look at our personal and social resources, evaluate the environment we have helped create, and decide what needs to be done" (p. 94). Kivel identifies listening to nonwhite people as a first step towards being an ally, and suggests that enacting critical listening and thinking are essential to deconstruct racism (p. 95). Kivel also addresses institutional racism (p. 172) and offers tools, exercises, and concrete actions for white people to be antiracist. For example, Kivel unpacks how to be a white ally and offers tactics, questions, and suggestions to enact an ally ethic (pp. 94–118). Some basic tactics he shares include noticing who is the center of attention and who is the center of power; noticing how racism is denied, minimized, and justified; and supporting the leadership of people of colour (pp. 97–98).

According to Reynolds (2013), working alongside Indigenous peoples is a process of "imperfect allyship" (p. 52). Reynolds stresses that we can never be "perfect allies, but we may become imperfect allies." In her view, ally work is an imperfect project infused with "justice-doing and decolonizing practice" (p. 52).

The concept of allyship is highly debated and contested. Allyship is prevalent as a framework to structure how people in power can enact their own ethics of justice-doing with those who directly experience colonial violence. Most of the white settler practitioners in this study questioned the appropriateness of self-identifying as an ally and expressed concern that the term ally could be construed as dichotomous with innocent white person. White settler practitioners asked questions such as: Who are we to claim we are allies? Who decides if our

work is helpful? A white settler practitioner who has worked alongside Indigenous people in community offered the following reflection:

An ally is someone who can speak to themselves being unsettled with other white people, to continue that process and then be useful to Indigenous people in the way they acknowledge as being useful.

This definition aligns with literature that states that “meaningful alliances aren’t imposed, they are consented” (Indigenous Action Media, 2014, para. 10). Another white settler practitioner working in health care settings shared that they have stopped saying they are an advocate because they realize that the work they are doing is “not on behalf of someone else”; rather, they are “making a contribution to [their] own life, [their] own community and to what time [they] have on the planet.” These reflections on advocacy and allyship by white settler practitioners reinforce Reynolds’ (2010) contention that “becoming an ally is not developmental process. It is always *becoming* an ally” (p. 15); as allies we are in a continual state of learning and expanding and we must acknowledge our limited role. Further, Reynolds invites a solidarity in practice that is fluid and in motion. Allyship, in those terms, focuses on unsettling white settler privilege and centering Indigenous voices. Practitioners in this study were interested in discussing how might these processes might occur.

Moving away from and resisting the seduction of the pain narrative of First Peoples (e.g., impacts of multigenerational trauma), this research turned toward systemic colonial violence and racism. The reality is that white settler allyship is burdened with tension and distrust because “white settler narratives of good intentions and benevolence have been the historic foundation of white settler identity formation” (Hunt & Holmes, 2015, p. 168). In our work as CYC practitioners, we are often trusted in roles of allyship and mentorship with Indigenous and

nonwhite people—including colleagues and clients. Awareness of our white settler privilege and acknowledgement of the areas of our own racialized discomfort are necessary for meaningful connection and change. It is important to make space within ourselves for our own anxiety and for complex uncomfortable conversations as a necessary part of resisting racial amnesia (Razack, 2002). As Eve Tuck (2012) insists, solidarity is an uneasy and unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict (p. 3).

In the next sections, practitioners offer tangible ways for white settler practitioners to enact solidarity and engage in “imperfect allyship.”

Leveraging privilege. There is a growing emphasis in Indigenous resurgence communities for “accomplices not allies” (Indigenous Action Media, 2014, para. 5). A nonwhite practitioner working within a bureaucratic setting insisted that white settler practitioners

leverage your privilege. Put yourself on the line. That is what it means to be an accomplice. I don't want an ally. I don't need allies. I need somebody who is like, “Okay, let me take the bullet.” Great, get ahead of me and I am the kind of person who would be willing to do that for someone I knew I could actually support. It doesn't make sense to do it with a white person where whiteness is at play because is it not going to be helpful. That is just self-sacrificing, and there is no point to that. . . . Are you actually willing to live the politics that you claim to have when it means that you're the one whose job is on the line or you're the one who could lose something?

The Indigenous Action Media alliance concurs with the positioning of accomplice as an applied, action-oriented term. They state that allyship has “become an identity, disembodied from any real mutual understanding of support” (2014, para. 5). According to them, accomplices are not motivated by personal guilt or shame and are explicit about their own agenda. Accomplices are

developed through established trust and “mutual consent” (para. 22). They are alongside Indigenous folks or “in their own spaces confronting and unsettling colonialism” (para. 22) and “are compelled to become accountable and responsible to each other” (para. 22).

Many of the white settler practitioners spoke of ways that they work with intentions to inflict less violence on Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities. The white settler practitioners spoke of small acts of unsettling they enact. They discussed ways they “amplify Indigenous voices and knowledge” and let Indigenous folks “take the lead.” They described being ready at any point to “step out front, if required,” to navigate and translate the white system as part of having white settler “insider knowledge.” They also talked about being aware of how to “use language” in reports, court documents, and file notes, act as “barriers” to bureaucratic violence, and “volunteer” technical skills (e.g., social media and grant writing) as an activist ethic. In the words of one white settler practitioner:

I see it sometimes as working the system, knowing the key words or knowing how to twist the presentation of data and information in order to support our clients to support community and do what is necessary in that regard. I don’t see that so much as an ethical rub (conflict), but as supporting a person to, you know, access a service or protecting a child. Telling the ministry or telling a funding body what they need to hear in order for me to open the door or unlock a door for somebody.

Decolonization in praxis. A number of practitioners grappled with being able to define what decolonization is in praxis. One recent white settler CYC graduate school student declared, with some trepidation, that although they had just completed their graduate program, they could not articulate what decolonizing praxis is. Another white settler practitioner working primarily in remote northern communities shared a story that embodies their decolonizing praxis:

I think Elders in these communities are *so* overlooked by social services, by white people. Those Elders are the ones that really run the communities. I remember going into a house once and trying to build a plan for a child's safety. There was a lot of anger in the home, a lot of yelling. A lot for all the right reasons. A lot of people trying to push their values and thinking. And all it took was one, the matriarch of the family, she must have been 90 years old. Once this diminutive woman said "This is what I think," the conversation ended. And that was one of the first things in community: engage the people that have respect of the community. Those Elders are so vital. They are often the ones that hold the knowledge of the traditions; they hold the knowledge of how families are connected to each other; they hold the knowledge of what kept the community safe; they hold the knowledge of the history of the community. And if you can engage with those people, those are the ones that are going to be able to keep those kids safe.

The white settler practitioner went on to declare that "to me that is decolonial practice—that is looking at the community's own system of knowledge and not being the rescuer or the saviour."

This example echoes the framework proposed by Maori academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012). According to Smith, the intellectual project of decolonizing must have "radical compassion that reaches out, that seeks collaboration, and that is open to possibilities that can only be imagined as other things fall into place," a process that needs to be led by Indigenous peoples themselves (p. xii). Decolonization is therefore embedded in rights of self-determination and sovereignty (p. xiii). Smith calls for "revolutionary thinking about roles that knowledge, knowledge production, knowledge hierarchies and knowledge institutions" (p. xii) play and which are integral to decolonization and social transformation. And although her writing locates the responsibility for societal change in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds, Smith

challenges white settlers to realize the powerful remembering by Indigenous peoples of the oppressive colonial past and present, while also calling on white settlers to acknowledge their present-day colonial privilege (p. 1). Smith highlights coming to know the past as an essential aspect of the critical pedagogy of decolonization (p. 36). Likewise, practitioners in this research expressed the importance of knowing the history of settler colonialism, “starting with the process of extracting resources from the land” and institutionalized “genocide and assimilation” practices and policies.

White settler practitioners offered other conceptualizations of decolonizing CYC praxis. Their ideas included bringing discussions of power and privilege to the forefront of scholarship and classrooms, encouraging students to understand positionality and continuously evaluate that position in their encounters, and continuously implicating ourselves—as practitioners—in our positions of power and in our commitment to unsettling settler systems. It was also identified by the majority of practitioners that we cannot have conversations about decolonizing CYC praxis without conversations about land and its “repatriation.” An essential finding, expressed by both Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners, is that Indigenous practitioners must lead any efforts in decolonization. A nonwhite practitioner, using film as a metaphor for decolonization, insisted:

I do believe there is a role for white people to play. But it is not the starring role, and it is not the supporting role. I think they are the extras in the movie, truthfully.

There is a role for all of us on a journey towards decolonizing. There is not one strategy, but rather multiple paths within different spaces, contexts, and locations in the field. A number of these ideas are explored in depth as ethical pathways (Figure 3) in conjunction with anticolonial theory in the final chapter. There is a need for Indigenous- and nonwhite-led initiatives and collaborations along with focus on white settler work.

White settlers working with white settler practitioners. As a strategy for solidarity and (imperfect) allyship, a number of white settler practitioners discussed the importance of white settlers working with white settler practitioners on antiracism and anticolonialism. As a white settler practitioner asserted, the system is “really tricky” and “even when you think you are working against it, it has a way of reappropriating your work.” So, engaging in anticolonialism, as a praxis stance and disruption of white supremacy, can support moves to decolonize. Many of the practitioners discussed the need for white settler practitioners to “educate” and “unsettle” themselves and each other.

A practitioner working in a health care setting discussed in depth a cultural safety training they completed. This work was embedded in the organization they were working for and it included four cultural safety training sessions and a final step where white staff were required to attend a seminar to discuss their whiteness and how to shift systemic racism within the organization. The white settler practitioner discussed the value of having discussions about dismantling systemic racism with white colleagues:

I was so afraid I would appear racist and not a good person because I said the wrong thing or didn't understand something. So, these communities of practice created space to get uncomfortable without damaging anybody else. You can make mistakes, but you aren't doing it around people that are getting further traumatized by your white words. In addition, the white settler practitioner referenced the importance of connecting with other white settlers and avoiding the trap of adopting the identity of being the good white person. The white settler practitioner went on to reveal:

There is a disconnect that had happened for me with some other white people. In the sense that I have been doing this learning, and it has created this space between me and

the white folks that haven't been doing this learning. And I see that as a missed opportunity in a way, and I am a little bit worried about, how much can I grow and change and then what though? I am just one person doing that learning. How can I do that learning in a way that brings my people with me? Otherwise there are just going to be a few of us, a few of us *really good white people*, and then the systems are still going to be the same because we have alienated all those other white people.

White settler practitioner spoke to the need to “talk to other white people” so that the “education of white settlers doesn't fall on [solely] Indigenous people” who get tasked with the emotional labour and are targeted with “the backlash” when white settlers experience their own fragility. This could be informed by available literature (Coulthard, 2014; de Finney et al., 2018; Hunt, 2014; Manuel & Derrickson, 2017; L. B. Simpson, 2017) alongside extensive reports like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015a) *Calls to Action*, the *Calls to Justice* by the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019b), and the final report by Grand Chief Ed John—*Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness, and Reunification* (John, 2016). Additionally, they highlighted the need for white settler practitioners to do their own racial justice work so that we can “be patient enough” to “love [other white settlers] through their own disruption” of the identity of the good white person and “bring [white settlers] along.” Practitioners went on to say that “it is not our clients that burn us out”; rather, “it is the structural violence and being almost powerless” to change it. While white settler practitioners mentioned the impacts of systemic violence, Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners reminded me throughout this study that they live embodied and inescapable experiences of colonial and racial violence.

In the context of cultural safety workshops and working specifically with white settlers, a white settler practitioner referred to their cultural safety mentor, Harley Eagle (2018), and his use of Cree-Métis scholar/educator Verna St. Denis's concept of "life-giving" (n.p.) work. Eagle describes life-giving work as "addressing racism and embracing critical consciousness" (n.p.) in a process that allows for understanding the dynamics of systemic racism, the subtleties in interpersonal relationships, and the move towards authentic relationships with self; these strategies provide for transformative change, which Eagle identifies as life-giving work. The white settler practitioner described the cultural safety training as profoundly transformative:

There is something about the language of *life-giving* that really resonated with me, because often the work around disrupting one's own whiteness can be difficult and uncomfortable. And can have lots of implications for people around having to let go of worldviews they understood, and it can be kind of scary. And so, connecting to this work being *life-giving* is action for me. It is like I am being an activist in my own disruption. (emphasis added)

Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners suggested additional ways for white settler practitioners to enact solidarity. An Indigenous practitioner discussed the importance of white settler practitioners getting uncomfortable:

I work with very educated people, who I really do believe are allies. But they still can't deal with the tension. They still want to defend it. I don't need to hear I am right. Maybe just shut up, in a sense. Maybe just be quiet for a minute. Let's just sit and be in discomfort together for a few minutes. We'll see who breaks first [laughter]. Let's be uncomfortable and see what happens.

Although this Indigenous practitioner could find humour in getting “uncomfortable” and unsettling whiteness in practice, they continued to ask, “If you and I are going to be allies, then where is the consistency in your responses to yourself?” and “Where is the consistency in your allyship?” For this practitioner, inconsistent responses from their white settler colleagues create a “disembodied” experience for them where they find themselves “incongruent with their own values and worldview” and they “feel like [they] have two bodies or two minds.” They described this as “incommensurable” for themselves and their Indigenous and nonwhite clients.

Another nonwhite practitioner identified the importance of having more Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners working in the field. They gave a recent practice example of a nonwhite youth who was able to work with two practitioners from their own nonwhite racial background:

What is it like to be seen by a face you can see yourself in? That has been pretty powerful for me as a “therapist,” which I don’t even like that term. But I work with a young [racial identity] youth and they are like, batting two for two, because their previous counsellor was [racial group] also. So, for them, what a profound experience to have on our multicultural team, which is, you know, has white people on the team. Which there is nothing wrong with white people supporting children and youth of different cultures, but I think there needs to be an effort to have people who have that experience of racialization and have the experience of othering, because that changes the way you connect with someone. And I don’t know, I have never read that in a fricking counselling textbook, but I believe it.

“With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility”

Repeatedly, an Indigenous practitioner joked and conveyed a strong message that practitioners carry “great power” and cannot forget that with that power comes “great

responsibility.” Actions to address this responsibility were outlined by practitioners and supported and enhanced by current literature. First, practitioners articulated that “education is key” and encouraged “critical questioning” and “systems analysis” in the beginning of child and youth care education. “Critical education,” one practitioner suggested, can “pull apart the neoliberalism indoctrination” and “settler colonial agenda” foundations and shift the narrative of the field. Learning “anticolonial” and “antiracist” frameworks would, according to the practitioners, provide tools and language to speak to and “challenge” their own practice, articulate and “address systemic injustices,” and assist us to “validate the children, youth, families, and communities” we work with about the “unequal” world they live in so they can better express “the realities of structural inequalities” and resist being pathologized by “Eurocentric frameworks.” As a nonwhite practitioner expressed,

I want [the youth I work with] to disrupt whiteness. I want them to disrupt themselves. I want them to disrupt the settler colonialism. I want the racialized kids that I am working with to disrupt the settler dream.

The practitioner went on to detail that we [nonwhite and white settler] practitioners are on “land that was never treated.” They stated firmly that “we weren’t invited” and argued that “we are still benefitting from stolen lands and lives.”

Practitioners also called for CYC programs to have “an Indigenous liaison position” in each school to “recruit, support, and mentor Indigenous students.” One white settler practitioner suggested that “this is something every school could do right now.” Beyond this step, practitioners expressed the need for both self-education and “the centering of Indigenous and nonwhite scholarship” in CYC courses, so that CYC curriculum “reflects the populations” with whom we work. A white settler practitioner expressed the need for “policies, practices, and

training” in how to “identify the impacts of settler colonial and racist violence on people,” especially Indigenous and nonwhite people, and also “how to name antiracist practice” and make space for “unlearning racism” and internalized white supremacy. These suggestions echo the scholarship of Black CYC scholar Trayvon Edwards (2018), who proposes the representation of practitioners “of different races, while ensuring practitioners are trained and have additional knowledge on antiracist practices” (p. 50). Edwards asserts that CYC practitioners can be a “valuable resource for Black youth” (p. 44) within the oppressive institutions of child welfare and education, but first we “need to be educated on current research surrounding” (p. 44) Black youth. Edwards argues that antiracist education could help mitigate “the issue of unqualified practitioners working with vulnerable young people” (p. 50).

Additionally, an Indigenous practitioner communicated that “intimate relationship [should] be cultivated between Indigenous and racialized [practitioners] to build communities of practice” to better support children, youth, and communities facing systemic violence and racism. They further stated that “even Indigenous program specializations are not created and taught for Indigenous students.” With different examples, each of the Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners referred to the relationship between Indigenous, Black, and practitioners of colour. CYC academic Daniel (2019) referenced the need for an “oasis” where Indigenous and nonwhite youth, practitioners, and scholars can repair, recharge, and flourish. In practice, this recommendation manifests as the decentering of whiteness and establishment of spaces for Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners to collaborate, connect, and strategize outside of the “white gaze” (Razack, 1998, p. 15).

Beyond these strategies, practitioners discussed the importance of “honouring dignity,” truth telling and “safety” in the conversations, akin to what Cathy Richardson and Vikki

Reynolds (2014) describe as “structuring safety”—“a core competency” (p. 151) that requires skill and a “complex analysis of power, compassion, and critical supervision” (p. 151)—within classrooms, office spaces, community agencies, and in practice. For instance, a white settler practitioner discussed their “cultural safety training,” which led them and other white settler practitioners to get “together to talk about whiteness and how to shift systems from within around systemic racism.” This training was delivered by cultural safety educator Harley Eagle (2018), who credits Verna St. Denis’s concept of “life giving work” (n.p.)—the work of addressing systemic racism. Rather than framing critical praxis in a light that only entails loss and conflict, CYC schools, agencies, and practitioners can all engage in the productive work of “life giving.”

Conclusion

Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners in this study insisted on the importance of decentering whiteness in practice. This insistence raises questions: How can we create nonwhite spaces within a white-dominated field? How can we acknowledge, honour, and amplify Indigenous and nonwhite epistemologies and ontologies without coopting them as our own (Hunt & Holmes, 2015; White et al., 2017)?

Within the collaborative dialogues with four Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners and seven white practitioners, tangible ways for white settler practitioners to take action towards unsettling were suggested. Practitioners shared ideas around challenging white settler practitioners’ power in practice, like learning language to speak to systemic power and having representations of Indigenous and nonwhite in students in higher education, as practitioners and teaching faculty. Practitioners proposed respecting Indigenous knowledge without appropriating it and engaging with community Elders and knowledge holders as leaders in their families and

communities, especially around concerns with children and youth. Practitioners suggested leveraging power in substantive ways, such as translating insider white knowledge, educating and challenging whiteness and racism with other white settler practitioners, acting as barriers to systemic violence, and critically transmitting knowledge about white systems (courts, child protection, case files) to open doors and connect resources and possibilities to Indigenous and nonwhite people.

Further, as practitioners shared the need for intersectional analysis in CYC, I expanded my conceptualization of whiteness to denote its pervasive and elastic nature. Throughout this study whiteness has been taken up as expansive, to capture not only skin colour and practitioners' self-locations as white, but also the broader, pervasive systems of white privilege housed in religion, body shape, names, citizenship, socioeconomic class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability, among many other dimensions. My conceptualization of whiteness encapsulates privilege beyond individual ancestry, requiring further discussion into mixed race and white passing privileges that problematizes *both* the rigid white/nonwhite dimensions outlined by participants and the at times unmutable politics of race that are produced under white supremacy logic.

The next chapter continues to examine the implications of this research by discussing ethical pathways towards unsettling white settler practitioners in CYC, with further actions suggested by practitioners and current literature.

Chapter 4: Ethical Pathways, Concluding Thoughts, Continued Unsettling

As I processed the collaborative dialogues with advanced, critical, and politicized child and youth care (CYC) practitioners, I considered the call of scholar-activists de Finney, Palacios, Mucina, and Chadwick (2018), who state that “we urgently need other ethical frameworks by which to understand our practice and professional ethics” (p. 34). In this section, I weave suggestions by practitioners and current literature into implications for ethical pathways towards unsettling white settler privilege in practice.

I have explored throughout this study the need to flip the racial narrative in CYC in order to address the ongoing overrepresentation of Indigenous families across colonial systems in which CYC practitioners participate. Figure 3 represents a visual tool I created that depicts ethical pathways towards unsettling white settler practitioners. I propose this visual tool as a synthesis of my key learning and findings from this study. The map links together concepts from this study along with ideas and concepts from scholars and practitioners for addressing the white settler problem in CYC. The ethical pathways can be used in whole or in part to address and engage white settler practitioners in antiracist, anticolonial, intersectional praxis that centers the interrogation of whiteness and white supremacy. In this final chapter, I explore nine ethical pathways and propose implications for broader conversations and new questions for CYC practice.

As highlighted by the tensions in the collaborative dialogues, there are limits to declaring whiteness and examining white settler privilege. Whiteness is situated within white supremacy and is habitual on the part of white people, while the truths of those experiencing the white world in a nonwhite body are marginalized, negated, and erased by the racialization of whiteness (Ahmed, 2007). Declarations of whiteness cannot accomplish what they promise to (Ahmed,

2004). Instead, declaring one's whiteness, even as a part of critical reflection, can reproduce white settler privilege. Exploring white settler privilege in CYC cannot just be a performance, task, or self-location exercise for white people to park their guilt and anxieties in addressing racism (Ahmed, 2004). Unsettling white settler privilege can begin with critiques of whiteness as a form of racial privilege and center the effects of whiteness on racialized bodies, as mapped out by the work of scholars like Lorde (1984) and hooks (1990). Most importantly, such analysis must be woven into concrete action and a commitment to changing persistent structural, systemic, and interpersonal forces and dynamics that sustain this violence.

Ethical Pathways

Ethical pathway 1: White supremacy consciousness. Central in the ethical pathways I propose is a commitment to individual and collective radical reflexivity (D’Arcangelis, 2017) and a reflexivity of discomfort (Hamdan, 2009) for white settler practitioners as an ongoing daily practice. If white settler practitioners “feel a sense of comfort with racial analysis” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 137) and do not experience some of the discomfort that has been “unleashed on racial minorities for centuries” (Leonardo, p. 137), meaningful solidarity “will proceed at the reluctant pace of the white imagination” (p. 137). It has been documented through numerous sources in the literature that white settlers’ “unconscious illusion” (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016, p. 281) becomes more entrenched when “the fragility of the original myth [settler nationalism] is challenged” (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, p. 281).

The findings illustrate elements of internalized “white supremacy consciousness” (Kasl & Yorks, 2002, p. 74)—a way of thinking that takes for granted the legitimacy of a society being dominated by white norms and values. Within white supremacy consciousness, Kasl and Yorks (2002) explain, “white norms and values are normalized, thus making implicit their supremacy over other groups’ norms and values. It is this normalization that maintains the institutionalization of privilege based on race” (p. 74). The white settler practitioners in this study all challenged internalized white supremacy consciousness within themselves.



Figure 4: Overt and covert white supremacy consciousness.

Figure 4 (source: Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence, 2005; D. Turner, 2018) details components of white supremacy consciousness. It is important for white settler practitioners to pay attention to covert white supremacy, which is socially acceptable. White saviour complex, cultural appropriation, Euro-Western-centric curriculum, practices, and policies, expecting Indigenous people and people of colour to teach white people, denial of white privilege, and self-appointed white ally positionings are all embedded in unconscious white supremacy, resulting in the kind of socially acceptable enactments of white supremacy consciousness discussed throughout my findings. White supremacy consciousness is an important concept in navigating the meaning making of the collaborative dialogues on white settler privilege in CYC. The maintenance of white settler superiority and privilege is often unconscious. A key question raised by this study is therefore: How do white settlers bring white superiority out of the cultural shadows (Bhadda, 2004), do the essential work of recognizing our own internalized supremacy, and “feel the shame contained therein” (D. Turner, 2018, p. 11)? While overt forms of supremacy lead to horrific acts of brutality, the Indigenous and nonwhite

practitioners in this study make it clear that the covert forms—which, according to Dwight Turner (2018), are more subtle and more culturally acceptable (p. 4)—have serious impacts on relationships with coworkers, on recruitment and retention of staff, and on practice. Further, white supremacy is evident in the overrepresentation and underserving of Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities reflected in policies and funding structures. It also places the responsibility on Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners to address and fix systemic racism, creating grief, resentment, and burnout from contending with backlash, denial, and silencing.

Ethical pathway 2: Strategic use of white settler discomfort. White settler practitioners are in a unique position to influence CYC practice, policy, and research in ways that could have direct, tangible impacts on all children, youth, families, and communities (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). As critical praxis evolves in CYC, it is imperative that white settler practitioners are self-aware and locate ourselves as politicized, accountable, ethical white settler practitioners. It is crucial that we realize the ways in which “troubling ‘good intention narratives’ have allowed white settlers to ignore harmful outcomes of well-intentioned actions” (Hunt & Holmes, 2015, p. 167). White settler practitioners who situate ourselves as antiracist and anticolonial and identify with disempowered and marginalized people *without* acknowledging our differences (i.e., being colour blind; not addressing our own white settler privilege and the benefits white people have been afforded through Indigenous genocide) and the structurally embedded white saviour complex reinforce foundational frameworks in which harmful well-intentioned actions occur (Fee & Russell, 2007, p. 188). One key to countering white settler fragility, upsetting the binary of the good/bad white settler practitioner, and dismantling the white saviour complex is to “encourage vulnerability through critical hope” (Applebaum, 2017,

p. 873). That is, white settler practitioners can refrain from comforting white discomfort and instead embrace a “willingness to become undone in relation to others” (Butler, 2004, p. 136) and awaken from the colonial trance (Absolon, 2011). Critical hope (Boler, 2004) keeps systemic oppression central and requires responsibility for white emotional violence, including white tears.

Ethical pathway 3: Imperfect allyship. The complexities, limitations, challenges, and contributions of allyship featured prominently through this study. Recalling scholar-activist Vikki Reynolds (2013), imperfect allyship requires actions by potential allies across divisive differences of privilege to address abuses of power (p. 58). The imperfect process exists on the developmental continuum of “becoming” (Reynolds, 2010b, p. 15); becoming an ally is a continual state of “unfolding awareness” (p. 15) that must acknowledge the limits of the role. Reynolds (2010) further invites a solidarity in practice that is fluid and in motion. She also troubles the rigid ally/oppressor binary, stating that we come from “intersecting domains of privilege and oppression” (p. 13), which has led her to work from a “groundless solidarity” (p. 13) where ethics are not anchored to one location of oppression. Paul Kivel (2002) also identifies listening to racialized people as a first step towards being an ally and adds that enacting critical listening and thinking is essential to deconstructing racism (p. 95). He discusses being an ally as “an ongoing strategic process in which we look at our personal and social resources, evaluate the environment we have helped create, and decide what needs to be done” (p. 94). Kivel also addresses institutional racism (p. 172) and offers tools, exercises, and concrete actions for white people to fight racism. Some basic tactics he shares include noticing who is the center of attention and who is the center of power; noticing how racism is denied, minimized, and

justified; and supporting the leadership of people of colour (pp. 97–98). These tools can all be integrated into ethical pathways to unsettle white settler practitioners.

In the ethical pathways visual (Figure 3), I link to the online *Indigenous Ally Toolkit* (Swiftwolfe, 2019) distributed by the Montreal Indigenous Community Network; the toolkit names the importance of “the role an individual occupies and plays within the collective experience” (p. 1), identifying that an ally has collective responsibility and accountability. It examines three steps to enacting allyship: (1) be critical of your motivations—“Am I doing this to feed my ego?” (p. 3); (2) start learning—educate yourself on the history of the Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island (p. 4); and (3) act accordingly—for example, “properly renumeration and crediting Indigenous people for their knowledge and time” (p. 7). The pathways map also proposes interactive learning activities as important tools in unlearning dominant whiteness. For example, one of the white settler practitioners who participated in this study shared the impact of the Kairos blanket exercise (Kairos Canada, 2019) as an embodied experience to expand their understanding of the impacts of colonization and move towards solidarity in practice. The blanket exercise was presented as one valuable opportunity for enacted truth-telling among colleagues.

While allyship was brought up as a valuable strategy, the positionality of allyship was also contested and troubled throughout the study by white, Indigenous, and nonwhite practitioners. There was a clear acknowledgement across the practitioners that the term ally had in many situations been diluted of its power and coopted by white settlers as moves to innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012). This highlights our need as white settlers to continually problematize our claims to allyship and respond to calls of Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners for accomplices in addition to and/or instead of allies. Further, the politics of allyship requires more intersectional

analysis and discussion; for instance, what does allyship look like for practitioners of mixed-race backgrounds who straddle whiteness in all sorts of complicated and complex ways? This is not a topic that was explicitly explored in our conversations, but it remains important to complexifying allyship. Incorporating St. Denis's (as cited in Eagle, 2018) concept of life-giving work in CYC—addressing systemic racism through ethical and grounded accountability—could enhance how white settler practitioners move towards increased imperfect solidarity. The possibility of acting as accomplices requires white settler practitioners to diversify our skills in antiracist and anticolonial praxis.

In terms of what accomplicizing might look like in CYC practice, Richardson and Reynolds (2014) discuss creating “safe enough” space, honouring autonomy, sharing power and responsibility, centering the client and decentering the practitioner, resisting the seduction of the pain narrative, embracing humility, and receiving critical supervision as tangible ways of enacting imperfect allyship/solidarity.

Ethical pathway 4: Structuring safety. Establishing safe enough spaces—and acknowledging that such spaces are never fully outside of settler contexts—further requires white settler practitioners to prepare and foster safety by examining and addressing questions like these: How does this space (office, counselling room) foster safety? How does my performance of myself (my clothing, posture, tone of voice, attitude) foster safety? How do I locate my privilege and acknowledge my cultural location in an attempt to foster safety? (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014, p. 152). Actions towards creating safe enough spaces contribute to structuring safety. This process of structuring safety necessitates contesting “objectivity and neutrality” while taking “overt positions of justice-doing” (p. 151). Richardson and Reynolds

believe these stances, if followed by white settler CYC practitioners, would situate us “with the ethical principle of autonomy and not replicate oppression by siding with paternalism” (p. 151).

Richardson and Reynolds (2014) write that “words such as ‘torture,’ ‘genocide,’ ‘racism,’ and ‘white supremacy’ are omitted from the discourse used to describe the deliberate violence against Indigenous peoples in Canada” (p. 150). But “the hard truth,” as detailed by the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019a), “is that we live in a country whose laws and institutions perpetuate violations of fundamental rights, amounting to genocide against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLBGTQQIA people” (para. 3). This hard truth should not be new knowledge to settler Canadians. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015b) named residential schools as a “central element” in cultural genocide, a process they describe as “the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group” (p. 1). Twenty years prior, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Government of Canada, 1996) outlined similar findings.

Given that the continued violence of systemic racism, whiteness, and white supremacy results in injustices that are lived every day by Indigenous and nonwhite peoples in settler colonial Canada (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017; Razack, 1998), we need mechanisms for truth telling in CYC. Following the call of Skott-Myhre (2017), CYC needs to become more comfortable in using terms such as genocide, colonialism, and white supremacy instead of more benign terms such as diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation. I argue, as McMahon (2018) implores, that

we need to start naming white supremacy for what it is—the roots of this country. Start naming colonialism for what it is, the system this country was built on. Start naming racism for what it is, the backbone of the spirit that kills Indigenous Peoples. (para. 8)

The ethical pathways visual (Figure 3) names genocide and white supremacy with the intention to disrupt whiteness and respond with “truth listening” (Barkaskas & Hunt, 2017, n.p.). It is important for practitioners to deliberately use the language of genocide and white supremacy used by these national inquiries when developing policies and programs. Using this language in our agencies and practice can reframe the barriers families face in accessing and engaging in services and keep central the violent impacts of systemic racism and state policy interventions. The pathways also call on white settler practitioners to commit to concrete, everyday actions of solidarity as outlined in the calls for justice of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019b).

Ethical pathway 5: Unontologizing. Practitioners articulated that “people have been brainwashed by white supremacy and patriarchy.” Unontologizing is the process of unlearning what has been framed as normal, stemming from neoliberal ideologies that claimed nonwhite as nonhuman and colonial property, but is actually “whiteness over all else and the struggle to overcome the racism inscribed in [our] bones” (Skott-Myhre, 2019, p. 13). The practitioner suggested that white settler CYC practitioners must learn how to “not turn away from pain, from struggle, and other people’s struggle” because we are implicated in and benefit from others’ pain. “Nothing is going to change,” they insisted, if we do not learn how to “unsettle practice” and to sit and “be still” with our discomfort. As white settler practitioners unontologize, the following words of an Indigenous practitioner, highlighting white fragility and microaggression, need centering:

[White settler practitioners] can’t see themselves in a way they see as negative. This is engrained. That is an active process to work against. Unlearning is the most difficult thing. You are unlearning, you are unontologizing. You are taking away that ontology of

who you are as a being. That's difficult; it's difficult work. But you aren't going to make it by making up excuses. And you aren't going to do it by finding ways to say "I can't hear this feedback." It's not intentional. It's unintentional knowing and ways of being. Intent does not equal impact. And in the process of unsettling white settler privilege, white settlers are required to do their emotional work in a process towards antiracist and anticolonial praxis.

Alongside white supremacy consciousness (Kasl & Yorks, 2002), I included in the ethical pathways visual (Figure 3) suggestions of unpacking one's unconscious white supremacy through examining one's unconscious biases and blindspots (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013) and interrogating one's "moral courage" (Kidder, 2003, as cited in Blackstock, 2011, p. 60). These are fluid, emergent processes with no exact recipe; instead they require continual learning and enactment. Cindy Blackstock (2011) emphasizes the need for more "moral courage" in social service work, which Kidder (2003) defines as "the ability to stand up for the 'right thing,' or do the 'right thing' when some negative repercussion for the right-doer is anticipated" (as cited in Blackstock, 2011, p. 36). Blackstock highlights the need for child welfare organizations "to reflect on courage as an activation tool for social work codes of ethics" (p. 44) that require "life-long dialogue, learning and practice" (p. 44). Examining blind spots and unconscious bias and enacting moral courage may aid in the process of addressing covert white supremacy consciousness and thus in desettling white settler ontologies.

I also included in the ethical pathways visual (Figure 3) the book *Me and White Supremacy: A 28-Day Challenge to Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor* (Saad, forthcoming), which takes white settlers from simply intellectualizing about white supremacy and into action. With this practical tool, white settler practitioners can begin to

address the white saviour complex and white settler fragility—which manifests in white tears, shame, anger, minimization, and guilt. White settler practitioners need to access the heart under the mind—not simply responding to emotions but rather uncovering the connections between heart and mind in our white fragility—while we expose our own racial amnesia (Razack, 2002), asking ourselves, as DiAngelo (2017) suggests, what “has allowed [us] to not know what to do about racism” (p. 15).

Ethical pathway 6: Racism is a white problem. The ethical pathways visual (Figure 3) names racism as a white problem (Derrickson & Manuel, 2017; Harvey, 2007) that requires antiracism work on the part of white settler practitioners. White scholar Jennifer Harvey (2007) enlists an ethical inquiry rooted in the acknowledgement of both beauty and brokenness in the actualities of justice and injustice. She states that “if the claimed task is to increase the possibility of justice in the world, it is critical to understand how the world works” (p. 13). To do so, we must expose the intact and structurally central systems that continue to create racialized human suffering and oppression (p. 13). Harvey centers social analysis in justice making, and, without avoiding or negating the real impacts and violence of racism, takes an approach to ethics that amplifies “the possibility for all to live into beauty and joy” (p. 13). Within an antiracist and anticolonial framework, systems of care must move beyond “EuroWestern psycho-social notions of relational practice to foreground the political, economic, and sociocultural inequities that produce ongoing colonial violence” (de Finney, Moreno, Chadwick, Adams, Sam, 2018, as cited in de Finney et al., 2018, p. 34). Interventions need instead to be integrated and “focus on unsettling settler systems” (de Finney et al., 2018, p. 34) and seeing practice beyond “individualized care” (p. 34) and rather as “interventions into systems that colonize and harm” (p. 34) Indigenous and nonwhite communities. Ideally, Indigenous and nonwhite children, youth,

families, and communities will work with practitioners “who share their cultures and histories” (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014, p. 151). Until then, Richardson and Reynolds (2014) write, white settler practitioners “must understand the history and impacts of colonization and genocide as their responsibility in order to be qualified to work alongside Indigenous residential school survivors” (p. 152); this can be extended to also working alongside nonwhite children, youth, families, and communities.

Ethical pathway 7: Critical memory. Part of the responsibility of understanding the history and impacts of colonization is captured by sociologist and theorist Alexis Shotwell (2016), who employs Charles W. Mills’ (1997) epistemologies of ignorance, explaining that these epistemologies function as a method of forgetting, which is a primary move to sustain settler colonialism. In “Reckoning with a Fraught Past,” Shotwell dissects ideas of critical memory practice as a way white settlers can work within an anticolonial and decolonizing praxis. Her theory of critical memory is linked to Indigenous historian and revolutionary Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz’s (2008) concept of “unforgetting” as an act of resisting colonization (p. 37). Shotwell explores whiteness as a problem of being, and challenges white settlers to do decolonial work. But she contests settler decolonial work as a “kind of purity practice” (p. 45) that actually can displace settlers’ responsibility. Shotwell identifies as an avoidance tactic the “new-age spiritual appropriation based on the belief that Indigenous people are closer to the earth, more real, or truly healing” (p. 45) combined with occasionally adjunct anticolonial critique but no engagement in political change on the part of white settlers. Too often white settler allyship involves romanticizing and appropriating Indigenous spiritual practices and worldviews as another move to innocence.

Ethical pathway 8: Queering the field. In addition to the pathway of critical memory, queering is another potential pathway to be explored by CYC practitioners. As a suggestion to the questions “How else can we reimagine practice?” and “What else is possible?”, two white settler practitioners in this study called for queering the field of CYC. Queer theory is not a singular framework, nor is it focused specifically on sexuality; rather, it is an epistemological approach that rejects normative, exclusive, hierarchical framings of bodies, life, and justice. Queer theory represents “many different voices and sometimes overlapping, sometimes divergent perspectives” (Hall, 2003, p. 5) that emphasize “the disruptive, the fractured, the tactical and contingent” (p. 5). Queer theory questions normative, definitive frameworks to unsettle the logics of neoliberal cis-heteropatriarchy that harm so many children, youth, families, and communities through imposing problematic expectations for what children, youth, and families should look like, do, and be (Vachon, 2019). To address white supremacy, queer theory must also be informed by an anticolonial lens that upholds Indigenous sovereignty.

Indigenous scholar Scott Morgensen (2011) denaturalized white queer theory by exploring the intersection of Native queer and two-spirit projects (D’Arcangelis, 2013, p. 103). It is imperative that the voices of Indigenous queer and two-spirit folk are centered in the inquiry of queer theory in CYC. For instance, Leanne Simpson (2017) articulates the need to involve queerness and gender fluidity in radical resurgence and nation building. These framings are explored in the Indigenous queer and two-spirit proposals for decolonizing cis- and heteronormative ontologies (Hunt & Holmes, 2015; Vowel, 2016) in the subsequent section on decolonization.

The ethical pathways visual (Figure 3), as mentioned, may be engaged in whole or in part to enact a queer ethic that Reynolds (2010) suggests “frees us from taking on being an ally as a

static identity” (p. 13) but rather “invites fluid movement from the fixed and certain to the confused and unstable” (p. 13). Reynolds cites incarcerated Indigenous rights activist Leonard Peltier’s wisdom: “We are not supposed to be perfect. We’re supposed to be useful” (p. 16). Queering ethics for white settler practitioners can move CYC towards unsettling with an awareness of both the white settler problem and our collective and individual responsibilities to take action—within ourselves and our practice.

Ethical pathway 9: Addressing anti-Indigenous racism. Race, like colonization, continues to be a shifting, adaptable, and strategic mechanism, not a fixed category; it is another social construct with a definition that changes subject to the needs of the dominant white class (DiAngelo, 2018; Rodriguez & Villaverde, 2000). Racialized formations, an essential tool of colonialism, involve the “inescapable power that fills the jails and graves with Indigenous people” (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017, p. 76). Two examples highlight Canada’s racially unjust court system, its disregard for young Indigenous life, and Canadians’ acceptance of violence to racialized bodies, marked with stereotypes such as the “noble savage” and “squaw” (Vowel, 2016, p. 44). On February 9, 2018, an all-white jury acquitted a white farmer of the heinous crime of murdering Colten Boushie, a young Cree man who had driven onto the farmer’s land (McMahon, 2018). Only weeks later, another all-white jury cleared a 56-year-old white man for the brutal slaying of 15-year-old Sagkeeng teenager Tina Fontaine (MacLean, 2018). In a 2015 *MacLean’s* magazine article titled “Canada’s Race Problem? It’s Even Worse Than America’s,” the Canadian Indigenous population’s experience with systemic racism was compared to that of Black Americans, using data on Indigenous peoples from Statistics Canada and on Black Americans from the U.S. Census Bureau. In every metric from infant mortality, to high school

graduation, to incarceration rates, the data confirmed the sombre reality that Canada has a far worse race problem than the United States (Gilmore, 2015, para. 8).

In the week I sat to write the final chapter of this thesis, the National Inquiry Into Murdered and Missing Women and Girls presented its final report (*Reclaiming Power and Place*, 2019c). The report issued calls for justice grounded “in international and domestic human and Indigenous rights laws including the Charter, the Constitution, and the Honour of the Crown” (Volume 1c, p. 168). The calls for justice present imperative changes within all levels of government, industries, institutions, services, and partnerships—including social workers and those implicated in child welfare—“to end the genocide and to transform systemic and societal values that have worked to maintain colonial violence” (p. 168). These legally binding calls to justice seek to change “the structures and the systems that sustain violence in daily encounters” (p. 176). Doing so, the report insists, “is not only necessary to combat violence but is an essential legal obligation of all governments in Canada” (p. 176). Instead of outrage about the violence and ongoing genocide the inquiry reveals, the mainstream public and media response to the report consisted of problematic and systemic manifestations of individual and collective white fragility and anti-Indigenous racism. For example, former Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt blasted the report, claiming its finding of genocide was “propagandist” (Barrera, 2019, para. 1). Mainstream media responded with an uproar, objecting to and rejecting the use of the word genocide. For instance, *The Globe and Mail* published both an opinion piece stating the report was “marred only by its inaccurate genocide charge” (Paris, 2019) and an editorial (Editorial: “Is Canada Committing Genocide? That Doesn’t Add Up,” 2019) discrediting the inquiry’s genocide finding, stating that “the commission’s accusation of a continuing genocide does not ring true” (para. 4). These few examples show the pernicious yet deeply adaptive nature

of Canadians' investment in white supremacy and how difficult it is to unsettle: It responds to new information and clear evidence by simply reasserting silence and denial.

These reactions to the inquiry's findings point to the entrenched racial bias that positions white settler Canadians as entitled to take Indigenous lives with impunity. These logics are embedded in every aspect of our social services—health, education, the justice system, and certainly, child and family services. Racism is transparently evident in the numbers of Indigenous children and youth in state care. As of October 31, 2018, in British Columbia alone, 64% of youth under age 15 in state care were Indigenous, despite the fact that Indigenous youth are only 10% of the province's total population of youth under 15 (Morgan, 2019, para. 4). CYC is complicit in these “racist child apprehension practices” (White et al., 2017, p. 50). Further, there are direct documented links between Indigenous children and youth who interface with child protection services and the criminal justice system with the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA crisis (Palmater, 2018). These links take shape as Indigenous youth being removed from their communities, creating isolation from family and cultural connections, then experiencing being problematized and pathologized in programs that neglect to acknowledge systemic racism and colonialism, leaving Indigenous youth—particularly alarming numbers of girls and 2SLGBTQQIA youth—vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and erasure (National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019c).

CYC practitioners are not exempted from the power structures of white supremacy and racism. In fact, Skott-Myhre (2017) says, “we cannot help but be deeply embedded in it” (p. 17). Too often in child and youth care, white settler practitioners practice from perspectives that pathologize Indigenous lives, rather than ones that question, probe, and challenge the perpetuation of whiteness and white settler privilege (Lund & Carr, 2010, p. 229). Due to

insidious colonial policies and “the intergenerational effects of racialized poverty” (de Finney & di Tomasso, 2015, p. 69), Indigenous and nonwhite families experience higher rates of investigation and are “systematically detained, incarcerated, criminalized and institutionalized” (de Finney et al., 2018, p. 28) for having survived colonial violence, rather than being supported to find justice. Under the Canadian settler state, “transcarceral systems” (p. 28)—which de Finney et al. define as “state-run, government-funded colonial systems, including the criminal, legal, education, immigration, health care, and child welfare systems” (p. 29)—continue to maintain and enforce state policies, including “forced assimilation, state surveillance, and the incarceration of marked, nonwhite bodies” (p. 29)—the manifestation of genocide.

CYC is not neutral or innocent within these transcarceral systems. In fact, dominant theories, values, and structures that shape CYC practice are guided by “notions of progress, economic development, and care founded on dominant whiteness, masculinity, and colonialism” (White et al., 2017, p. 56). According to Jennifer White, Scott Kouri, and Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw (2017), structural forces, including white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and colonial relations of power, “not only impact the lives of children, youth, and families, but they shape our own practices” (p. 54). In speaking about the power that white practitioners wield in their professional lives, Skott-Myhre (2017) writes that “if you are white, you inherit a world in which your well-being is premised on racism and white supremacy” (p. 13): Nothing we, as white practitioners, achieve materially within the current economic system has been created without slavery and colonialism. It is therefore imperative as we move forward in challenging the predominance of whiteness and settler colonialism in CYC that there be an increased representation and retention of Indigenous and nonwhite practitioners, educators, professors, and professionals (Edwards, 2018, p. 51).

The violence of racism, white supremacy, and colonialism impacts the bodies of Indigenous people and people of colour daily, and they are continually required to do the emotional labour to survive these systems (Skott-Myhre, 2017; White et al., 2017). In the words of Manuel and Derrickson (2017), racism is a “devastating weapon and a debilitating mental illness” that white people must examine if we hope to ever see the world as it truly is (p. 77). As CYC practitioners, we must look to engage critical tools that can motivate the “moral agency and justice praxis of white people” (p. 7) to address racial injustice and white supremacy. The disruption of white supremacy, while supporting sovereignty and reparation to Indigenous peoples and descendants of slaves and trafficked and indentured laborers, is an essential step toward subverting racial discrimination (p. vii).

Ethical pathway 10: Anticolonial theory and stances. The National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls clearly states in its final report that “the implementation of the Calls to Justice must include the perspectives and participation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people” (2019b, p. 171). Likewise, so must Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people imagine and lead decolonization efforts in ways that meet their needs and enhance their self-determination. As CYC looks to enact decolonizing praxis, White et al. (2017) ask: “How might we explore avenues” in “consulting with Indigenous and racialized scholars and at the same time not burden them with the work that we are responsible for as settlers?” (p. 55). Practitioners in this study echoed the assertions of Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012) that Indigenous activists and scholars must lead the way in decolonization, and that decolonization requires the repatriation of Indigenous self-determination and of sovereign Indigenous lands. Decolonization cannot merely be added to issues of social

justice and social change without addressing the return of land and the resumption of sovereign life for Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Yang, p. 1).

According to Tuck and Yang (2012), decolonization is an unsettling approach to human and civil-rights-based justice that requires things of white settlers (p. 36). Specifically, decolonization demands the dismantling of current systems of dominance, the elimination of racialized labour (slavery), and the flattening of imperialism (p. 31). Throughout their article “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” Tuck and Yang expose the invisibility of settler colonialism and the need to challenge settler perspectives about the truths that maintain current social structures. They also argue that the ongoing violence of settler colonialism cannot be ignored in moves by settlers to decolonize. Tuck and Yang’s clarity around the magnitude and requirements of decolonization necessitates that white settlers extend beyond trite commitments and political moves.

Maori academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) explores decolonization extensively in her pivotal book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, first published in 1999. Smith states that decolonization necessitates a continuous revisiting of our own comprehension of imperialism and colonialism (p. 25). She names two intersecting aspects to decolonization: the “notions of authenticity” (p. 25)—Indigenous peoples having absolute authority over their own lives; and a requirement for an analysis of how colonization occurred and what it has meant in the daily reality—the immediate past, the present, and the future—of colonized peoples (p. 25). Smith argues that solutions toward decolonization are captured in both aspects.

Building on Smith’s work, other Indigenous scholars (e.g., Dakin, 2012; Hunt, 2015; Simpson, 2017) center Indigenous governance, nation building, and resurgence as pinnacles of decolonization. Decolonization, according to Sarah Hunt (2015), must involve “actively

challenging or disrupting systems of knowledge that do not fully account for the lives of Indigenous people, queer and trans people, and many others whose lives are erased through epistemic and material violence” (p. 113). Chelsea Vowel (2016) emphasizes that decolonization includes rebuilding Indigenous nationhood, which for Vowel includes “gender equality and respect for gender fluidity” (p. 110). According to Vowel, an emphasis on 2SLGBTQQIA folk is essential to decolonization (p. 111). Writing together, Kwakwaka’wakw scholar-activist Sarah Hunt and white settler scholar-activist Cindy Holmes (Hunt & Holmes, 2015) echo Vowel’s statement and speak to the necessity of a “relational decolonial process that links to queer, 2spirit and trans solidarity with resistance to heteronormativity and cisnormativity” (p. 158).

Sandrina de Finney and Lara di Tomasso (2015) write that “decolonizing child and family services involves mourning as much it does recovery, action, and dreaming” (p. 82). Similar to what the practitioners asserted in this study, these authors emphasize that Indigenous communities have “practices and abundant untapped resources” (p. 82) to lead decolonization of the CYC field. White, Kouri, and Pacini-Ketchabaw suggest that white settler practitioners and scholars can advance “a praxis that works towards decolonization by both deconstructing theories and values steeped in Eurocentrism and prioritizing a curriculum that values Indigenous knowledges, identities and practices” (White et al., 2017, p. 59). As noted in the literature review, however, Scott Kouri (2018) troubles the decolonizing of CYC led by white settlers. He advocates for a theoretical understanding of anticolonialism in CYC in order not to see our work as “ethical while simultaneously preparing young people for settler colonial subjectivity which reinforces settler relations to land, life and one another” (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016 cited in Kouri, 2018, p. 21). Kouri encourages the scholarship and understanding of anticolonial theory within CYC.

According to Indigenous scholars Michael Hart and Gladys Rowe (2014), engaging the concept and theory of anticolonialism does not in any way erase the actuality of existing settler colonial structures and practices. Anticolonialism is the ethical and theoretical stance of disrupting settler colonialism, while decolonization is the process action which must include the rematriation of resources and land (de Finney, personal communication, July, 2019). White settler scholar Elizabeth Carlson (2016) articulates that white settlers face important limitations in how, when, and why we should engage in decolonial advocacy when entering into partnerships and alliances with Indigenous and people of colour communities and movements. She encourages white settlers to “engender humility” and states that white settlers’ roles should be located “at the periphery” (p. 5) of Indigenous and people of colour movements, while “pushing-back against colonial institutions” (p. 5) and stepping into the center of working with white settlers, advocating and working for systemic change in white institutions and systems. Carlson argues that even though anticolonial practice should have clear boundaries and limitations for white settlers, it is nonetheless a moral and ethical imperative. This study has focused specifically on the complexities of enacting this imperative in the context of the difficult daily demands of frontline CYC practice.

Moving Forward

Unsettling white settler practitioners, naming the white settler problem, and dismantling the systemic genocide of Indigenous children and youth are paramount in addressing the calls for justice of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019b). As white settler CYC practitioners continue to interrogate our white settler privilege, we expose how the knowledges and skills that are valued in CYC education “have become ways in which

neoliberalism and settler colonialism have infiltrated our everyday lives, reproducing the very problems that we are here attempting to [rectify]" (White et al., 2017, p. 52).

There are demands in CYC to move beyond the framework of colonialism and engage with different concepts, dogmas, and practice to forge links between structural inequities and the realities of children, youth, families, and communities (Skott-Myhre, 2005, p. 92), prioritizing Indigenous knowledges and practices (White et al., 2017). To do this, it is essential we unsettle the authority of white Euro-Western psychological norms that dominate CYC. CYC praxis that centers the subjugation of the other without a continued analysis of how whiteness is constructed or how colonialism forms our sense of selves as white settlers perpetuates the very systems and assumptions we are attempting to alter with critical, politicized, and socially just CYC praxis (Hunt & Holmes, 2015; White et al., 2017).

Truth telling and calls for justice require us to take unequivocal, non-negotiable stances against colonial violence. I engaged in this research to expose real, material tensions, trouble dominant discourses, provide explicit opportunities for white settler practitioners to grapple with our own unsettling, and potentially outline some possibilities for reimagining decolonial/anticolonial and antiracist praxis. The applied questions that guided my exploration included the following: How can this research benefit practitioners? For whom is the research useful? Who is the research for? How can its findings affect and possibly benefit Indigenous, nonwhite, and marginalized communities by informing frontline practitioners about more just practice? It is my hope that this research can motivate future conversations, discourse, and action for change around white supremacy and white settler privilege in CYC. An optimistic outcome is to use this study to develop resources, workshops, and educational outputs to support and influence how white settler ethics are taught, troubled, and grappled with in CYC. How do we

continue to examine the white settler problem and keep exploring how to unsettle the white settler within CYC praxis? In addition, my intention is that this research contribute to the collective sustainability of critical, politicized practitioners (Reynolds, 2012). Unsettling work is far from over. In fact, despite generations of antiracism and anticolonialism work, the stronghold of white supremacy consciousness remains deeply intact in our child, youth, family, and community serving systems.

As I transition into this conclusion, I look to how I continue to unsettle. The themes of this study—working in colonial violence and racism; power and privilege; white settler fragility; and troubling allyship—have explored and outlined complex individual and collective ethical responsibilities of white settler CYC practitioners. I presented these responsibilities in a visual tool (Figure 3) that illustrates ethical pathways towards unsettling white settler practitioners. The key themes and ethical pathways all make contextual, situated calls for change, and I am realistic about the limited impact one MA thesis can have in challenging the complex, persistent systems of settler colonialism, white supremacy, or CYC. On its own it cannot alter others' practices or impact how white settlers interface in settler-colonizer helping relationships. It has, however, illuminated discomforts, ruptures, learning, and strategies for transformation. I hope that it has honoured the significant wealth of praxis knowledge shared by practitioners who pick up this work day after day in challenging frontline realities. There are many tensions in this work. Its claims are intimately connected to Indigenous peoples' fight for land and dignity, which are inseparable from the struggles of antiracism and anticolonialism (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017).

Conclusion

In the supercomplexities of our times (White, 2015), exploring and “experimenting with who we might become” (White et al., 2017, p. 59) as white settler CYC practitioners requires

that we dismantle white settler privilege, whiteness, and white supremacy that are perpetuated at the expense of Indigenous and nonwhite lives. The legacy of white settler privilege and fragility continues, and as an initial step in moving forward, I call on white settler CYC practitioners to examine our own locations, situate ourselves in discourses of discomfort, and challenge our own ignorance and claims to innocence. Ongoing conversations and actions are required to move towards an unsettling of white settler CYC practitioners and systems. Hunt and Holmes (2015) suggest that we “raise questions and tensions, in order to center the dynamic, messy quality of relationships among individuals who are engaged in processes of unsettling dominant power dynamics and colonial ideologies” (p. 161). We must tirelessly address these power dynamics if we are to be agents for socio-political transformation.

It is critical to note that my research design and subsequent data reinforce a racial binary between Indigenous/nonwhite and white settler practitioners. Subtleties of mixed race and white passing privilege are briefly referenced in this study. In my attempt to disrupt white settler privilege and the white settler problem in CYC I have centered whiteness and reinforced a false racial binary. Hence, this study does not address the tensions within and between racial identities. Going forward, I invite conversations and further research and troubling around these complexities.

I hope this research can invite white settlers in CYC to be brave in the process of unsettling ourselves. I hope it can contribute to the ongoing work of unsettling, and engage critical, politicized ideas to generate micro-level everyday transformations and macro-level policy and institutional shifts to support further unsettling in the field. Engaging an ethic of love (hook, 2000; Richardson & Reynolds, 2014; Skott-Myhre & Skott-Myhre, 2015) alongside courage may allow us to “become more than what the dominant system tells us we are” (Skott-

Myhre & Skott-Myhre, 2015, p. 591). The ethics of love and courage are necessary more than ever today as we are called upon to address ongoing forms of violence that threaten the future welfare of Indigenous people and people of colour as so many are “being shot, incarcerated, having children stolen and put into ‘concentration camps’ on the U.S. Mexican border, sustaining ongoing occupation of their land, the disappearance and murder of their women, experiencing of climate change related to starvation and forced migration” (Skott-Myhre, 2019, p. 14) and more. Enacting these ethics demands “an absolute paradigm shift” to “dismantle colonialism within Canadian society, and from all levels of government and public institutions” (National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019b, p. 172). In support of this process, which will require rejecting past and present “ideologies and instruments of colonialism, discrimination, and misogyny” (p. 172), this research has aimed to integrate fluid, responsive, and embodied ethics rooted in solidarity and an anticolonial, antiracist, intersectional praxis.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Indigenous and Racialized, Experienced Practitioners with Children, Youth, Families and Communities

Kaz MacKenzie
 School of Child and Youth Care,
 University of Victoria
 Box 2400 STN CSC,
 Victoria, BC, V8W 3H7
 kmackenzie@uvic.ca

Dear Participant,

Hello. My name is Kaz MacKenzie, I am a white settler, cis-gendered woman; I use the pronouns she and her. As an uninvited settler to Lkwungen, Esquimalt and W̱SÁN, NEĆ territories, I strive to work in community and conduct research with respect, collaboration and humility. My ancestors arrived as occupiers on Turtle Island from Ireland, Scotland, and England. I am grateful for the opportunity and privilege to engage in these conversations, on these lands.

You are invited to participate in study titled *Integrating Fluid, Responsive and Embodied Ethics: Un-settling the Praxis of White Settler CYC Practitioners*, which I am conducting as a Masters student in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. The purpose of this study is to discuss white settler privilege in the child and youth care.

This research explores the *un-settling* white settler privilege in work with children, youth, families and communities. It seeks to provide opportunity for the *un-settling* of white practitioners and contribute to the ongoing work of un-settling practice, along with gathering critical, politicized ideas about macro-level policies shift to support further un-settling in the field. My invitation to you as an experienced Indigenous or racialized practitioner is to provide an opportunity to disrupt my discussions with white practitioners and challenge the possibility of focusing on whiteness.

If you participate in this research, we will engage in an interview and your experience, perspectives and values will be respected. The interview will be an hour and a half, held in a location of your choice. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any point without any consequences or explanations. In this case, your contribution can be discarded.

Your participation and identity will remain confidential during the conversations and dissemination stages of this research. The findings of this study will be shared in my Masters' thesis, as well as through public and academic workshops, presentations and publications

If you are interested in participating, or if you have any questions about the study you may contact me via the information provided at the top of this letter. My supervisor, Dr. Sandrina de

Finney, is also available to answer any questions you may have. She can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kaz MacKenzie

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate for White Practitioners



<http://www.charisbooksandmore.com/understanding-and-dismantling-racism-booklist-white-readers>

Dear Participant,

Hello. My name is Kaz MacKenzie, I am a white settler, cis-gendered woman; I use the pronouns she and her. As an uninvited settler to Lkwungen, Esquimalt and W̱SÁN, NEĆ territories, I strive to work in community and conduct research with respect, collaboration and humility. My ancestors arrived as occupiers on Turtle Island from Ireland, Scotland, England and Sweden. I am grateful for the opportunity and privilege to engage in these conversations, on these lands.

You are invited to participate in a study titled: *Integrating Fluid, Responsive and Embodied Ethics: Un-settling the Praxis of White Settler CYC Practitioners*, which I am conducting as a Masters student in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. The purpose of this study is to discuss white settler privilege in the child and youth care.

This research explores the *un-settling* of white settler privilege in work with children, youth, families and communities. I am interested in discussing white settler privilege, power, imperfect allyship, solidarity, resistance, decolonial praxis and ethical challenges for practitioners working with historically excluded people and communities. My invitation to you as an experienced Indigenous or racialized practitioner is to provide an opportunity to disrupt my discussions with white practitioners and challenge focusing on whiteness.

If you participate in this research, we will engage in an interview and your experience, perspectives and values will be respected. The interview will be an hour and a half, held in a location of your choice. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any point without any consequences or explanations. In this case, your contribution can be discarded.

Your participation and identity will remain confidential during the conversations and dissemination stages of this research. The findings of this study will be shared in my Masters' thesis, as well as through public and academic workshops, presentations and publications

If you are interested in participating, or if you have any questions about the study you may contact me via the information provided below. My supervisor is Dr. Sandrina de Finney, she can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kaz MacKenzie
School of Child and Youth Care,
University of Victoria
Box 2400 STN CSC,
Victoria, BC, V8W 3H7
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Appendix C: Semistructured In-depth Collaborative Dialogues

with advanced practitioners who identify their practice as critical or politicized

Central Research Questions

- How do practitioners understand, name, reproduce, contest, and struggle with white settler privilege?
- How do we unsettle our frontline practice as white practitioners?
- How do critical settler practitioners enact a decolonial praxis?

Part I: Settler Colonialism*

- What is your understanding of settler colonialism?
- How do you see settler colonialism in practice, examples?
- How do you feel about participating in these systems?
- How do you feel about responding to and/or contesting these systems—examples?

Part II: White settler privilege in practice*

- How do you understand white settler privilege?
- How do you understand it in practice?
- What are ways you see it in practice? Can you give examples?
- How do you
 - reproduce white settler privilege?
 - contest white settler privilege?
 - struggle with white settler privilege?

Part III: Self-Location of practices*

- Can you tell me about your practice?
- What do you think about your practice?
- What ways can you challenge your white settler privilege?
- What ways can you resist white settler privilege?
- What ways do you ignore your white settler privilege?
- How do you negotiate power in your praxis?

- Are you an advocate or activist in your life?
- What does that look like?
- Where do you get your learning about??
- How are you an ally? Do you engage in *imperfect allyship*? Solidarity?
- Are there times your chose being an ally and times you put it down?
- Why do we work in these systems? explain first –give some context
- What does the dominant white hetero-patriarchal settler colonial systems of care do to people? can you link this to your topic?

- Do you have some examples of resistance? Or ways you may have surrendered your personal ethics within these systems?

Part IV: Ethical Challenges*

- Can you share with me what you struggle with as a white settler practitioner? Or working within a white settler colonial context?
- Can you tell me what times you felt ethically challenged as a white practitioner?
- Can tell me about when you had to force compliance with policies or practices you know are harmful?
 - what is that like?
 - what is the impact?
- Are there times you have felt ethically conflicted as a white practitioner? Or as an Indigenous or racialized practitioner?
- Are there times you have come home and really felt like you violated your own personal ethic commitments?
 - Can you tell me about that?
 - What was that like?
 - What else could have been done in that moment?
- How do you try and rupture those walls? Trouble those rules and those policies?
 - Can you give me some examples of those micro disruptive practices you might use as a practitioner?
- What ways might you use micro-resistances?
 - Can you give me some examples?

Part V: Reimagining*

- How else can we reimagine practice?
- What else might be possible?
- How do we unsettle our frontline practice of white settler practitioners?
- How do we enact a decolonial praxis?
- What else is needed at a macro level?