

**Counselling in an Age of Empire:  
Intervening in the (Re)Production of Majoritarian Subjectivity**

by

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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## Abstract

In an age of unbridled global capitalism and caustic neocolonial relations to land and life, the question of the aims and approaches of doing counselling with young people, particularly those majoritarian youth who are inheriting the privileges and specters of capitalist and colonial conquest, is pertinent. This dissertation is a collection of three theoretical papers on critical counselling with majoritarian young people in the context of contemporary Empire. A critical lens drawn from decolonial analyses was applied to mainstream counselling practice and theory. By developing a map of how contemporary Empire functions as a permutation of settler colonialism and globalized capitalism, this work investigates the forms of power and discourse that structure contemporary counselling, particularly the bio-medical-industrial-complex of psychiatry and the pharmacology industry, societies of control and digital technology, affective labour, and coloniality. Practices of vulnerability, self-reflexivity, decolonization, accountability, and critique are weaved into a cartographic methodology to redefine counselling as an ethics-driven and politicized intervention in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, globalized capitalism and settler colonialism seek to push past material limits and appropriate the products of human relatedness—feelings, ideas, cultures, and creations. In resisting this affective extractivism, these papers explore what it might mean to position engagement, living encounter, and relationship in an ethics-based counselling paradigm of resistance and social justice. The challenge of a critical counselling praxis commensurate with such a paradigm is to find avenues to intervene in the majoritarian psyche's capito-colonial grip on all forms of land and life. *Counselling in an Age of Empire* proposes that a politicized account of counselling with majoritarian subjects might prove to be a productive space for recrafting subjectivities. Through a careful critique of the majoritarian subject, in the roles of both

counsellor and client, a praxis of counselling attentive to political context, based in living encounter, and grounded in a settler ethics of vulnerability and accountability is sketched out. Overall, the work is aimed at majoritarian students and counsellors, their teachers, and those interested in developing a counselling praxis grounded in settler ethics, critique, vulnerability, and the power of living encounter.

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I specifically acknowledge the Lekwungen, SENĆOŦEN, and Hul'qumi'num speaking peoples whose lands I have lived and worked on throughout the time of my learning at the University of Victoria. My work is undoubtedly bolstered by many unearned advantages, dispensations, and benefits that are built into being a white-skinned male settler academic. As part of the academic intuition, I acknowledge that it is very slowly and reluctantly that the University system is coming to terms with its role in colonization and, as of yet, has still made little to no moves to repatriate the lands that we all work and study on. In the context of such ongoing dispossession of land, I would like to acknowledge the generosity that my Indigenous

teachers, colleagues, mentors and friends from these local communities and communities across Turtle Island have shown me. I have, throughout my education and work, been offered welcome, teachings, medicines, and deep relationships. I have had people open their doors and share their lives, knowledge, and culture with me. I also sincerely thank Indigenous students, clients, friends, and colleagues who continue to bring their scholarship, critical analyses, cultural knowledge, lived experience, and ethical commitments to the learning work we do together.

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Lastly, I want to recognize that this dissertation is a product of the relationships I have had with students, clients, allies, families, and communities. During the years of my study, research, and writing, I have had the privilege of working with innumerable people and groups who informed my work but shall not be directly named in this document. I do, however, want to acknowledge here that the products of this research are relational accomplishments that I am receiving credit for. I hope that this dissertation represents our relationships in a good way and supports our ongoing work.

## Introduction

Intervening in the psychological development of young people has been a nebulous and questionable enterprise since its inception in the Western imaginary, when Freud famously analyzed a five-year-old boy (through the medium of the boy's father) in 1909. Today, over a hundred years later, psychologists and psychiatrists have unequalled material and discursive power in the mental health field (Frances, 2013), bequeathing direct front-line encounter and more long-standing therapeutic relationships to the field of counselling. In an age of unbridled globalized capitalism and caustic neocolonial relations to land and life, the question of the aims and approaches of doing counselling with young people, particularly those majoritarian youth who are inheriting the privileges and specters of capitalist and colonial conquest, is pertinent.

This dissertation is a collection of three core papers on critical counselling with majoritarian young people in the context of contemporary Empire. The term *majoritarian* is taken from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (2004) to designate a standard, in this case, identities which are normalized and which dominate through white supremacy, heteronormative patriarchy, classism, and a variety of other social structures and discourses. The following papers critically map the coordinates of counselling with majoritarian young people, building toward a politicized counselling praxis founded in settler ethics and ethics of vulnerability and living encounter. The overall aim is to provide critique and to define new avenues for counsellors who work with majoritarian young people accessing counselling for what has come to be known as anxiety, depression, substance use, and suicidality.

With counselling variously understood as fostering processes of identity and value exploration, healing from trauma and loss, and relating differently to oneself, others, and the world at large, it is specifically about the crafting and recrafting of subjectivity. As global

Empire (Hardt & Negri, 2000; A. Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012) extends itself from the conquest of land and the exploitation of bodily labour to the usurpation of our affective, creative, and social capacities (Negri, 1991; Skott-Myhre, McDonald, & Skott-Myhre, 2017), relational, caring, and subjectivizing practices such as counselling are positioned as new sites of appropriation and of resistance to the total subsumption of life to capito-colonialism. Counselling work takes place within a spectrum between (1) a normalizing ideological pole that aims to return people who have been identified by themselves or others as troubled, deviant, pathological, deficient, or mentally ill to a requisite subjectivity characterized as productive, normal, and compliant within Empire, and (2) a radical pole of therapy that centers difference and challenges dominant structures by linking human suffering to injustice, trauma, violence, and oppression. Using intersectional (Cheshire, 2013; Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 2004) and settler colonial identities (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016; Morgensen, 2011) as sites of analysis, this study explores how the settler-capitalist unconscious functions in collusion with structural, discursive, and material coloniality to reproduce majoritarian subjectivity (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Exploring the overlaps, contradictions, and possibilities of counselling work with majoritarian young people along and outside of this spectrum of normalization and difference is a central focus of the theoretical papers that comprise this dissertation.

While I elaborate the numerous ways counselling has colluded with capitalism and colonialism, I also explore the radical potential of distress and crisis in majoritarian subjectivity. I center practices of vulnerability, self-reflexivity, social justice, accountability, critique, and difference-centered encounter as first steps in redefining counselling as an ethics-driven and politicized intervention in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity. I propose that ethical living encounter may be a practice of resistance to the full subsumption of mental health practice

to the bio-medical-industrial complex embodied in psychiatry and Big Pharma. Living encounter, grounded in critique and ethics, therefore, is presented as a key concept that provides avenues for crafting new forms of subjectivity, particularly counselling with majoritarian young people who will inherit both the privileges and shadows of Empire. The critical aspect of this work is to lay bare the imbrication of counselling with Empire by applying decolonizing (Coulthard, 2014; L. Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012) and immanent (Braidotti, 2010a; Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, 2004; Negri, 1991; Skott-Myhre, 2016) analyses to mainstream counselling practice and theory. The more affirmative aspect of the project is to investigate the production of subjectivity through direct and ethical living encounter.

Foregrounding the affective, critical, and politicized lines within counselling's past and present, this study as a whole provides conceptual contributions in four areas. First, I provide a cartography (Braidotti, 2010a, 2010b), or critical conceptual map of power relations and subjectifying processes, of mental health counselling with majoritarian young people. This will include a located and partial mapping of the relationships among settler colonization, globalized capitalism, the bio-medical-industrial complex, and the ways suffering and distress are coded and responded to through counselling discourse and practice. Second, I explore various lines of mainstream, Indigenous, and critical counselling theory, as well as critical theories of identity and subjectivity. Third, I discuss the ethico-political implications and possibilities of working with majoritarian subjects and those othered within Empire. Lastly, I provide possibilities for counselling with majoritarian young adults that critique and ethically respond to our current times, with a specific focus on colonization and capitalism.

Through the dissertation papers, I explore how, as counsellors, we respond to young people's experiences of mental distress, rampant technology use, spiritual and cultural

dislocation, and affective exploitation beset by an increasingly biomedicalized and individualizing mental health system. I develop conceptual and ethical tools that might interrupt young majoritarian people's initiation into Empire as exploited and exploitative subjects. My focus is especially on using critical approaches to understand how majoritarian identities and the processes of subject formation and transformation occur within the counselling relationship. To do so, I focus on the functioning of power, identity, language, and context in counselling with majoritarian young people. Overall, the work is aimed at majoritarian students and counsellors, their teachers, and those interested in developing a counselling praxis grounded in settler ethics, critique, vulnerability, and the power of living encounter. I work from my particular social location to interrogate the functions of counselling in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity.

### **Self-Location**

As I work and write on colonized lands, my identity as a settler person whose family is part of the waves of immigration and land occupation from Europe and the Middle East is undeniable. Who I am as a researcher and counsellor has been shaped by this history and it is one of my ethical practices of accountability to acknowledge my identity and be visible in terms of my role in the continued occupation of Indigenous territory in North America. I am a third generation English-Lebanese cis-gender settler living in what is now known as Victoria, British Columbia (BC), Canada. I was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, which is on the unceded territories of the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) people. I now live, work, study, and am raising a family on unceded Coast and Straits Salish territories. Specifically, I have made a new home for myself and my family on the territories and waterways of the Lekwungen, SENĆOŦEN, and Hul'qumi'num speaking peoples.

Throughout my PhD studies, I taught child and youth care and mental health courses at the University of Victoria and Camosun College. I also wrote numerous articles, many of which included portions on settler colonialism and settler ethics (Kouri, 2015, 2018; Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016; White, Kouri, & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2017). My counselling practice was done in postsecondary, private-practice, wilderness, and First Nations contexts. In 2015, I registered as a clinical counsellor with the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors after completing a practicum with the University of Victoria's Counselling Services and my Master's degree in Child and Youth Care. I worked as a postsecondary counsellor for a number of years then opened a private practice in Victoria, BC. I also worked as a counsellor with Penelakut First Nation and provided wilderness-based counselling with Human Nature Counselling. My educational and counselling experiences and the relationships that were built through them informed a great deal of this dissertation. Throughout my time at the University of Victoria and in my work with the Penelakut Nation, I have had the privilege of working with and being supported and educated by Indigenous Elders, teachers, students, clients, activists, and academic and clinical supervisors. In this dissertation, I attempt to make my relationships with Indigenous people, politics, knowledge, and scholarship visible and hold myself accountable to a settler ethics that I develop throughout.

A the outset of this dissertation, however, I want to make visible my indebtedness to my teachers and colleagues in child and youth care and particularly want to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Sandrina de Finney. While I strive to foreground Indigenous scholarly voices through my citational practices (Ahmed, 2013), much of the sacred oral and relational labour that has been shared with me, particularly by my supervisor, is infused into this work. Dr. de Finney has germinated and helped bring to life much of what is contained in this dissertation. The trust and commitments she has shown me far outweigh my ability to acknowledge in such an

academic style. I have joked that nearly every second line in this dissertation would need a “personal communication” citation after it to account for her contribution. In all seriousness, settler academics have an enormous responsibility to find practices of transparency and accountability to balance the generosity shown to them by Indigenous teachers, supervisors, and colleagues.

As a person with settler, white-skin, class, able-bodied, and gender privilege, I have been able to work and study, as well as raise a family in safety and health. I recognize that many of the privileges I have are unearned and based on systems of racism, sexism, colonialism, and capitalism that marginalize others. Informed by Michael Taussig (1980, 1986) who used his experience as an outsider in relation to Indigenous communities as a way of criticizing the workings of capitalism and colonialism as they are lived out through relationships, I attempt, in the following pages, to think about relationships across difference in subjective, social, ethical, and political ways. I worked to criticize my own site of privilege and embody an ethics of vulnerability that challenges the assumed impenetrability of the white settler male subject (da Silva, 2007). I extend out from my own location to understand and critically analyze the production of majoritarian subjectivity with Empire taken as a conjunction of globalized capitalism and settler colonialism. I attempt to put identity and what comes to be known as mental illness into a socio-political context and explore the ethics and potentials for counselling to function as a critical praxis in settler colonial states.

### **Scope**

Throughout this document, I explore counselling with young adults, particularly those in majoritarian subject positions, who navigate tensions between entitlement and meritocracy (Cairns, 2017), isolation and interconnectedness (Alexander, 2008), and disillusionment and

hopefulness (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016). I scrutinize how anxieties about identity, unfulfilled expectations, belonging and longing, privilege, and responsibility are all facets and products of the way a colonial society is organized and the ways young people differentially arrive in and reproduce Empire. By mapping Empire as capitalism and colonialism, I interrogate how a range of issues come to be framed, coded, and treated as mental illness. I thereby put mental illness and counselling into a politicized social context and investigate its problematics and the subjects who populate it, as well as proposing new ethical approaches to counselling.

Using identity and subjectivity as conceptual tools, I explore how young people in Canada are differentially and unequally positioned within Empire. I focus primarily on young adults recognized as representing identities commensurate with power within historic structures of capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy, and heteronormative patriarchy. Many privileged young people today access counselling for issues such as anxiety, depression, substance use, and suicidality. Putting many of these mental health codings in the context of Empire, however, retraces the frustrations, disappointments, and fears of a subject unable to arrive into a position which they believe, consciously or unconsciously, they are entitled to, a condition I describe as the subject-supposed-to-have. I connect such majoritarian experiences to those of people minoritized within Empire and explore the roots and impacts of colonialism and capitalism in counselling.

Throughout my analysis, I attempt to highlight the tensions between Empire serving the majoritarian subjects who propel and benefit from it while it also causes them others suffering. While the suffering of majoritarian subjects pales in comparison to the violent bodily, epistemic, spiritual, communal, material, and psychic oppression suffered by others, I do take it as a site of possible intervention in Empire. Such analyses connect mental illness discourse to racialized,

sexualized, ableist, and gender-based violence, political and religious conservatism, housing crises, and desperate attempts for majoritarian subjects to recuperate a safe and privileged place within a dying world. I attempt to illuminate how suffering is a politicized site and also often a site of resistance and alternative practices of subjectivity. Thus I interrogate how counselling increasingly operates in control societies (Deleuze, 1992) through the bio-medical-industrial complex (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1970; Ehrenreich, 2016) to capitalize on experiences of dislocation (Alexander, 2008), alienation (Hardt & Negri, 2005), and colonial violence (de Finney, 2014; Tuck, 2009). Our globalized world is one of growing hybridity and mobility, requiring ethics and a critical appreciation of difference (Bhabha, 2011). By mapping emotions such as fear, desperation, anxiety, and hopelessness within Empire, I underscore the despair in inheriting futures of possible environmental or economic collapse, globalized or civil war, or the ubiquitous rise of information and digital technology (Giroux & Evans, 2015; White, Kouri, & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2017).

Adults today bequeath young people born in this millennium a complicated world. While being accountable to this reality, I also attempt to develop accounts of counselling ethics and relationship that offer hope, accountability, affirmation, and love. I seek to counteract the individualizing and pathologizing rejoinders to distress that mainstream mental health offers and furthermore seek ways of meeting young people in their demands for the world to be other than what it is. Counselling with majoritarian young people can either act to collude with Empire or work with crisis in a way that opens onto alternatives for life. More radically, I argue that counselling may also seek social change by connecting with revolutionary and activist young people and communities and finding ways to bolster solidarity with those most oppressed by these systems. Counselling is specifically about ways of being, relating, and living together. This

series of papers seeks radical possibilities for engaging with young people whose aberrant experiences or atypical responses of being initiated into contemporary Empire are coded and treated as mental illness.

A salient issue developed throughout this dissertation is the politics of therapy with young people, particularly in relation to capitalism and colonialism. My proposition is that counsellors are particularly positioned to critically examine normalizing practices in mental health and find alternatives that respond to contemporary facets of Empire. The ethics of engaging with young people from a politically informed position will therefore be paramount. Informed by critical theories of capitalism, colonialism, and decolonization and by feminist, queer, and trans readings of gender, I develop a cartographic methodology (Braidotti, 2006b, 2010a, 2010b) that allows me to conceptually map and develop figurations for contemporary counselling practice with young people—a map of power and subjectivity. Cartography and figuration, according to Rosi Braidotti (2010a, 2010b), are critical feminist practice that makes visible the production of subjectivity, collectivity, and society through theoretically rich accounts of power.

Through a cartographic methodology, I take identity and subjectivity as a locus of analysis and build on the work of critical psychology, Indigenous theory, poststructuralism, feminism, and antipsychiatry to explore alternatives to mainstream practice. Counselling, for me, sits at an intersection between ethically informed ways of bringing change through direct encounter on the one hand, and, on the other, psychiatry and pharmacology as dominant forces in the lives of young adults diagnosed as mentally ill. Counselling in majoritarian space, in this way, has as much to learn from grassroots and traditional healing practices, social justice activism done by, with, and in solidarity with vulnerable or marginalized people than it does

from critical and cutting-edge trends within the dominant systems of mental health. We, as counsellors, have an unequalled opportunity to engage with majoritarian young people who find themselves in crisis, a crisis that may be coded as lifelong illness, healed in an attempt to recuperate a normalized subjectivity, or engaged with as an opening onto new ways of being in and co-creating the world. With a methodology informed by critical theories and ethics of the subjectivity in contemporary capitalism and colonialism, I develop ways to engage majoritarian subjects—counsellors and young people—who hold positions of privilege and power in society, or who one day will.

Majoritarian young people often present—or are presented—to mental health practitioners for therapy with the aim of being better adapted or reintegrated into school, peer groups, and the family. While much mental health discourse focuses on the individual, much of therapy is about belonging. The conceptualizations therapists draw from regarding the challenges and suffering these young adults face direct their practice approaches and goals. By placing mental suffering into an embodied and sociopolitical context, the papers included in this dissertation explore not only how capitalism and colonialism shape the experiences of today's young adults, but how suffering, disillusionment, antipathy, and evasion can be reconceptualized and worked with as resistance to exploitation and indoctrination into an individualizing capito-colonial system of rule—with the principal site of analysis being relationships that live close to the heart of Empire—relationships between majoritarian counsellors and young adults. I fold my lived and practice experience with critical theory and accounts of other practitioners into a reconceptualization of the challenges and possibilities of working with privileged individuals who are currently understood as psychologically distressed.

Throughout the papers, I explore ethical commitments to anticolonial and anticapitalist practice and wrestle with interpreting and intervening in what often gets presented as individual mental pathology. I attempt to elucidate the politics and ethics of engaging those majoritarian clients who benefit from systems of inequality and do not connect their experiences of mental illness to capitalism and colonialism. I look at the forces at work in how young white settler males in particular experience being thrown into the contemporary world and how their desires and psyches are shaped by it—how experiences of mental distress are related to their initiation into Empire. The tensions and interconnections between mental health discourse and experiences of entitlement, meritocracy, isolation, interconnectedness, disillusionment, resistance, and hopefulness across different young adult populations is a central focus of the overall work.

### **Practice Problems**

As a registered clinical counsellor, I work, at the present moment, in postsecondary, Indigenous, wilderness-based, and private practice contexts, mainly with young people. With a background in child and youth care, and having worked as a youth and family counsellor for over a decade, one main focus I have in my practice is working with career and life goals, personal development, identity, and what is called anxiety, depression, substance abuse, self-harm, eating disorders, and suicidality in youth and young adult populations. I am specifically interested in studying the applicability and ethics of critical praxis with majoritarian and Indigenous young people. As a person who occupies numerous locations of power, I aim to develop ways that counsellors who benefit from class, race, gender, and other forms of privilege can be oriented toward radical or transformative ends. My work entails engaging with mental health and psychiatric systems that often code young people who do not neatly assume normative subjectivities or strive for capitalist and colonial ascendancy as unstable, at risk, and potentially

posing a threat to themselves and others. My counselling work is primarily conducted with young people whose experiences of suffering, resistance, fear, trauma, disorientation, frustration, and alienation are coded as individual psychopathology.

Drawing on psychoanalytic, decolonizing, immanent, and poststructural perspectives, I bring a critique of capitalism and colonialism to my practice, but I have found few approaches to adequately address these structures in direct counselling work, particularly with privileged or majoritarian young people. With unabated technological infiltration into the lives of these young people and psychiatric discourse distending pharmacological interventions for those understood as ill, I am provoked to problematize my position as a counsellor and explore what might be done within a therapeutic context to dislodge young people's lives from the grips of psychiatry, capitalism, and colonialism. I am seeking, in the following papers, to map my counselling practice against the coordinates of contemporary Empire and to understand the thresholds of complicity with and resistance to late-stage capitalism and settler colonialism as they are manifested in therapy.

Working with young people in counselling contexts underscores for me the processes of producing values, identities, and ways of life. As such, it is one means of producing subjectivity. I acknowledge that in numerous ways my practice perpetuates many of the very problems therapy is supposed to address. In these papers, I uncover some of the colonial and capitalist underpinnings of counselling. Many of my young clients are in the middle class or are students on their way to that location. Most of them are white, straight, able-bodied, and cisgender and occupy other majoritarian coordinates of identity. I work with settler people who do little in the way of acknowledging colonialism, at least not in our counselling work. Often these clients experience their suffering as interfering with their projects of job attainment, wealth

accumulation, and land ownership, and they want help to return to work, school, relationship, and what is perceived as a normal life. While many of them wonder about the meaning of their lives or the prospect of a more authentic identity, the benefits of capitalism and colonialism are all too easy to reproduce as direct or indirect counselling goals.

I hold onto the idea—at times in the forefront, but always, at least, in the background of my mind—that the current conditions of work, technology, economics, social stratification, displacement, and property ownership fuel much of the suffering that comes to be called mental illness. As a direct or mediating force, I also connect physical, spiritual, mental, early life, and emotional trauma to much that becomes coded as mental distress (Van Der Kolk, 2014). I never cease to wonder how racism, land and resource appropriation, wealth inequality, interpersonal and systemic aggression, and war impact those who are not necessarily on the receiving ends of oppression and violence, but are at times their perpetrators. I staunchly argue that analyses of capitalism and colonialism must figure into our work *with all people* for them to be ethically consistent and efficacious in ending or at least interrupting Empire's reiterations. Capitalism is a middle- and upper-class problem, just as patriarchy is a men's issue and colonialism is a problem for settlers to solve (hooks, 2004; Lowman & Barker, 2015). In the following works, I explore how counselling might be a vehicle for intervening in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity and therefore Empire at large.

As an educated professional within a class and colonial system, my work enhances my own social status, privilege, and ability to enter the land-owning elite. It is clear that much of my ethical and theoretical commitments are at odds with my current practice and way of life. Counselling is a site of great privilege, and I attempt to leverage this privilege to stop the perpetuation of harm that occurs within it. While there is growing literature on counselling

across diverse social locations and how practitioners in positions of privilege and power might engage ethically with marginalized populations, there is very little in the counselling literature regarding similar ethics for practice with and by majoritarian subjects. I have taken this opportunity to analyze how a counselling praxis with majoritarian young people and by majoritarian counsellors might work toward ethical, decolonizing, and other social justice goals. In so doing, I aim to be accountable for the power that is imbued in my identity and speech as a counsellor and I find an ethical use for my ability to be part of people's lives.

In the papers that follow, I work toward a counselling approach that more adequately and ethically addresses the current dilemmas and contradictions embodied in both myself and my clients by capitalism, colonialism, and the bio-medical-industrial complex of mental health. I argue that mainstream counselling is so thoroughly embedded in Empire that it is hardly rescuable in its current form. Because it is a given that counselling will continue to exist and young people will increasingly access it, I intend to exert my power to be involved in its transformation. This dissertation maps the contemporary dimensions of Empire in relation to counselling work, explicates a conceptual framework for thinking about the fissures and opportunities of working with majoritarian subjects in crisis, and advances a study of counselling praxis as living ethical encounter in a neocolonial and globalized world. It is written as part of my praxis and is aimed at influencing future counsellors who question counselling's collusion in Empire and search for ethical ways to transform themselves and our field. It is not a series of answers but a critical map with numerous entry and exit points. I hope it is a provocation for majoritarian counsellors to rethink their identities, ethics, and agendas.

## **Dissertation Overview**

This dissertation is composed of this introduction, a paper on methodology, three core papers, and a conclusion. The three papers are entitled “Decolonizing Counselling as Living Encounter Within Empire,” “Majoritarian Identity and Subjectivity: A Conceptual Framework,” and “Clinical Praxis in Majoritarian Space.” Working toward a politicized counselling praxis in contemporary capito-colonialism, this study as a whole develops settler ethics and ethics of vulnerability and living encounter in counselling. The aim is to define new coordinates and avenues for counsellors who work with majoritarian young people accessing counselling for what has come to be known as anxiety, depression, substance use, and suicidality. Using intersectional and settler colonial identities as sites of analysis, the study explores how young people in North America are differentially positioned within Empire and how the settler-capitalist unconscious functions to reproduce majoritarian subjectivity. The focus is primarily on majoritarian counsellors and young people whose recognized identities are commensurate with power within historic structures of capitalism, colonialism, racism, and hetero- and cis-normative patriarchy.

By exploring the radical potential of distress and crisis in majoritarian subjectivity, counselling is positioned as a site of potential resistance to the full subsumption of mental health work to the bio-medical-industrial-complex. Mental health codings are also politically situated as the frustrations, disappointments, fears, and feelings of alienation of a subject unable to arrive into a position they believe, consciously or unconsciously, they are entitled to, a condition described as the subject-supposed-to-have. Critical theories of decolonization and intersectionality are used to craft a methodology that maps crises coded as mental illness against enactments of violence, racism, and xenophobia that majoritarian subjects unleash in the wake of

unfulfilled expectations and experiences of individualized suffering. This introduction provides an overview of the methodology, the three main papers, and the conclusion.

The first paper, focused on the methodology, centers ethics, positionality, vulnerability, and desubjectification in the development of power-laden maps of subjectivity and practice. After explicating my methodological approach, data collection, and guiding questions, I describe my cartographic methodology, which maps power, discourse, and living relationship through figuration and affirmative critique (Braidotti, 2010a, 2010b; St. Pierre, 2017, 2018). Using a cartographic methodology that maps power, discourse, subjectivity, and living relationship through an affirmative critique, I elucidate a politicized and located research ethics. Cartography, here, is grounded in an ontology of immanence and builds on Michel Foucault's (1997) and Judith Butler's (2002) theorization of socio-historical critique. The methodology centers positionality, vulnerability, and desubjectification in the development of power-laden maps of subjectivity. By mapping experiences coded as mental illness, the papers unveil the (re)production of majoritarian subjectivity in counselling and redefine distress as an opportunity to transfigure subjectivity and live together differently. I draw on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (2003, 2004) ontology of immanence and concept of the rhizome to articulate my data collection and analysis processes. In the process of developing a settler ethics for research, I engage with Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies from my location as a settler and elaborate some of the problems settlers face in doing social justice research in and on occupied Indigenous territories.

In the first main paper, "Decolonizing Counselling as Living Encounter Within Empire," I situate counselling in the context of Empire and work toward a decolonized praxis of living encounter. I begin by delineating how settler colonialism and globalized capitalism provide the

main coordinates for thinking about life today. I explicate how each is entwined with counselling and the bio-medical-industrial complex of mental health. With this context defined, I draw on immanent philosophy (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; Hardt & Negri, 2005; Negri, 1991, Skott-Myhre, 2005) to conceptualize power in two forms, *puissance* (immanent and creative force) and *pouvoir* (transcendental forms of power that operate through appropriation), and explore how relationship and living encounter might form the basis of ethical praxis. I end the paper by returning to the settler colonial context and commenting on how living encounter must be accountable to decolonization if it is to be developed and take place on occupied Indigenous lands. My analysis of Empire demonstrates how experiences of mental illness in majoritarian and Indigenous populations are directly tied to contemporary settler colonialism and globalized capitalism.

In the second paper, “Majoritarian Identity and Subjectivity: A Conceptual Framework,” I locate myself within structures and discourses of power and bring together critical theories of identity and subjectivity to illuminate the connections between social structures, discourse, identity, power, and subject formation. I review theories of white supremacy, hegemonic masculinity, intersectionality, performativity, queer and trans theory, and posthumanism in order to trouble essentialist notions of the subject and firmly connect identity to power. By drawing on these critical frameworks, I deepen my cartography of counselling by focusing on the production of subjectivity through identity discourses. I explore my own identity and place specific importance on being a white-skinned settler male. I reflect on my research and counselling practice and begin to develop the concept of settler ethics as an approach that is accountable to decolonization. Settler ethics specifically examines the relationship between Euro-Western theories and Indigenous ways of knowing and being, arguing that settler counsellors must

develop an ethics of engaging with people that does not perpetuate colonialism through appropriation, recentering whiteness and reinforcing settler subjectivity.

I work on the concept of majoritarian subjectivity, which allows for an account of privilege and power based on identity, yet also open lines of intervention in both subjectivizing processes and the ensuing perpetuation of systems of oppression. I propose that crises in identity and mental health that white heteronormative settlers experience might be an opening onto new ways of subjectifying. By engaging with feminist posthumanist notions of difference, becoming, and critical affirmation (Braidotti, 2006a, 2010a), I propose that counselling may be a site of intervention in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity. Working toward a minoritarian counselling praxis (Skott-Myhre, 2005, 2014), I follow Deleuze and Guattari (2004) in suggesting that there is a process of becoming-minor that those in privileged positions might undergo to escape the dominant systems of subject formation. The ethics and techniques of such a practice are the mainstay of the next and final paper of the series.

In the final core paper, “Clinical Praxis in Majoritarian Space”, I build on the contextual work of the first paper and the conceptual work of the second to deeply engage with the problems and ethics of a counselling practice with majoritarian young people. I review counselling approaches, focusing, on the one hand, on counselling’s complicity in capitalism and colonialism, and on the other, on feminist, multicultural, Indigenous, grassroots, antipsychiatric, critical, and poststructural counter-positions. I problematize majoritarian counselling as a settler project and work toward a politicized counselling praxis that is engaged with anticolonial and Indigenous healing practices. I explore living encounter and processes of becoming for their radical and innovative potential and reframe my original practice problems and research questions in this rich cartography of present-day mental health counselling. To do so, I focus on

the experiences of young people who are designated as mentally disordered or aberrant in their behaviours, values, or identities, yet are perceived to have entitlements to land ownership, high-paying jobs, and resources underwritten by capitalist mentality and settler identities. I use figuration (Braidotti, 2010a, 2010b) as a way to situate and describe the subjects of power today.

To accurately map the socio-subjective landscape of majoritarian counselling, I use the concepts of affective labour (Hardt & Negri, 2005) and control societies (Deleuze, 1992) to develop the figure of what I call the subject-supposed-to-have. I argue that changes in society, the economy, technology, and relations to land are entwined with young people's development as subjects within Empire. I place experiences of mental illness in relation to psychiatric discourse, the burgeoning psychopharmacology industry, and the affective landscape of capito-colonialism. Specific considerations are also given to the experiences of marginalized people and how majoritarian subjects collude and recreate systems of oppression and violence. I thereby reframe differential experiences of mental illness as a response to contemporary Empire and explore how we as counsellors respond in ethically and politically informed ways to young majoritarian subjects who have been identified as deviant, deficient, aberrant, or mentally ill.

The three papers I have just described present a cartography of what I understand to be the contemporary landscape of counselling with majoritarian subjects. Specifically, I explain how I see the production of majoritarian subjectivity through counselling and potential intervention points. I provide a rich analysis of the contemporary context and explore avenues for further development in the areas of counselling theory and settler ethics for research and praxis. The concluding paper summarizes my research and proposes directions for politicized counseling praxis and settler ethics. It outlines my commitments and is a call to action for other settler people. In this final paper, I also speak to key relationships that motivated and informed

this dissertation. In attempting to outline practices of accountability that follow from my reflections and analyses, I try to describe what I see as my next steps in embodying and enacting the ethics I propose. As the three main papers are separate but focus on many of the same problems, there are some repetition across them. In contrast to a traditional dissertation, preparing three independent papers for publication in partial fulfillment on a PhD degree required a reiteration of key issues and concepts in each paper. Each paper focuses on different facets of the same problems and, in so doing, extends the cartography in a variety of ways. It is my belief that constituting my dissertation with three papers for publication will more efficiently and effectively engage my audience and support my dissemination strategy.

### **Audience and Dissemination**

This dissertation is intended for scholars, practitioners, activists, and other people interested in critically informed relational ethics. The primary intended audience for this work is new counsellors, those in training, and students in post-secondary programs in human services fields. As counselling is my particular field of practice, I hope this work provides a resource or example for counselling educators and trainers who are tasked with cultivating new practitioners. With the majoritarian subject as the focus of the analysis, my intention is to raise consciousness and self-reflexivity for majoritarian practitioners. My belief is that a critical map of counselling will provide new counsellors and researchers avenues for ethical and practical exploration. I provide a number of self-reflexive, ethical, and practice-based questions for other counsellors or trainers to work with in their practice. I also invite other majoritarian people into greater accountability, ethical forms of witnessing, and effective forms of action.

This project as a whole attempts to fill a gap in critical counselling theory. Up to now, critical, diversity, and social justice approaches have focused on serving minority and

minoritized populations. This work was and continues to be essential. Settler colonization and globalized capitalism, however, will continue as long as the majoritarian subject holds power. It is imperative that we intervene in the reproduction of this subject, and my analysis shows that what is commonly understood as mental health crises can be read and worked with in ways that open up to new forms of subjectivity and ethics. I do not imagine that counselling will directly change larger systems of oppression and control; however, I argue that counselling provides, through living relationship, one avenue for social and subjective transformation. Many majoritarian subjects, both counsellors and clients, do not yet connect their mental health and counselling experiences to political reality. My aim in this dissertation, therefore, is to develop a conceptual map that may broaden and politicize the work of other scholars, practitioners, and students in the human services.

This research project offers contributions to the critical literature in counselling, human services, child and youth care, and allied fields. I will publish the three core academic papers included in this dissertation. Adapted versions of the methodology and conclusion may also be published in academic journals. I will aim for open-source journals and also explore ways to make earlier versions of the papers available through free web-based platforms. By making my final products widely available at no cost to readers, I hope to disrupt the hierarchy and capitalism imbricated in academic and counselling production. I will also provide workshops and conference presentations to engage beyond writing.

## Methodology

In this paper, I explicate my methodology inclusive of methods, philosophy, and ethics. As a whole, the methodology provides the process through which this dissertation was constructed. This dissertation is a collection of papers in which I apply critical analyses of decolonization (Coulthard, 2014; de Finney, 2014; A. Simpson, 2014; L. B. Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Watts, 2013) and immanence (Braidotti, 2006b, 2010a; Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, 2004; Hardt & Negri, 2000, 2009; Negri, 1991; Skott-Myhre, 2016) to the theories, practices, contexts, and ethics of majoritarian counselling. The research was constituted by theoretical analyses. I used texts, concepts, application of theory, and theoretical development as a way of engaging the field of counselling. I used cartography (Braidotti, 2006a, 2006b) and figuration (Braidotti, 2018; Nxumalo, 2016; St. Pierre, 1997a) to map the social dimensions of counselling and the subjective dimensions of majoritarian counsellors and clients. My methodology was guided by ethics grounded in social justice and decolonization (Reynolds, 2010a; Reynolds & Hammoud-Beckett, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2016; Winslade, 2015), as well as poststructural analyses of discourse and power that situate critique within a socio-historical context and center vulnerability and desubjectification (Butler, 2002; Foucault, 1997). I take up Deleuze and Guattari's (2003) notion of immanent philosophy to provide an ontological foundation for the method of cartography as a pragmatic constructivism. Braidotti's (2010a, 2010b, 2018) affirmative mode of cartography and figuration are a central methodological approaches in this work and provide the tools to attend to power and problematize our contemporary circumstances in an effort to affirm what might be otherwise within it.

I situated my methodology in a postqualitative research paradigm (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013) in which knowledge and the subject are not taken for granted but seen as both producing

and produced by power, language, and socio-historic context. St. Pierre (2018) suggests that reading widely across philosophy and social theories is an approach to find concepts and reorient thinking in a particular area. The data of this research was materials from the public domain, particularly critical literatures and mainstream counselling texts. I began with an in-depth engagement with literature from counselling, psychoanalysis, critical and social theory, decolonial and Indigenous theory, theories of identity and subjectivity, and continental philosophy. Through engagements with collegial thought through supervision, conferences and public information exchanges, I used an emergent cycle whereby I allowed my thinking, intuition, inspiration, and ethics to make connections and seek out new information in the literature (St. Pierre, 2016, 2018). I applied critical theories to better understand the problems and potentials of counselling with young majoritarian subjects.

Throughout the research process, I worked as a counsellor with diverse clients in diverse contexts. I attempted to reflect on my own experience in light of the literature and the social context which I was a part of. While this research does not include data drawn from my counselling practice, the tensions and possibilities that I saw in my practice guided my literature searches, and my reading of the literature informed my practice. Throughout my research, I worked at applying, developing and weaving together concepts as part of mapping counselling. In this way, I attempted to enact an ethic of critique and vulnerability whereby I took my practice field as a site for analysis and potential transformation (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). This ethics-driven approach allowed me to explore ruptures in my own practice and affirm difference and responsibility in my counselling identity and research (Braidotti, 2010a). I used my own location as a practitioner as the position from which I was thinking and writing. I searched for spaces between discourses and worked in the complexities and failures of the language I inhabited. I

attempted to study the limits, aporias, gaps, and fissures in conceptualizing counselling practice and explored the liminal spaces between knowing and not knowing. In this way, I approached new, ethical, and hopeful ways of thinking about counselling and those who are understood to be in mental distress.

An immanent approach to methodology which saw thinking as an embedded material practice (K. Skott-Myhre et al., 2012) helped me to interrogate my own experience in the light of the literature and important cultural and social events. These extended out from the field of counselling to social and political events that circulated in the media. I attempted to put counselling theory and practice into a larger socio-political context. I kept notes to record my reflections about research, practice, and broader social issues including tensions, ethical dilemmas, and hopeful moments and my affective and intuitive responses to them. Allowing my feelings, intuitions, and dreams to enter into the research process is reminiscent of what St. Pierre (1997b) calls transgressive data in that it disrupts coherent rational narrations with emotionality and sensuality. With an open-ended curiosity for the unpredictable, emergent, alternative, and experimental, I tracked my thoughts and responses in the process. In addition to my engagement with material from the public domain and published data sources, the iterative cycles of problem definition, thinking, writing, and practice provided a rich set of data, which I experimentally joined in various ways to create conceptual socio-subjective maps. I wrote summaries, noted further readings, posed and attempted to answer reflexive questions, and applied critical concepts to counselling practice. This experimental reorganization and application of the literature to counselling was guided by the ethics elaborated in this paper. The conceptual development reflected a rhizomatic approach to data analysis.

In this dissertation, I situate the research project within settler colonialism and examine how research has generally functioned to further colonial occupation and the dominance of Euro-Western knowledge paradigms. I argue that adopting a decolonizing methodology is complicated, if not unattainable, for settlers, because it requires them to become something radically other than that which they are. Writing from the location of a settler, I attempt to make visible the problematics of settler research, using critical theories from my own Western philosophic lineage to work toward a settler ethics for research and practice. I appraise the problems of settler research in order to not too quickly appropriate the language of decolonization. I argue instead that settlers must work at undoing or unsettling (Regan, 2010) themselves and that this work should not interfere with or impede Indigenous peoples' work at decolonization (Coon, Land, Richardson, Kouri, & Smith, 2016). While settler ethics may be a subset of decolonization, it is imperative that settlers call one another into the process and keep one another accountable.

Drawing on poststructural theory and immanent philosophy, I elaborate an ethics of vulnerability and difference-centered living encounter which may have the capacity to undo some of the colonality inherent in research and practice. The development of such a settler ethics runs throughout the entire dissertation project, extending from my methodology to my analysis of how settler colonization shapes mainstream counselling. I argue that the principles of vulnerability, critique of power, difference-centered encounter, and settler ethics of solidarity and accountability can be first steps in redefining counselling as an intervention in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity.

The methodology outlined in the following pages allowed me to explore counselling as a tool of normalization and as a praxis of politically engaged relationality—as a site in the

reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity or an intervention into it. My engagement with critical counselling started from my particular location as a settler counsellor working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people on occupied Indigenous territories. To explore the ethics and politics of the counselling practice I was engaged in, I applied decolonizing and immanent critique to my own practice, the literature on counselling, and ideas prevalent in the field. I situated my methodology in the contexts of settler colonialism and globalized capitalism and developed an ethical framework for doing research as a politically informed mapping of counselling practice. Through this framework, I critiqued majoritarian counselling and elaborate more radical and ethical possibilities of responding to young people seen to be in psychological distress. As a reflexive cartography of my own subjectivity, I provide an analysis of majoritarian counsellor identity and social position.

Further, I analyzed how the bio-medical-industrial complex and, in particular, the DSM coding system and the pharmacological regime of psychiatry, as proximal structures and discourses that shape how mental illness is experienced, understood, and responded to, are omnipresent yet regularly resisted through counselling practice. The concepts of identity and subjectivity allowed me to interrogate how practitioners understand themselves and the young people they work with. Starting with intersectional, queer, and poststructural theories of identity and subjectivity, I outlined the ethical and practice problems associated with working with young people within Empire. Social justice literatures, including writings on allyship, diversity, and solidarity, were explored for their relevance in crafting new counselling identities. Situating this work on occupied and unceded Indigenous ancestral territories, I took the settler as a very specific figure for analysis. Through a careful critique of the majoritarian subject, both in the role of counsellor and client, I worked toward a praxis of counselling that is attentive to political

context, based in living encounter, and grounded in a redefined settler ethics. The intended audience of this work is majoritarian students and counsellors, their teachers and supervisors, and those interested in developing a new ethics for counselling grounded in settler ethics and the power of difference-centered living encounter.

### **Guiding Questions**

The following questions motivated and guided the cartography of counselling brought together in this dissertation:

1. Who are majoritarian subjects today? What ails young people who are set to arrive in sites of privilege and power within Empire? What brings these subjects to counselling, and how are their subjectivities reproduced and challenged in counselling practices?
2. What is mental health and illness in a settler colonial and capitalist context? How does the bio-medical-industrial complex function today in Canada and other Western settler-colonial states?
3. How has counselling colluded with or been appropriated by Empire? How have counsellors resisted and provided alternatives to the production of majoritarian subjectivities? What is the role of counsellors in socializing young people to life within Empire?
4. How does counselling function as a site of production and intervention in entitlement, white privilege, capitalism, and colonial relations to land and life?
5. What are the politics of white settler counsellors engaging majoritarian young people in therapy? How can radical counsellors who occupy sites of privilege and power be accountable to Indigenous sovereignty, knowledges, cultures, lands, and peoples? What

are the ethics and practices of unsettling ourselves as counsellors? How do we engage without appropriating, tokenizing, or misrepresenting Indigenous knowledges?

6. Could majoritarian subjectivities, of both practitioners and clients, be subverted through counselling? What radical, decolonial, anticapitalist, poststructural, feminist, and antipsychiatric possibilities are available in mental health contexts with majoritarian young people? What are the politics of encounter and affective labour in control societies?

The goal in this project is to critically map mainstream counselling in order to explore new ethics and practices. To map power, subjectivity, and practice in critical ways, what Braidotti (2006a, 2006b) calls cartography, I situated my work within an ontology of immanence (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003) and apply the concepts of figuration and rhizome to methodology (Honan, 2007; St. Pierre, 1997a; Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Critical thought in such a paradigm becomes an active participant in the world by mapping power and articulating the virtual possibilities inherent in the bodies that produce it and are produced by it. Once I have spelled out my ontological and philosophical position, I explore the complexities of critical settler research in neocolonial contexts by engaging with the work of Indigenous research scholars (Martin, 2003a; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). I propose that a settler ethics for research and practice can be developed by attuning to Indigenous and decolonizing scholarship and drawing on the critical traditions within the Western canon.

### **Immanent Philosophy, Cartography, and Figuration**

Drawing on Spinoza's (1677/2007) ontology of immanence and Nietzsche's (1982) affirmation of contingency, Deleuze and Guattari (2003) attempt to return philosophy from dualism to its material and affective context. Immanent philosophy is their attempt to transpose

thought back to its earthly and relational constitution. Mental landscapes, Deleuze and Guattari (2003) write, “do not change haphazardly through the ages: a mountain had to rise here or a river to flow by there again recently for the ground, now dry and flat, to have a particular appearance and texture” (p. 58). They add that “thinking is neither a line drawn between subject and object nor a revolving of one around the other. Rather, thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and the earth” (p. 86). While such ideas may be new in the Western canon, they have been alive in Indigenous cosmologies for millennia (Watts, 2013). Throughout this dissertation, I look at mapping the complexities, transversal connections, ethics, and incommensurabilities of bringing together immanent philosophy, critical analysis, and Indigenous knowledge as a settler person (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Once I have explicated immanent philosophy in relation to my methodology, I will more fully engage on the tensions between critical Western thought and decolonization.

Deleuze and Guattari (2003) propose that philosophy is the process of clarifying problems and developing concepts that contain possibilities for intervening, through activity, in the living world, from which they are not separate. Put simply, philosophy is “the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 2) in response to the problems of relating in particular lived geographies. Rather than the philosopher being the composer of ideas in isolation, ideas are produced by bodies, human and more than human, already in composition. Concepts here figure as the capacity of a living system to trace its own problems and potentials. Immanent philosophy therefore expresses the capacity to pragmatically intervene in the relations between the bodies that compose a geography by determining, enunciating, and unfolding its constitutive relations and virtual potentialities. Immanent philosophy is an embodied and relational practice of being creative in the space opened up by critique.

Braidotti (2006a, 2006b) takes the immanent philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (2003) and infuses it with a feminist politics of location. Arguing that the project of philosophy itself, including the thought of Deleuze and Guattari, must be put into a historical, political, and cultural context, she elaborates a concept of cartography that infuses immanent philosophy with additional critical lenses borrowed from feminism, Marxism, and colonial studies. Cartography, according to Braidotti, maps the interrelationships of thought, land, subjects, and power/discourse. Cartography sets historical-philosophic critique and immanent philosophy in a material world structured by colonialism and capitalism. It questions the political location and politics of the philosopher and entails a critical analysis of power and the formation of subjectivity. Taking the production of knowledge as a relational and materially constituted process, the contexts of such conceptual development are of vital significance. As immanent thought, cartography neither separates mind from body and geography nor represents the world as the object of an individual consciousness. Rather, cartography transforms philosophy from a metaphysical, communicative, or reflective practice to a constructivism that has immediate pragmatic utility.

As a methodological tool, cartography aims to comprehend the constitutive forces, relationships, and affects of a particular milieu. It seeks to provide a conceptual map of the problems of living within such milieux and to propose avenues for productive and ethical action. Knowledge here is figured as the ability to comprehend how we are composed and which other reconfigurations of our constitutive elements have mobility and may be assembled differently to achieve change in the world. Deleuze and Guattari (2003) explain philosophy in this regard as a constructivism that “has two qualitatively different complementary aspects: the creation of concepts and the laying out of a plane” (p. 36). The first aspect of creation will include concepts

(such as settler ethics and the subject-supposed-to-have), whereas the laying out of a plane, in this case, will entail elaborating a field of counselling praxis with majoritarian subjects under Empire. Rather than evaluating concepts in terms of their truth and falsity, the criterion of validity for conceptual development is the capacity of thought to nourish the life that constitutes it (Braidotti, 2010b). In my research, grounding cartography in an immanent ontology provided me with a challenge and an alternative to methodologies of transcendence that figure a researcher outside the field of study. Rather, immanence repositioned me in the research process as part of an assemblage already composed of stratified lines and forces of becoming. Cartography can therefore never objectively report on a reality outside of itself, because the world and subjects are perpetually in an emergent and reciprocally evolving relationship.

Immanent philosophy distinguishes itself most clearly for me in Deleuze's (1988) reading of Spinoza. In *The Ethics* (1677), Spinoza reworked Jewish mysticism, Western rationalism, and pre-Socratic thought to develop the concept of immanence. Writing shortly after the time of Descartes (1637/1996), Spinoza introduced immanence as an ontology that does not separate mind and matter. Where Cartesian dualism presents two distinct substances of existence and orders them hierarchically, Spinoza, read through Deleuze, offers us a univocal or flat substance capable of expressing itself in infinite variation. This vision of life contrasts with the dualism of most Western philosophy that separates life into matter and a transcendent realm of thought.

Throughout the Western canon, from Plato's theory of forms to Descartes' doubting subject, philosophies of transcendence have exempted God, man, thought, history, truth, and language from their constitutive material relations. Transcendence ontologically separates the substances of existence, stalls their becomings, and subsumes difference to essential identities.

Difference, within such regimes, is usually articulated as differences between entities that are captured through taxonomy or other structures. Todd May (2005) explains that

transcendence freezes living, makes it coagulate and lose its flow; it seeks to capture the vital difference that outruns all thought and submit it to the judgement of a single perspective, a perspective that stands outside difference and gathers it into manageable categories. (p. 27)

For Deleuze and Guattari (2003), difference is immanent to life itself and the affirmation of difference has the capacity to break up transcendent systems of organization. Difference as an ontological claim foregrounds change, flux, and flows of life. Immanent thought provides mobile concepts that do not identify any particular difference but articulate difference in itself—the complete singularity of an existent without reference to what it is not or to any other set of abstract codes. Immanent thought thus sensitizes us to apprehending how current social structures and rationality work to organize, prevent, extract, and control living flows and the becomings of every assemblage. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari (2003) describe philosophy as an experiment in immanence. Such a view of immanence rejects positivist notions of repeatability and instead places ethics and politics at the heart of experimentation. Braidotti (2006b) proposes a vision of the subject as immanently composed of relationship, thought, and affect. Such a subject can attempt to build sustainable forms of relationship by affirming what might be possible in the future through a critical creative process in the present.

Braidotti's (2006b, 2010b) critique of the humanist subject is an attempt to think through what is immanent in subjectivity, what is constituted by an ecology of forces. She rejects the assumed relationship between the rational subject and universal values and instead proposes an ethics of relationship that opens opportunities for coordinated action based on the immanent

needs of those involved. Using positionality as a critical tool does not assume an essentialist vision of the subject. Drawing on feminist theories of positionality but rejecting essentialism, Braidotti proposes that cartography allows us to account for the multiplicity of forces that inhere in any subject position. Cartography, therefore, allowed me to analyze the power structures that organize and impinge on the production of the subject and knowledge, while also analyzing power as immanent force, the force of producing through relationship. In the second paper of this dissertation, I analyze how discourses of race, gender, sexuality work to stratify difference and propose instead an immanent reading of the subject.

In the overall study, I took up cartography and figuration (Braidotti, 2018; Nxumalo, 2016; St. Pierre, 1997a) as methodological tools grounded in immanence to make visible the limits of intelligibility and action while also exploring the transitions, becomings, escapes, and alternatives within systems of thought and power. As such, I drew on cartography and figuration as practices of hope to map out sustainable transformation within an ecology of responsibility and accountability in the counselling field. Braidotti (2010b) writes, that “this humble project of being worthy of the present while also resisting and of constructing together social horizons of hope and sustainability expresses an evolutionary talent that enables ‘us’ to be in this together” (p. 417). Bringing together diverse forms of philosophy, social and political theory, and human service literatures has allowed me to produce a powerful map of contemporary counselling inclusive of practices of transformation, ethical relationality, and praxis.

### **Rhizomatic Analysis**

In working through my data sources of text, concepts, and thought, I followed feminist poststructuralists Lather (1986, 1993), St. Pierre (2016), and Braidotti (2010a) in arguing that the ability to challenge normalized knowledge and the assumed subjects of such knowledge are their

own forms of validity for research. Grounded in self-reflexivity, politicized engagement, and failures of representation and language, such principles of research created an analytic practice that transgressed, unsettled, overflowed, and deconstructed (Lather 1986) what counselling and its subjects are thought to be. Simultaneous with this poststructuralist critique, I also attempted to rethink the present state of Empire toward a more ethical future. Braidotti (2010a) proposes that an adequate ethical question is one that can contribute to sustaining greater relationships and connections and “affirms life as difference-at-work” (p. 55). Methodology grounded in ethics is therefore an attempt to map the contours and processes of power, possible escape routes, points of fracture, or “lines of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 13). It is also an ethical commitment to sustaining a life connected with others on the fringes, in liminal spaces, or outside of normalized knowledge, practice, and subjectivity.

My analysis uses a critical and rhizomatic approach (Honan, 2007; St. Pierre, 1997b) by interweaving different critical theories, literatures, and reflections on my own practice to amplify their synergies, tensions, exclusions, and incommensurabilities with contemporary counselling. Rather than attempting to build an objective or neutral representation of counselling theory and practice, I articulate a politicized cartography grounded in ethics and my own positionality. This move toward an ethical and pragmatic approach to analysis is characteristic of poststructural research (St. Pierre, 1997b). I aimed to produce politically informed maps or cartographies (Braidotti, 1994, 2010b, 2018) of mental health work and to find ways of figuring (St. Pierre, 1997a) the subjects of contemporary counselling. St. Pierre argues that cartography and figurations bypass humanist notions of truth, morality, and individuality and work to trace the production of subjectivity in a complex, shifting, and layered world. I have used cartography and figuration in my papers as a way to bring forth a critical image of the subject that draws from the

present and also challenges it. Fikile Nxumalo (2016) explains that figurations do not simply represent reality but expose the “contradictions, leakages, resistances and hopeful potentialities” (p. 41) that emerge in research and practice. In this sense, figures and conceptual maps don’t tidy up the messiness of lived practice. On the contrary, they increase tensions and doubts in meaning.

The data analysis process I engaged in was rhizomatic (Coleman & Ringrose, 2013; Honan, 2004; Kouri, 2014) in that it foregrounded the productive connections and tensions among elements of different critical theories, practice experiences, and discursive systems. Rhizomes have been used as the figure of networked communities and knowledges by globalization theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2005), as well as social activist Vikki Reynolds (2010a), among others. The data could have been assembled and interpreted in multiple ways, and many of the analytic choices I made were on the basis of my conceptual framework rooted in the ethics, goals, interests, affects, and limitations outlined in the remainder of this chapter. I engaged in rhizomatic experimentation with ideas in which elements of the diverse fields of literature were analyzed in relative distinction to other concepts, then synthesized into new assemblages to see what they produce and how they function. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) write that the rhizome allows for connections between “any point to any other point” (p. 23) and that these connections produce a map that “is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entranceways and exits and its own lines of flight” (p. 21). A rhizomatic approach allowed me to foreground analyses of colonialism, capitalism, and the production of subjectivity in creative ways that also mapped power relations that reproduce mental illness and endemic material violence. Constructivism of this kind takes the empirical as

real, yet also works to demonstrate the contradictions and multiplicity of forces at work within the present that hold open the possibility that things could be otherwise (Braidotti, 2010a).

Rather than analyze data toward an objective or neutral account of counselling practice, my rhizomatic analysis was postqualitative (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013) in that it mapped processes of subjectification in power-saturated contexts. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue that “there is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)” (p. 23). By exploring the multiplicities within the literature and other data, the simple divisions of individual, social, practice, personal, political, and affective could be transgressed toward more complex and layered accounts. Braidotti (2010a) discusses desire as a blend of critique and creativity which can reconfigure elements of the present into an affirmative political map with openings onto new modes of relationality and action. What this analytical process has produced is a novel critique and representations of the field of counselling that may help to disrupt normalized and rationalized understanding of mental illness and point to radical and ethical counselling praxis.

I began my data analysis process by deeply reading the literature for practice problems, ethical tensions, and critical analyses of capitalism and colonialism. I then read across the literature for patterns, inconsistencies, incommensurabilities, amplifications, and productive tensions. I kept notes of my own ideas, affects, embodied responses, intuitions, and imaginations as I read. I created short summaries that represented key concepts, ethics, or problems, and I began to build a toolbox of critical concepts, analyses, and practices. I assembled these summaries and ideas into shifting conceptual maps and experimented with how I could bring about an analysis that was productive, ethically grounded, interesting, and novel. I worked toward developing a transversal account of critical counselling (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016) that

drew on different fields of knowledge in order to see points of connection and potential subversion. St. Pierre (2018) explains that writing analyses in postqualitative research is a form of living. She argues that a researcher must become different in the world as the theories they are writing about sink into their bones. This personal and professional transformation through engagements of reading and writing were at the centre of my research and counselling praxis.

My intention in such experimental rhizomatic mapping was to extend the critique of mainstream counselling and to challenge normalized representations of mental illness in majoritarian subjects. Critical analysis helped produce complex representations and figurations (St. Pierre, 1997a) that allowed for new modes of thought. Writing, figuring, and conceptual diagramming (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003; Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016; Lather, 1993; Nxumalo, 2016; St. Pierre, 1997a) were my three main approaches to analyzing data. I was able to figure the majoritarian subject in a way that provides new opportunities to engage with social justice and politics in counselling. Specifically, I conceptually mapped counselling within the context of Empire as capito-colonialism and suggested that there are numerous intervention points in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity.

### **Toward a Settler Ethics in Research and Practice**

Foregrounding settler ethics informed by decolonization and Indigenous scholarship, I have troubled straightforward engagements of settlers with Indigenous people and others who are or have been marginalized within colonized spaces. Eve Tuck, Indigenous Unangax scholar, and her colleague Wayne Yang (2012) explain, however, that settler people risk using the language of decolonization, particularly in academia, to absolve themselves of the guilt and responsibility layered in land theft and attempted genocide. They also remind us that settlers entering into Indigenous spaces of knowledge and appropriating concepts, practices, and tools replicates many

of the mechanisms of colonialism. By foregrounding the complications and contradictions of working with decolonization as a settler person, I have attempted to elaborate a concept and practice of settler ethics which might be a troubled subset of decolonization specific to settlers. Using critique, vulnerability, and an analysis of difference, I have worked at describing a form of settler ethics that is attentive to decolonization and Indigenous knowledge yet stops short of appropriating these modes of thought for myself. While it is clear that forms of ethics that challenge colonialism will be required for settlers to refigure themselves (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016), I have elaborated a settler ethics of engagement, including the tensions, problems, and work still to be done.

Beyond the risks of appropriation, fetishizing, and idealizing Indigenous peoples and cultures, I have remained aware that settlers continually prioritize their own needs and interests even when engaging in critically informed allyship or counselling. I attempt to critique how colonial recuperations are embodied in our professional habits, discourses, and performances. It was essential as a starting point, therefore, for me to track how colonialism has been perpetrated in explicitly racist and genocidal forms, as well as more implicitly in well-intentioned or unconsciously motivated engagements by settlers. I center this history in my mapping of contemporary counselling. With the focus of the research being on settlers and other majoritarian people, I highlight the reiterative nature of colonialism in centering the needs and worries of the colonizer and question if anything at all can be done to impede its perpetuation. I ask about the possibility of majoritarian subjects becoming more accountable and working toward material change in support of Indigenous sovereignty.

By foregrounding ethics in research and practice, my goal was to join thought and action in an evolving praxis of counselling with young people (J. White, 2007). Such a praxis is

disruptive of more conventional counselling, which, as I elaborate, is fully complicit in capitalism and colonialism and generally leaves hidden the reproduction of neoliberal settler subjectivity. This project fails in itself to alter the material conditions of Indigenous peoples and instead makes public and transparent the situation of settler colonialism as it relates to counselling, severely limiting its decolonizing force. It will rest with my future work and the work of those who are influenced by this project if it has material consequences in the repatriation of Indigenous lands and the building of Indigenous sovereignties (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

### **Decolonizing Methodologies**

In the introduction of their *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2008) write that, “sadly, qualitative research in many, if not all, of its forms (observation, participation, interviewing, ethnography) serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth” (p. 4). Two decades prior, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) began her classic text *Decolonizing Methodologies* with a warning: “From the vantage point of the colonized . . . the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism . . . the word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary” (p. 1). Smith carefully detailed the embeddedness of Western research within imperialism, racism, sexism, and colonization and described research as “a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other” (p. 2). In this struggle, Smith understood the transformation of institutionalized academic practice and traditional research frameworks as a significant step equal to that of actually carrying out research. The approaches she suggested are situating research within a broader history and agenda of decolonization, working to reconcile institutional

demands for rigour and validity with Indigenous criteria of usefulness and justice, being transparent, particularly regarding limitations of a research project, and engaging in a collaborative dialogue with researchers in the field.

In this section, I engage with Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies from my location as a settler on unceded Coast and Straits Salish territories and waterways and elaborate some of the problems settlers face in doing research on occupied territories. Settler academics are not only produced through a history that systematically disenfranchises Indigenous knowledge, but our continued presence as central producers of knowledge is structurally reliant on, and reiterative of, the perpetuation of settler colonialism. Under such conditions, settlers are left with few options, ranging from working at a distance from Indigenous contexts and people, which perpetuates the denial of our constitutive relations with colonialism, to engaging with Indigenous research, which risks replicating an abhorrent past.

There have been some attempts to develop ethical research collaboration principles, such as the OCAP—ownership, control, access, and possession—guidelines for research first elaborated by the National Steering Committee of the First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS) in 1998 and updated by the First Nations Information Governance Committee in 2002 (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2019). Since then, Indigenous nations and organizations have further developed their own ethical protocols, and research institutions such as universities and state-sponsored research bodies have elaborated strict protocols for Indigenous research, such as those of the Government of Canada (2015) informed by the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Indigenous Research Ethics. Importantly, individual nations, communities, and groups have their own protocols, many of which are based on both traditional principles and ethics and those developed in more recent engagements. This

paper seeks a critically informed ethics for settler research that attends specifically to the complexities of power, discourse, subjectivity, and identity in research and counselling frameworks. Through a brief summary of two texts on Indigenous methodologies, L. T. Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) and Shawn Wilson's *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (2008), I sketch the problems of settler research. I then turn to my own location and lineage as a settler to discuss critical practices that challenge the dominance of Eurocentrism.

### **Genealogy**

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in her classical text *Decolonizing Methodologies*, explains that “coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization” (1999, p. 34). Building on the work of both Smith and Karen Martin (2003a), Shawn Wilson (2008) in *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, provides a global history of research conducted both *on* and *by* Indigenous people. Wilson articulates this Indigenous research history as occurring in five overlapping phases, which I outline below.

Wilson (2008) identifies the first phase of Indigenous research as “terra nullius” (p. 45), emphasizing the colonial mentality that understood Australia as a new world void of recognizable human society and Canada as a domain of the imperial British Commonwealth. The research focus during this period, roughly 1770–1900, amounted to cataloguing animal and plant life for commercial purposes and clearing and controlling Indigenous lands. Indigenous peoples and societies were treated variously as nonexistent, a nuisance, or a subhuman group incapable of thought or invention (L. T. Smith, 1999). Smith explains that ethnocentric and anthropocentric conceptions of empiricism and positivism in the West produced classificatory systems that organized people and knowledges hierarchically. With imperialism and Western superiority as

foundations for research in the colonial context, “technologies of research were . . . instruments for legitimating various colonial practices” (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 60). Research facilitated resource extraction, underwrote racist taxonomies of humans, and justified Indigenous land dispossession and genocide.

In the second phase of Wilson’s (2008) history, 1900–1940, Indigenous people continued to be dispossessed of their lands through forced relocation and genocide. In this period research “occurred with government structural support and through agents such as the church” (p. 47). Research during this period was inherently racist and included measuring “native” intelligence, describing “primitive” lifestyles, and archiving the cultures of people who were thought to be on the brink of extinction (Martin, 2003a). Wilson calls this phase “traditionalizing” because “research prescribed and imposed a pan identity and experience based upon physical categories established within the discipline of anthropology” (p. 48). Categories such as “traditional” and “assimilated” underscored many research agendas, and Indigenous identity was consistently undermined by a negative valuation relative to white settler personhood.

The “assimilationist phase” of 1940–1970 (Wilson, 2008, p. 49) followed the traditionalizing phase and shifted the research agenda further into the study of mythologies and social/kinship structures. It was during this period that settler researchers gained status as an expert class who would develop systems of knowledge and potential solutions to “Indian problems.” Wilson argues that “the study *of* and *on* (but never *by*) Aboriginal people became and remains profitable business for academics who want to advance their careers” (p. 49, emphasis in original). Furthermore, non-Indigenous governments used research to back legislation that regulated all aspects of Indigenous life, from marriage to mobility, schooling to employment.

The pervading stance was one of paternalistic protectionism that sought to assimilate Indigenous people into the dominant society, one tactic of which was the residential school system.

The fourth and fifth phases of Wilson's (2008) history are the early (1970–1990) and recent (1990–2000) Aboriginal research periods. The early Aboriginal research phase was characterized by continued interpretation and representation of Indigenous people, cultures, worldviews, and lands through the dominant Western paradigm and discourse. Research, somewhat motivated by growing human rights movements, was welfarist in nature and entered into areas of linguistics, education, and health (Martin, 2003a). Wilson explains that research revolved around topics that Westerners found exciting, exotic, or easily understood. Indigenous methods, voice, and self-representation continued to be missing in this period as Western academics mediated Indigenous welfare and representations of culture and knowledge.

Recent Aboriginal research started in the 1990s and, according to Wilson (2008) and Martin (2003a), came on the coattails of political redress in Australia and Canada that inaugurated Indigenist research. While it was the case that during the 1990s environmental discourses commodified Indigenous knowledge as a potential solution to global economic and ecological problems (Martin, 2014), it was also the case that collaborative research emerged. For the first time in settler colonial states, Wilson argues, Indigenous-led research was taking place and the development of a formal Indigenous research paradigm began. Clearly, Indigenous people have always had diverse ways of learning and doing research; however, these were unacknowledged or suffocated within Euro-Western imperialism and the epistemologies and ontologies of academia.

The first step toward an Indigenous paradigm, Wilson explains, was taken within a Western framework and necessitated separating Indigenous worldviews from academic research

pursuits. While Indigenous peoples were beginning to participate in Western research, they did so through Western paradigms. The second step, however, introduced the notion of the Indigenous paradigm, but sought to “maintain mainstream western influence to avoid marginalization” (Wilson, 2008, p. 53). Third, as exemplified by Smith’s (1999) canonical text, Indigenous research was done by Indigenous people and focused on Indigeneity, Indigenous culture and knowledge, decolonization, and the Indigenization of research methodologies. Western paradigms and projects at this stage were challenged and new research agendas were developed by Indigenous people and communities. Finally, the fourth step or stage in the development of an Indigenous paradigm “honors and illuminates [Indigenous] worldviews” (Wilson, 2008, p. 54). Martin (2003b) calls this the Indigenist research phase and emphasizes the development of Indigenous research principles, forms, and structures. These go beyond ownership, control, access, and partnership principles (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2019) and include community-led research where ethics and research practice are guided or developed by Indigenous people in community. Indigenist research, Martin argues, “occurs through centering Aboriginal Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing in alignment with aspects of western qualitative research frameworks” (p. 12).

### **Settler Ethics**

Within the contexts of settler colonialism and the history of Indigenous research, Wilson (2008) offers two avenues for methodological development: (1) attempt to decolonize existing methodologies and render them pragmatic for Indigenous research; and (2) begin from an Indigenous paradigm and develop tools for research. The first option, Wilson explains, “is an attempt to insert an Indigenous perspective into one of the major paradigms” (p. 39). Wilson judges this approach to be generally ineffective because the foundational epistemologies and

ontologies on which Western methodologies are based are difficult to alter. He therefore favours the second option and devotes more than half his text to explicating the epistemological, ontological, methodological, and axiological foundations of an Indigenous research paradigm. The two options he proposes equate to, in my view, an Indigenous perspective that is inserted into an area that had previously excluded Indigenous voice or a methodology that developed outside dominant research frameworks altogether. In either case, issues of identity, history, the politics of knowledge, and ethics preclude easy adoption by settlers. Settlers lack the knowledge of Indigenous ontologies or epistemologies to do the work called for, and they risk appropriating or misrepresenting Indigenous knowledges, as has been done innumerable times in the history of research. That being the case, however, Wilson does extend an open invitation to settlers to engage with his work that cannot be ignored due to the difficulty of the task. Taking these caveats and risks into consideration, I argue that settler ethics in research might be a subset of decolonization that is specific to settlers and connected in critical ways to their own identities, knowledges, and lineages. Developing a concept that is subsumed within decolonization suggests, for me, that decolonization is prior and foremost in relation to settler ethics. It requires repositioning Indigenous knowledge and activism at the centre and developing an ethics that is accountable and responsive to this priority.

As a settler now living on unceded territories and waterways of the Coast and Straits Salish peoples, my academic and research work is inextricably embedded in ongoing colonization. Our university, the University of Victoria, is a colonial structure built on stolen lands of the Lekwungen and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples (Cheryl Bryce, personal communication). Our programs privilege dominant Western knowledge and our academic relationships are saturated in power relations structured by colonialism, capitalism,

heteropatriarchy, and racism (McCaffrey, 2011). In such a context, I am humbled by my Indigenous friends, teachers, students, and mentors who have been generous and patient with me as I come to be aware of my own colonial past, and I am forever indebted to them. To be accountable to these people means, for me, to do more than interrupt colonial erasures; it means to make a proposal, subject myself to criticism, and take action. My principal objective in this research project is to understand, communicate, and thereby interrupt the reproduction of the majoritarian settler subject in my field of research and practice. This involves listening to Indigenous peoples, as well as speaking to settler people in an attempt to undo our habits of ignorance and violence and prevent their replication in coming generations of settler people.

Karen Martin (2014) argues that “colonialism by any other name (or project) is still colonialism” and that “the discourse of creativity serves not as a vehicle of social, political, economic and educational transformation but of re-invention of previous master discourses” (p. 293). While the creation of new settler methodologies may provide opportunities for social justice work, they may also distract from the return of Indigenous lands. To be decolonizing, research must attend to “the repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1). In an attempt to be accountable to this end, I have considered throughout the project if I am attending to how my research and practice work is related to Indigenous land sovereignty and the reproduction of the settler state and subjectivity. This project falls short of being decolonizing. I have discussed the tensions and contradictions of settler research and the challenges of ethics. I believe my work critically reflects on the tensions, challenges, and contradictions of attempting to do ethical research or practice as a settler person.

Settler ethics as a research and practice approach means to place my thoughts and practices under a decolonizing critique that asks about the impact of the work on the repatriation

of Indigenous lands and life and the reinstatement of Indigenous governance (Tuck & Yang, 2012). While borrowing this standard, it is different for settlers to attempt decolonization, because our practices of doing research inevitably, to some degree, recenter us and our work and take up intellectual space. Decolonization, as the end to settler subjectivity and claims to land, is therefore an impossible task for settlers unless they become something radically different than what they are. It is this impossibility that requires settlers to undo themselves and their attachments in ways that also undo Empire's hold on Indigenous land and life. Settler ethics are produced, therefore, in the dialectic between recentering white settler affects and problematics on the one hand, and, on the other, critiquing the settler's insatiable appetite for all things Indigenous, including decolonization. It is my gambit throughout this dissertation that what is understood as emotional crisis or mental illness is one opportunity counsellors have to intervene in recuperating settler dominance.

Settler ethics and practices of accountability in this research also include working with an Indigenous supervisor and Indigenous colleagues in academia and counselling who can critique, inform, and support my work. It means centering Indigenous perspectives in my work and intervening in settler denials, backlash, and antipathy. I am also committed to applying my ideas in Indigenous and non-Indigenous practice contexts to explore their political (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015) and catalytic (Lather, 1986) validity. As an academic practice and a practice of listening, it means to read Indigenous knowledge from a settler position and respond from that position. It means spending time with Elders and learning to walk in two worlds (J. Charlie, personal communication, 2017). Settler ethics is about finding ways of representing relationships, learnings, and gifts in ways that acknowledge the complexity, harms, and care that infuse living relationships across diverse positionalities.

## **Social Justice in Settler Colonial Contexts**

Drawing on social justice and activist work, Reynolds (2010a, 2016) writes from the position of a settler and explains that solidarity and allyship are promoted by communities of shared values, feelings, interests, and responsibilities. Solidarity, for Reynolds, is about interconnection and belonging, about seeing how multiple forms of oppression are interconnected and how the liberation of any one person is entwined with the liberation of all. Drawing on intersectional feminism, Reynolds keeps various forms of oppression conceptually distinct while also seeking connection between them. Reynolds (2010a) proposes six guiding principles in what she calls an ethical stance of justice doing. These include centering ethics, connecting forms of justice, naming power, fostering sustainability, critically engaging with language, and structuring safety. In the following pages, I will specifically engage with the principles of centering ethics through the development of a settler ethics, connecting forms of justice through intersectional analyses, naming power in the counselling field and more broadly in Empire, and critically engaging with language through an analysis of discourse. The guiding principles that Reynolds proposes support many forms of social justice; however, as John Winslade (2015) explains, there are various forms and discourses of social justice and that they do not always align. Tuck and Yang (2012) go further to argue that many forms of social justice, particularly those aligned with democracy and land protection, are incommensurable with decolonization.

In a survey of educators, Winslade (2015) found some of the main veins of social justice to be a focus on diversity and inclusion, equity and equality, consciousness raising and challenging internalized assumptions, neutrality vs. positionality, emancipation, and attending to historical and contemporary injustice, inequality, and harms. Counselling, in a register of social justice, therefore, must challenge social adaptation in contexts of injustice and instead recognize

its involvement in injustice and strive to make amends and participate in an ongoing process of seeking justice for all. Social justice is here figured as a horizon. Rather than something that is reachable, it is figured as an ongoing practice of analysis, action, and striving. Such a process-oriented approach to social justice in counselling must constantly ask about the social worlds in which practice takes place, the identities and positionality of all who are involved, and the horizons of hope and possibility for rendering freedom, justice, and equality

In the field of counselling, social justice has been articulated many ways. Reynolds and Hammoud-Beckett (2018) assert that social justice is principally about taking overt positions in relation to violence, oppression, power, privilege, and social control. They propose that resisting neutrality, competition, and the replication of social norms is necessary for justice-doing in counselling. Following Paulette Regan (2010), Reynolds and Hammoud-Beckett (2018) call counsellors to name and respond to white supremacy and colonization, and question what it would mean “for the settler majority to shoulder the collective burden of the history and legacy of residential schools” (p. 6). Drawing on Paul Kivel (2007), they ask counsellors to question to what degree counselling work accommodates people to lives of individual suffering and to what degree our work challenges or interrupts structures of oppression.

A social justice orientation in counselling work orients practitioners to how sense and meaning are made from injustice and how people come to internalize discourses that normalize oppression, discrimination, and injustice (Winslade, 2018). Understanding that the way people experience and interact with the world is informed by internalized constructions of identity, Winslade proposes that counsellors can help individuals desubjectify and develop counter or alternative stories to those saturated by negative internalized discourses. He also challenges millenarian visions of social justice that promote grand narratives and images of a fully equitable

future. Instead, he suggests that we stay on guard for how emancipations often lead to further exclusions and instead enact an ethics of hospitality as generosity and inclusion of the other. This position centers the ongoing nature of social justice work and how completion is always deferred. It also figures the social justice activist as the agent of generosity and hospitality. Settler people working for social justice must specifically deal with the settler's position as the one who has taken land and excluded Indigenous peoples in all forms of participation. Making social justice work a labour of inclusion and generosity must deal with the colonial power that underscores one's ability to include and be generous and hospitable. This is where Tuck and Yang (2012) call for an ethics of incommensurability that can name the impossibility of reconciling the histories of genocide, land theft, and exclusion that now substantiate settler people as possible agents of social justice work. While the ongoing work of social justice must be enlivened, as Tuck and Yang (2016) suggest, "with the spirit of resistance to the constant re/production of injustice" (p. 3), it must do so through an analysis of its own failures.

Tuck and Yang (2016) provide a critical analysis of social justice discourse and question its hegemony in much of the radical agenda. They question "what justice is, or more precisely what justice wants, what it produces, whom it fails, where it operates, when it is in effect, and what it lacks" (p. 3). Arguing that justice is a placeholder for resistance against displacement, dispossession, and death, Tuck and Yang see it as a catalytic concept, one that challenges fixed notions and instead wants something and initiates or does work. As a collectivist concept, the "social" of social justice challenges the failures of the state in its practices of rendering justice and goes further to challenge the injustices brought about by the state and its apparatuses. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, Tuck and Yang question the wants of justice by considering

both what justice wants and lacks. To consider what justice desires, Tuck and Yang (2016) argue that we might

examine the role of the state and its functioning through promising, harnessing, and manufacturing hopes for justice. The state is a desiring-machine of justice in the Deleuze and Guattarian sense of an apparatus that consumes, produces, and excretes justice.

However, we might also consider how desire alludes to community and nonstate actors' desires for justice, which exceed those of the state, and their movements toward and away from the state. Desire includes hopes and disappointments with justice, the multiple lines of flight to and from justice, and the lines that go beyond and exceed justice. To consider what justice lacks is one way to frame the horizons of justice and to gesture at what is beyond justice. If justice cannot deliver itself, what does it actually deliver and what is lacking in its promise? (p. 5)

Rather than directly answer the question of what justice desires or lacks, Tuck and Yang (2016) outline a discourse of redress to social injustice. This redress discourse figures justice as: a remembering of dispossession and death; a limited form of action that cannot escape the repetitions of injustice and redress; limited by the state and its claim to supreme power; an impossibility due to revolutionary ideals; a mediation between grievance and grief; and an interval between the not anymore of hetero-patriarchal-neoliberal-colonialism and the not yet of a decolonized and socially just future. These coordinates for social justice clearly challenge the notions of a teleology and instead propose an ongoing posture of critique and activism in the face of both justice's failures and its idealism. To hold social justice as an ethics and orientation, therefore, means to question what is desirable and disappointing (Hartman, 1997). Taking a

social justice perspective into my research, I was guided in my choice of literature and the analyses that I applied to the field of mainstream counselling.

While Indigenous theorists decolonize methodologies and develop Indigenous paradigms of research, I propose that settlers and other non-Indigenous people work at developing new methodologies rooted in critical variants of our own philosophic lineage, particularly those informed by or seeking social justice. I suggest that although colonialism has been and continues to be an almost totalizing force, there may still be starting points within the Western tradition worthy of consideration. Colonialism has suppressed, not only the life and knowledge of Indigenous peoples, but countless other traditions and ways of knowing within the imperial domain. I will return to the quote from Denzin and Lincoln (2008): “Sadly, qualitative research in many, if not all, of its forms (observation, participation, interviewing, ethnography) serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth” (p. 4). My methodological move here is to put focus on Denzin and Lincoln’s “if not all” and investigate what possibilities poststructural critique might yield for my research. I argue that there may be critical voices within the white, settler colonial, and largely male Western philosophical traditions who were aware of its imperial agenda and worked against it from within. I explore whether these critical voices, when subjected to the social justice ethics and decolonizing critique outlined above, may have promise to inform a postqualitative methodology (St. Pierre, 2016).

### **What Is Critique?**

I have aimed to find starting points within the Western traditions that are critical of the project of Euro-Western epistemological dominance, and have sought to build from this critical base in my own lineage and work toward new methodological ethics and approaches that can ally with Indigenous research principles. Through this work, I have attempted to work from

within the Western context to challenge the unquestioned reproduction of dominant settler epistemology. In this section, I explore the critical perspectives of Foucault (1984, 1997) and Butler (2002) to think about how Western imperial knowledge systems may be challenged through processes of desubjectification, placing importance on care and vulnerability in research contexts. In crafting and enacting this methodology, I attempt to embody an ethics of vulnerability in which a settler subject critiques themselves and their practices in order to make transparent the functioning of power. I hope to build a methodology that works with the disruptive and critical voices within Western paradigms and can also be accountable to the settler colonial history. Recognizing that Indigenous knowledges have temporally and physically preceded the Western canon, there is no absolute divide between the two but rather the development of one form of knowledge in the space of the other. It is beyond the scope of this paper to map the overlaps, appropriations, conversations, and exchanges between Indigenous knowledges and Western philosophies (see, e.g., Bignall & Patton, 2010; Deloria, 2009; Watts, 2013), yet I situate my work ethically in this ongoing, and sometimes violent, conversation between these forms of knowledge.

My methodological considerations regarding research by settlers in colonial contexts led me to explore some of the more critical theorists in the Western canon who deal with power and subjectivity, namely, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Butler, and Braidotti. Foucault's (1984, 1997) methods, specifically genealogy and archeology, are epistemological critiques of the fields of intelligibility that make objects and subjects of knowledge recognizable and that demarcate true and false statements. Here, Foucault shifts, from using preestablished categories, knowledges, and values that substantiate judgments, to analyzing the power relations that make particular categories and values intelligible in the first place. He highlights the multiplicity of

critical approaches by juxtaposing Kant's interrogation of the Enlightenment with "the little polemical professional activities that are called critique" (1997, p. 42). Situating himself in relation to the former, Foucault invites us to consider the critical attitude as "a certain way of thinking, speaking and acting, a certain relationship to what exists, to what one knows, to what one does, a relationship to society, to culture and also a relationship to others" (p. 42). Critique, for Foucault, is therefore a relational practice, a practice that will be saturated in ethics and power and that seems to depend on an object of criticism, even if that object is an abstract system of knowledge and values.

Foucault (1997) proposes a critical "historical-philosophical practice" (p. 55) that constructs a history "traversed by the question of the relationships between structures of rationality which articulate true discourse and the mechanisms of subjugation which are linked to it" (p. 56). By arguing that knowledge, society, and subjectivity are primarily historical in the sense of being situated contingently in relation to a past that could have been otherwise, Foucault proposes critique as exploring the possibilities of knowledge and subjectivities being other to what they are currently. Historical-philosophical practice, what Braidotti (1994, 2006b) develops as a cartographic method, maps the history of a particular matrix of epistemological and ontological categories constituted by the prevailing system of knowledge. Through historical-philosophical or cartographic examination of what comes to be considered true and who counts as a subject at any point in time, we can extract alternative relationships to knowledge, power, oneself, others, and society. By applying historical-philosophic critique to counselling, I attempt to map the prevailing bio-medical-industrial complex and explore system's limits, contradictions, breaking points, and points of resistance.

Historical-philosophic practice takes into its purview the normative frameworks for judgment that other forms of critique use as their foundation (Foucault, 1997). Taking Kant's (1784/1999) analysis of the Enlightenment into his present, Foucault (1984) asks how a critical attitude toward the structures of rationality and power might provide new avenues for self-production. By unmasking and speaking frankly about the structures of rationality, critique, for Foucault, becomes "the movement by which the subject gives himself (*sic*) the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth" (p. 47). Rather than being subjected to a discourse of truth, the subject irreverently calls upon a right to think and self-fashion otherwise. Critique, therefore, is an ethics of "voluntary insubordination" (p. 47), or autonomy within a matrix of truth, power, and subjectivity. Foucault argues that a degree of freedom is available in the critical distance achieved through historicization—by showing that things could have been, and still can be, otherwise. By crafting a critical relationship to the dominant structures of intelligibility (calling normative legibility into question through historical-philosophic practice), a subject can know and produce themselves, and the world they inhabit, differently. The goal of critique is therefore not simply calling into question systems of power, but recrafting oneself in the space provided by critique.

The historical analysis of the emergence of specific intelligibilities that produce and limit truth allows us to question the limits that current truths place on our freedom. Furthermore, questioning how produced truths subject individuals to particular practices and relationships allows alternative relationships, freedoms, and truths to be practiced. Critique's objects are the structures that organize subjectification, and its aim is to facilitate resistance and alternative practices of subject formation. Foucault (1997) explains that all attempts at subjection or governance of individuals are met with an "opposite affirmation" (p. 44), the strategies or art of

“not being governed quite so much” (p. 45). During the time of ecclesiastical rule this meant challenging the authority of the church through biblical critique, and in the 16<sup>th</sup> century strategies to resist sovereign rule included claiming natural or universal rights of individuals (Foucault, 1997). Critique is therefore a questioning of authority and the relationships that secure a particular set of relationships between power, truth, and the subject. To speak against the current regime of truth is therefore a practice of desubjectification. Desubjectification, however, also entails standing against or outside the regimes of intelligibility that secure viable subject position. Critique and desubjectification therefore are related to vulnerability and risk, particularly as they are structured by context and identity.

Vulnerability and risk are contextually shaped by identity, and some subjects are always already in locations of precarity by virtue of being nondominant. For such subjects, it is far less a choice or practice to form themselves on the margins of discourse and intelligibility. For dominant subjects, such as settlers, to challenge the structures of intelligibility or produce oneself on the margins of recognizable subjectivity is to increase one’s insecurity as a subject. Butler (2002) explains that while a subject is compelled to form itself through the practices that are in place, a disobedience or inservitude to dominant principles of subject formation can produce an “ontologically insecure position” (p. 226) through which new practices of self-formation can occur. Ontological insecurity therefore refers to both the increased jeopardy entailed in working on the margins of intelligibility, as well as the increased space for new practices of self-formation. Ontologically insecure subject positions are riskier, yet produce a space of critical self-production and new practices and relationships.

The role of risk and vulnerability in research contexts can be thought through Foucault’s (1977/1995) explication of critique as “opposite affirmation” (p. 44) and “voluntary

insubordination” (p. 47). Vulnerability is not evenly distributed in research or practice, particularly in contexts where participants are being asked to share experiences or thoughts which can become coded as atypical, abnormal, irrational, illegible, traumatic, difficult, or marginal. Perhaps the risk is even greater when a person’s identity, that which makes them interesting or important as a participant, is itself precarious or marginal (Tuck, 2009). Thinking vulnerability in research contexts with Foucault’s historical-philosophical practice (1977/1995, p. 55) raises questions regarding the mechanisms of subjugation related to discourses on boundaries, safety, research ethics, and distance: How do researchers become subjectified through research discourses and methods? What forms of desubjectification and insubordination are possible for majoritarian researchers through critique and practices of vulnerability? These questions catalyzed much of the research and analysis in this dissertation’s three papers and conclusion. While a definitive answer was not achieved, I believe that the practice of self-critique afforded by grappling with these questions is important for an ethics of counselling and research in contemporary settler societies.

To begin to engage these questions here, I will weave the topic of vulnerability in research with Foucault’s notion of critique via Butler (2002), who argues that if “self-forming is done in disobedience to the principles by which one is formed, then virtue becomes the practice by which the self forms itself in desubjugation, which is to say that it risks its deformation as a subject” (p. 226). The practice of becoming vulnerable in research therefore coincides with the critique of dominant principles of boundaries, neutrality, intelligibility, and objectivity, and may inaugurate an “ontologically insecure” (p. 226) subjectivity for those involved in critical research. Butler (2002) writes that “there is thus a dimension of the methodology itself which partakes of fiction, which draws fictional lines between rationalization and desubjugation,

between the knowledge-power nexus and its fragility and limit” (p. 222). Butler begins her reflections on Foucauldian critique by asking if critique can be disengaged from particulars, from the specific objects it references, and be generalized as an essence or abstraction. To answer that question, she disentangles critique from the practices of fault finding and judgment, arguing that for Foucault critique “is precisely a practice that not only suspends judgement . . . but offers a new practice of values based on that very suspension” (p. 212). Furthermore, Butler engages Foucault (1997) on the issue of ethics and argues that for him ethics are a self-crafted and stylized attitude of inservitude toward recognized norms. Butler follows Foucault here and locates ethics outside judgments that would depend on established categories and values and instead emphasizes Foucault’s practices of desubjectification and self-crafting. By working through these dimensions of Butler’s work on Foucault, I will develop the value of vulnerability and care in the desubjectifying processes at work in postqualitative research and critical counselling.

Butler (2002) argues that critique, for Foucault, both takes on dominant rationalities as its object and works in the subjectifying space created by critique. Critique therefore brings into view the very frameworks which had hitherto been the invisible basis for judgment and ethics and subject formation. The critic does this by making visible the relationships among knowledge, subjects, and power that support particular epistemologies and normative categories of recognition. In my research, these are the clinical categories instituted by settler colonialism, developmental psychology, psychiatric discourse, bio-medicalization, and affective labour in globalized capitalism. Further, critique aims at exploring other ways of knowing that have been suppressed by dominant frameworks—subjugated knowledges—with Indigenous frameworks, critical psychology, and poststructuralism being starting points for me. Butler poses the relativist

questions regarding the requirement of some more fundamental moral framework or judgment to do the work of evaluating different epistemologies, particularly in their promise to deliver a better world. She answers her own question by arguing that critique only becomes necessary when a crisis point is reached within a particular epistemological field and “the categories by which social life are ordered produce a certain incoherence or entire realms of unspeakability” (p. 215). Critique therefore is not exactly the establishment of a new discourse, but the tearing open of one field and the surveying of others that may establish themselves in the space created. Similarly, critique as an ethics is not a compliance or conformity with established rules or laws or a full investment in an alternative norm, but rather a critical relation to norms in general.

A practice of critique that is disobedient to dominant mores seeks a transformation of self through difference, a transformation that can establish an intentional and singular moral character (Butler, 2002). The singular, however, is not necessarily stable, and it is only in reference to a multiplicity of historically embedded practices of self-formation that a critical attitude can be established as a moral foundation of the self. Through the study of the various ways morals and norms have historically constituted the subject and those who were excluded from subject positions, and the establishment of a critical distance to them, criticism becomes a practice of constituting a new subject. Butler here elaborates critique as virtue, ethics, and moral attitude. Rather than understanding critique as resistance to authority, she emphasizes the artistic and stylistic aspects of self-formation or self-crafting. The tensions between the unsettling of the subject and its reinstantiation in a new form is the space of exploration that I attend to in the following papers. I argue that counselling can very much be a liminal space where critique, vulnerability, and self-crafting can intersect with a radical politics that does not work to resubjectify within majoritarian coordinates.

Butler (2002) says the following about the risks related to invalidating the dominant orderings of truth and power:

How does one call into question the exhaustive hold that such rules of ordering have upon certainty without risking uncertainty, without inhabiting that place of wavering which exposes one to the charge of immorality, evil, aestheticism. The critical attitude is not moral according to the rules whose limits that very critical relation seeks to interrogate. But how else can critique do its job without risking the denunciations of those who naturalize and render hegemonic the very moral terms put into question by critique itself? (p. 220)

Butler (2002) answers these questions by following Foucault's analyses of the relationship between the forms of life that are possible and not possible within a given regime and the possibility of suspending the ontological production of a given regime altogether. She argues that while power provides the categories of legibility that have founded subjectivity, the practice or art of critique "will produce a subject who is not readily knowable under the established rubric of truth" (p. 220). The dominant regime of truth provides the ontological matrix within which particular lives become recognizable as such. Desubjugation therefore entails ontological risk—the risk of one's life not counting—as well as ontological possibility of crafting a way of life outside the ones that are currently known. The intimate relationship between freedom and risk, Butler (2002) writes, links "the limits of what I might become and the limits of what I might risk knowing" (p. 221). In turn, risky practices of self-crafting delineate the categories of knowledge which themselves are most vulnerable to change. Practices of subjectification on the margins of the dominant categories call into question the foundations of knowledge which substantiate their norms.

Importantly, Butler (2002) argues that self-formation always takes place within some given framework of norms. While some subjects can desubjectify and critique relative to one nexus of power and truth, self-formation is never fully self-initiated, completely outside of norms, or fully successful at not being governed by all. First, self-formation is achieved through the institution of reflexivity and the burden of formation, and thus “self-making . . . is never fully self-inaugurated” (p. 225). This would relate to a new settler ethics of research that is liminal yet able to provide some structure for ethics and aesthetics as self-crafting performance. Second, formation takes place within political contexts such that “there is no self-forming outside of the norms that orchestrate the possible formation of the subject” (p. 226). Today, these norms are determined by the dictates of globalized capitalism as an outgrowth of settler colonialism. Lastly, Foucault (1977/1995) clearly argues that defying authority is always a question of particulars: “how not to be governed like that, by that, in the name of those principles . . . not like that, not for that, not by them” (p. 44). Freedom, therefore, is never completely voluntary, complete, self-initiated, or outside knowledge and power. While a particular system can be resisted, it is always resisted through another network of power that one never internally or autonomously deploys. As settlers, we then must question what we need to appropriate to deploy a counter-colonial project. Crafting a conceptual and practice framework for critical counselling praxis is perhaps one avenue for deploying professional power differently with young people.

### **Discourse and Power**

Foucault (1979) theorized discourse as a constitutive and binding social force that substantiated power relations within society. Knowledge, in the form of discourse, is produced through historically contingent systems of power and, in turn, reproduces those same positions and relations. Applying Foucault’s notion of discourse, Nikolas Rose (2007) explains that psy-

knowledges, the knowledges embodied and recognized as legitimate in the social practices of psychology and psychiatry, not only are a product of power relations, but also work to form the subjectivity of those within its grasp. Going further, Rose argues that psy-knowledges have had a dominant role in the production of subjectivity on a larger scale because their discourse has infused social meanings regarding what it is to be a “self” in the modern world. Psy-knowledges, counselling theories, developmental psychology, and categories of identity, therefore, can all be analyzed as discourses that shape positions within society, as well as values, needs, privileges, and access to resources. These discourses, furthermore, must be analyzed in their mutual constitution of global capitalism and settler colonialism via neoliberal individualism, competition, and alienation from community and traditional cultures.

Thomas Szasz (2007) explains that discourse, at the intersection of psy-knowledges, is a means of social control whereby conformist neoliberal social behaviour is normalized, and variant, atypical, or anomalous behaviour is undesirable and tied to mental illness. Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) concept of “collective assemblages of enunciation” (p. 85) immanently connects the material realm of physical objects to discourse, language, and the symbolic through a system or relays. They argue, in a similar way to Foucault (1979), that language does not represent reality, nor is language a personal possession. Instead, language circulates within a social and material world by performing transformations and emanating orders. Order-words instruct us on how to think, what makes sense, what is possible, and the meaning of actions (Skott-Myhre, 2008). It is language—a collective language that cycles through the social—that transforms subjects from children into adults, healthy to ill, sane to insane. Language orders subjects into groups, whether these are racialized, gendered, mentally ill, or other taxonomies. A

collective assemblage of enunciation is therefore not separate from the material world but works through the repetition and recycling of language to instantiate transformations in it.

By studying the psy-discourses that provide counsellors their position, expertise, and authority, in the following papers I place counselling in relation to the power structures of contemporary capitalism and colonialism. My exploration focuses on the coding practices that counsellors use in their role and how these practices act to repeat or reproduce social relations. The ways in which counsellors respond to their clients' speech can remain within the dominant lines of discourse, or, as Winslade (2009) argues, following Deleuze and Guattari, trace lines of flight that produce new becomings. In my papers, I focus on how capitalism and colonialism are reproduced by particular discourses and social positions. I explore the radical potential of challenging taken-for-granted notions of mental illness, as well as the ethics of politically situating ourselves in counselling practice. I explore the taxonomies and discourses of identity and what lines of flight may be possible from within their matrix. In the remainder of this paper, I will conclude my application of Foucault and Butler to research practice to situate my ethics in research.

### **Care and Vulnerability**

Both Foucault (1977/1995) and Butler (2002) analyze how the subject is produced within the dominant formations of power and how mapping such forms can reveal the limits in them through which to desubjectify. Care, as a relational ethics of research, redistributes vulnerability through a contemporary web of relations which is also historically located. Where Foucault (1977/1995) found practices of freedom and self-formation in historical analyses of power and individual acts of defiance, Butler seems to find practices of critique and ethics in contemporary webs of power-saturated performances of identity and recognition. Foucauldian critique provides

the tools for analyzing how positions of knowing and speaking have come to be distributed, and cartographic research provides an analysis of how the networks of power are embodied in contemporary practice. In research, care is therefore a reciprocal and embodied relationship to vulnerability, a relationship to bodies and practices marked as different or marginal and to knowledges that lie at the limits of dominant epistemologies.

The question of vulnerability, or, more precisely, the moral and ethical status of being vulnerable as a researcher, is turned toward the researcher's epistemological foundations, as well as the ontological foundations of the subject of research, through critique. Rather than assess the value or acceptability of vulnerability within preestablished intelligibilities established by research discourse, the practice of becoming vulnerable in research contexts is an ethical practice of critique and inservitude. The vulnerable researcher questions the epistemological and power-saturated foundations of research discourse and the objects and others under study. The vulnerable or unsettled subject is not outside discourse altogether but participates in a rupture of the dominant formations of research, questioning who will come to occupy the liminal site of rupture and whether such a life is legible and sustainable. I ask in the following papers what might become of the subject positions of mentally ill young people and the counsellors who serve them when the categories and structures of capitalism and colonialism are problematized and critical horizons of desubjectification are explored. What becomes of the settler subject when the intelligibilities of Eurocentric knowledge and entitlement are undermined? As a practice of desubjectification, I seek the undoing of the settler subject, an identity that propels nearly every aspect of my life.

Historical-philosophic questioning regarding how we become subjects and our capacities for desubjectification and self-styling signal a critical project underway in this methodology.

Methodology, for me, begs the question of “how we are what we are” at the heart of research and counselling. Questions such as these (re)introduce the body, power, and relationality into methodology and simultaneously provide a vantage point to consider research in counselling as a practice of subjectification. I would simply venture here, following Butler (2002), that it would be at the limits of legibility mapped by historical-philosophic criticism that ethical practices of self-formation occur. By stepping into the ruptured or liminal spaces of capitalism and colonialism, into spaces created by contradiction or critique, new subjectivities—risky and insecure subjectivities that engage the vulnerabilities of those with whom we research, work, and serve—can manifest themselves.

Braidotti (2010b) argues that the historic-philosophic method, here presented through the Kant-Foucault-Butler line, foregrounds ethics of accountability and agency in self-production. However, she critiques the humanism implicit in the historic-philosophic’s emphasis on morality and agency and instead proposes a neo-vitalist and materialist conception of ethics that is grounded in more-than-human forces and a view of the subject as a multiplicity without central moral agency. Such a view is rooted in a line of immanentist philosophy that travels through the lineages of Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Deleuze. For me, the immanent ontology of Deleuze and Guattari (2003) and Braidotti (2010b) provide a creative direction for thinking and acting after or in the space of critique. Turning to Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of immanent philosophy and Braidotti’s notion of affirmation places knowledge, ethics, and action in relational and material worlds. In my papers, I explore a difference-centered settler ethics of vulnerability and living encounter that may provide majoritarian subjects a way to recraft themselves in the space of critique.

## **Summary**

This paper has outlined the methods, philosophy, and ethics I used to extend a critique of counselling in majoritarian space. These methods were understood and approached through a postqualitative (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; St. Pierre, 2017) methodology based in philosophic-historical critique (Butler, 2002; Foucault, 1997) and affirmative immanent philosophy (Braidotti, 2010b; Deleuze & Guattari, 2003). A politics of location and decolonizing critique propelled a settler ethics, and critique was intimately tied to care, creativity, and vulnerability. In the papers that follow, I explore identity, critical practices of counselling, ethics and ethical dilemmas, and hopes for the future of critical counselling with majoritarian young people. St. Pierre (2017) argues that experimentation in postqualitative research searches for the conditions for new experiences and new thoughts. By applying the literatures of critical counselling, decolonization, and identity to the specific area of counselling young adults in majoritarian spaces, this research has produced a partial and local power-laden map of the intersections of the bio-medical-industrial complex, settler subjectivity, and affective labour within Empire. This map serves as a starting point for developing new ethics in critical counselling and politicized praxis in contemporary capito-colonialism.

## **Paper One: Decolonizing Counselling as Living Encounter Within Empire**

In an age of unbridled global capitalism and caustic neocolonial relations to land and life, the question of the aims and approaches of doing counselling with young people, particularly those young people who are inheriting the privileges and specters of capitalist and colonial conquest, is pertinent. In this paper, I set counselling as embedded within and continuous with capito-colonial Empire, provide two concepts of power, and articulate a praxis of living encounter that works toward interrupting the reproduction of colonial and capitalist power. Contemporary Empire has been characterized by neo-Marxist social theorists, such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, 2005, 2009), as a dispersed network of multinational and global actors. Indigenous theorists (Coulthard, 2014; de Finney, 2014; A. Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012) address issues of globalization and put additional emphasis instead on the imperial state form and its neocolonial composition. By placing counselling in the context of Empire as both settler colonialism and globalized capitalism, I provide a theorization of power today and a macro context for redefining a praxis of living encounter on occupied territories. Counselling has grappled, and continues to grapple, with issues of context, power, and identity by drawing on feminism, critical race theories, antipsychiatry, and Indigenous studies. Such critical counselling perspectives are mainly elaborated in critical, diversity, and multicultural frameworks, with growing attention being paid to Indigenous-settler relations, reconciliation, and decolonization. The bulk of these analyses focus on minoritized people as the recipient of services and the ethics and skills of delivering appropriate counselling to people who have been marginalized. With some notable exceptions (Foucault, 1963, 1980; Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016; Rose, 1998; Skott-Myhre, 2005, 2012), however, very little has been explored in terms of resisting capitalism and colonialism by attending to the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity.

After first describing Canada's settler colonial context, I explore the terrain of contemporary global capitalism and neocolonial relations to land, life, and wealth, and identify specific tensions I see in my work as a counsellor with diverse young people, but particularly those young adults who customarily inherit the benefits and privileges of power. Arguing that young people's experiences of mental distress must be linked to their identities and positions within Empire, I contend that working with young people who expect and are expected to enter into social roles privileged by class, race, and gender stratifications creates an initial contradiction for counsellors who are similarly privileged by their social identities and professional role but hold to an ethics of addressing inequity and oppression. An exposition on settler colonization and global capitalism provides a framework for thinking about difference, subjectivity, relationship, and power in counselling within Empire. Such a contextual mapping is essential for adequately attending to the production of identity and subjectivity and developing an ethical praxis of living encounter in majoritarian space.

### **Settler Colonial Contexts**

Empire has been theorized by Indigenous scholars and their allies in various ways. While there is no unitary or exhaustive definition in the Indigenous literature, Empire has been theorized as colonial land usurpation and extractivism, as well as a form of ideology, state power, and Eurocentric patriarchal violence. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012), for example, define settler colonial Empire as primarily enacted as land theft and occupation, and Audra Simpson (2014) elaborates how Empire is an ideational context that marks out difference through knowledge paradigms. Empire has been theorized as a system of methodical and violent state enclosures (Gordon, 2006); as a targeted attack on female Indigenous bodies and presence (de Finney, 2014); as a process of cultural genocide and forced assimilation (Richardson & Nelson, 2007); as

a competing cacophony of diasporic and migratory transits (Byrd, 2011); as cosmological violence (Watts, 2013); as a radical environmental extractivism (Preston, 2017); and as an imposition of reified identities and neoliberal politics through legal mechanisms (Coulthard, 2009). These aspects of Empire work together to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands and to legitimize the neoliberal settler colonial democracy that is Canada (Kouri, 2015).

Since contact, Indigenous peoples who have lived for millennia on the lands which are now called Canada have had to resist colonial annexations and attempts at genocide (Barker, 2015; Coulthard, 2014; A. Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Lands have been usurped and cultures have been suffocated by the Canadian state. At provincial, municipal, and community levels, Indigenous people are among those most impacted by resource extraction, lack of medical care, housing and opioid crises, and sexual exploitation and violence that go hand in hand with unabated poverty. The theft of Indigenous lands fulfilled the requirements of both capitalism and colonialism, and, as Glen Coulthard (2014), a Yellowknives Dene scholar argues, is an ongoing feature of both, not only in terms of material dispossession, but also in terms of the dismantling of Indigenous ways of relating. The normalizing of settler subjectivity, relations to land, life, and community, and Eurocentric and hetero-patriarchal views of mental wellness have had deleterious effects on Indigenous people. The racism and attempted genocide against Indigenous people that has occurred for generations in Canada continues through the very institutions that are espoused to now address historical colonialism, including state-run human and social services such as counselling, social work, and child and youth care (de Finney, 2014; Saraceno, 2012). More broadly, Coulthard challenges the idea that pathways to Indigenous sovereignty and well-being can be found through state apparatuses, particular acts of state sponsored recognition and reconciliation.

Decolonization as the repatriation of Indigenous land and the reestablishment of Indigenous sovereignty (Tuck & Yang, 2012) is perpetually derailed and deterred by the Canadian government's purported attempts to address colonization. As one example, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has concluded an inquiry into the residential school system (2015a) and published *Calls to Action* (2015b) that include closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health services and outcomes, increasing health practitioners' cultural competence, and including Elders and traditional healing in education and health service provision. The TRC has worked to increase awareness about the residential school system and therefore place the current conditions of Indigenous people into a colonial context. The TRC Calls to Action, however, falls short of naming the attempted genocide of nations of Indigenous peoples, instead reframing colonization as "cultural genocide" (p. 155). Furthermore, it elaborates a path forward without a word about decolonization as land return, thereby offering reconciliatory roadmaps for Indigenous futures within the neocolonial nation state.

As a second example, there has been a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2018) to report on violence rooted in colonialism and make recommendations to decolonize the relationship between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples and, specifically, "build a foundation that allows Indigenous women and girls to reclaim their power and place" (p. 12). This national inquiry, while discussing decolonization, has refused to investigate local police forces or the RCMP, parties that have colluded to invisibilize this epidemic of violence. The inquiry has also omitted land repatriation as a cornerstone of decolonization. Both of these state processes have been criticized by Indigenous activists and their allies for lacking basic political resources, being insensitive to survivors in interviewing processes, failing to support those who have come forward to testify and bear witness, lacking

power to investigate and institute systemic change, and causing additional hurt to numerous people. I have worked with Indigenous youth and residential school survivors as a counsellor for over five years and have heard stories of how such inquiries and investigations and even counselling have been painful and traumatizing for some. Without rigorous decolonizing analyses of the Euro-Western and psychiatric dominance at the epistemic and ontological levels of counselling, reconciliatory frameworks risk subtly replicating colonialism through its attempts to address historical wrongs (Watts, 2013).

As Frantz Fanon (1952/2008) argued, the internal life and identity of Indigenous and racialized people are altered by colonialism, and psychology alone is very limited in its ability both to address the systems through which mental life is colonized and to deal with psychological harms rooted in colonialism. Indigenous people, therefore, are increasingly turning to traditional healing, self-governance, and community and family ties to address mental illness (Kirmayer & Valaskakis, 2009), yet counselling approaches based in Euro-Western understandings of therapy continue to overshadow Indigenous healing practices and material changes for Indigenous people (Stewart & Marshall, 2017). Today, the crimes of colonialism continue to be represented as individual failings or damage of Indigenous people or communities, which invisibilizes social forces (Tuck, 2009). For example, white settlers consistently attribute the poor health and educational outcomes of Indigenous young people to individual choice, mental illness, unintelligence, or inborn laziness when we know negative health, education, and employment outcomes are directly related to systemic poverty and racism (Eason, Brady, & Fryberg, 2018; Francis, 2011).

Indigenous youth populations in Canada, furthermore, continue to be at the greatest risk for suicide, substance use, and mental illness, primarily due to the impacts of colonization

(Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007; Chrisjohn, McKay, & Smith, 2017). These impacts, risks, and negative outcomes are not solely historical (e.g., leftovers of the residential school system), but are worsening in some cases (Kral, 2012). Mary-Jo Good and her colleagues (2008) argue that suicide and related psychological disorders can be read as a form of postcolonial disorder in which Indigenous youth well-being has been undercut through governmental land theft and disruptions to kinship and parenting patterns. Michael Kral (2012) has indirectly corroborated this analysis by showing evidence that suicide and mental health disorders are declining in Indigenous youth populations where communities have been successful in taking direct and local control of governance and health. Within these contexts, counselling, along with other social and family services, has been and continues to be complicit in colonial practices such as child removal, centering Euro-Western understandings of development and kinship relations, privatizing, and individualizing social problems.

### **Counselling's Complicity in Colonial Practices**

Counsellors have variously enacted colonialism, attempted to buffer its effects, and simply ignored its overarching influence. While the colonial project has shifted in its form, from a strictly settler occupation to a neocolonial process that includes sustained surveillance and policing of the “other,” environmental racism, resource extraction, and local and globalized poverty, its Eurocentric motives remain powerful, and it still exerts an explicitly violent power that seeks to empty lands for settler occupation and profit (Byrd, 2011; Morgensen, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Indeed, colonialism structures all of society, including our notions of development, growth, and mental well-being. Mental illness is often assessed in terms of young people’s ability to integrate into their social milieu, and such adaptation are often bolstered through promises of civic participation, jobs, security, and opportunities to build a life and home

on this land (or rather, fear of not attaining these things). Counsellors uninformed by anticolonial theory may see their work as preparing young people for a settler colonial and neoliberal subjectivity precisely through their integration into capitalist culture (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016). In other words, through their work to support normalized mental health, counsellors can consciously or unconsciously work to produce young people as labourers for the Canadian economy, consumers for the global market, and conforming citizens for settler democracies.

When our practices are ignorant of the knowledges and healing practices developed on this land for millennia through culture and tradition, as well as contemporary Indigenous knowledges and practices, not only does counselling reinforce settler occupation, counsellors simultaneously reinforce asymmetrical power relations between Indigenous knowledge systems and Western knowledge (Kirmayer & Valaskakis, 2009). Vanessa Watts (2013) contends that colonialism operationalizes itself specifically through the misrepresentations of Indigenous cosmologies. Watts explains that it is in the encounter with Euro-Western philosophy that Indigenous creation histories and ways of life are made unbelievable or mythological. Including Indigenous knowledge and healing practices in contemporary models of therapy can enact violence as long-standing and locally situated cosmologies and the histories and relationships that constitute them are engaged with haphazardly or appropriated into a Euro-Western onto-epistemology.

When Euro-Western paradigms are favoured and Indigenous cosmologies are ignored or appropriated, the counselling profession can be very much what Indigenous scholar and poet Leanne Simpson (2014) calls “a training ground to legitimize settler colonial authority over Indigenous peoples” (p. 22). For example, through psychological, developmental, and family assessments based on normative Western ways of relating and behaving, counselling is complicit

in racist child apprehension practices that continue to disproportionately remove Indigenous children from their homes. Sandrina de Finney (2014) explains that “newer waves of residential internment, each worse than the previous one, have targeted Indigenous children” (p. 13) and have contributed to more Indigenous children being in government “care” today than during the residential school era. While the denial of ongoing settler colonialism helps to frame many of our engagements, as counsellors, as “helping” and “care,” a therapeutic approach with the capacity to accurately map and resist what Shanne McCaffrey (2010) calls “the tentacles of colonization” (p. 343) is desperately required.

Given the rapidly growing diversity of youth and young adult populations in Canada, spurred in part by increasing immigration from the majority world and high birth rates in Indigenous and racialized minority communities (Statistics Canada, 2011), understanding how counselling is conceptualized and practiced with different groups is imperative. Counsellors continue to be on the front lines of working with Canada’s and Indigenous Nations’ most hard-to-reach young people, and it is urgent that we continue to develop decolonizing and anticapitalist frameworks and intersectional analyses (Yoon, 2012). While there is legitimate critique of a competency based approach (Beagan, 2018; Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018), a great deal of work is also being done to revise and update diversity competencies and cross-cultural awareness to reflect a growing awareness of the impacts of settler colonialism. In either case, however, little is being done to think through the possibilities for working with majoritarian young people who experience distress as they are initiated into their roles in a society based on necropolitics (Mbembé and Meintjes, 2003), injustice, and asymmetries of power. There is a growing body of literature in education and science (e. g. Coté, 2016; M. Kim, 2017; Metcalfe-Chenail, 2016), mainly catalyzed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (2015a, 2015b)

findings and calls to action, to incorporate or engage with Indigenous ways of knowing. We as counsellors need to develop accounts of how Indigenous critiques, knowledge, and healing practices may be ethically and politically engaged with in therapy conducted by non-Indigenous practitioners or with non-Indigenous young people. This last point regarding non-Indigenous practitioners' use of Indigenous knowledge or practice in therapy continually resurfaces as a contentious issue throughout the literature.

While recent attempts have been made to address the inherent racism against Indigenous people in counselling through diversity frameworks, cultural safety, and the integration of Indigenous culture and knowledge (Richardson & Reynolds, 2012; Rodríguez, France, & Hett, 2013; Stewart, Moodley, & Hyatt, 2017; Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010), there is a dearth of theory to address white settler consciousness, the consciousness responsible for the ongoing perpetuation of colonization, as it presents itself in counselling in both practitioner and client subjectivity. To participate in the dismantling of settler colonialism, I argue, white settler subjectivity must become a key target of change, including our relationships with Indigenous people and each other. We, as settlers, must acknowledge our history of colonization and ongoing occupation, our obsessions to land, money, and resources, and our systemically racist practices and institutions. As counsellors, youth workers, and academics, we need new practices of accountability and ethics adequate to the decolonial project. To develop such an ethical and decolonized praxis of counselling, we must firmly situate our work with young people of all backgrounds and identities within the two-horned system of rule that is capito-colonial Empire. In the following sections, I bring a settler colonial critique of Empire into conversation with contemporary neo-Marxist social theory and then elaborate an analysis of power that further contextualizes counselling and living encounter as decolonizing and immanent force.

## **Networked Global Capitalism**

Experiences of mental illness and their treatment are fully linked with both state-powered colonialism and the contemporary regime of fluid and affective capitalism. After centuries of colonial conquests, militarized conflicts, industrial, chemical, and technological innovations, unrestrained resource extraction, and population explosions, global capitalism has expanded colonial violence, jeopardized the existence of innumerable species, and relegated nearly all of life to the value of the dollar sign. Jami Weinstein and Claire Colebrook (2015), among many others, call this current ecological moment the Anthropocene, when human-induced ecological and geological change threaten the balance and sustainability of nearly all of earth's biological systems. Any analysis of distress, pain, and alienation today must attend to both settler colonialism and globalized capitalism—including their tensions and overlaps.

Throughout the first decade of the new millennium, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, 2005, 2009) theorized a new form of empire within which globalized systems of networked power exceeded and challenged the power of sovereign states—the empires that preceded them. Unlike imperial powers, such as Rome or Great Britain, contemporary Empire, for Hardt and Negri, is highly decentralized and works through webs of globalized actors and forces. Supra-state actors such as multinational corporations and intergovernmental agencies, they argue, largely work outside of any single governing institution and instead dominate nation-states through various forms of economic, military, and political pressure. Furthermore, neocolonial (Nkrumah, 1965) ties have formed between old-world imperial powers and new global forces such as the International Monetary Fund. Such networks of power, which also include militaries and militias, can insidiously and rapidly manipulate entire countries, economies, and populations.

Empire continues, as always, to differentially propagate the violence and oppression that is its method through gendered, racialized, and geographic stratifications, yet is also fluid in its capacity to destratify, modulate, appropriate, and reorganize social relations and identities as necessary for its continual growth (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Through the abstract value sign of the dollar and globalized networks of digital information, contemporary capital can rapidly shift contexts, geographies, and discourses for people in all parts of the world. These aspects of Empire as dispersed networks of global capital and violence work through and against state power. Sovereign state, monarchical, religious, ethnic, and dictatorial powers continue to exert influence within and outside their bodies and borders, yet also now contend with supra-state power. Today, supported by reinvigorated racist, populist, sexist, and xenophobic nationalist politics in North America and much of Europe the repressive state form is regaining ground but also challenged by increasingly left-leaning social, technological, and educational institutions (Giroux, 2017; Lazaridis, Campani, & Benveniste, 2016).

Clearly, within a globalized network of multinational and supranational power, settler colonialism continues to operate through globalized networks of power and the governments and ministries of Canada (which are themselves still loosely connected to the monarchy of England). Empire, therefore, is a complex composition of globalized, territorial, and neocolonial powers, which together and through their tensions determines both the feasibility of liveable forms of life and the precarity or disposability of bodies (Butler, 2004; Giroux, 2015). The expendability of specific subjects, bodies, or entire groups in Empire is undertaken, not only through economic disenfranchisement, but also through the perpetuation of unending war, the blurring of police and military functions, and the criminalization of resistance and of poverty (Hardt & Negri, 2005). The constancy of environmental collapse discourse, the modulation of security and insecurity,

and unending media warnings of enemies at, within, and distant from our borders produces differential exposure to the threat or actuality of death. Global capitalism's parasitic relationship with the living is, in this sense, a shift in scope and form from settler colonialism, but the change is not drastic.

### **The Contiguity and Contradictions of Empire as Capito-Colonialism**

My objective in the contextual sections above was to develop the concept of Empire along two interconnected lines. First, Empire continues imperial and settler colonial forms of domination. This line of analysis has been developed by Indigenous scholars (e.g., Byrd, 2011; Coulthard, 2014; de Finney, 2014; Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Watts, 2013) who demonstrate how the state perpetuates the crimes of colonization through child apprehension practices, Euro-Western epistemological domination in education systems, discriminatory police, military, and carceral institutions, recognition politics in legal proceedings, widespread resource extraction, and environmental racism on Indigenous lands. The second aspect of Empire, which complicates the singular domination of the state, is what Hardt and Negri (2005) identify as a dispersed network of supranational global actors that have emerged through globalized capitalism. This aspect of Empire is responsible, Hardt and Negri argue, for the unending character of global conflict and war and the expansion of transnational neoliberal capitalism independent of state borders. Indigenous activists, environmentalists, socialists and Marxists, and their allies have battled on this globalized terrain by resisting multinational corporate banking and resource extraction.

To fully comprehend the full force of contemporary Empire on counselling as subjectivizing processes, a simultaneous analysis of both globalized capitalism and settler colonialism is imperative. While in the present moment it is impossible to speak about

colonialism without capitalism and vice versa, separating them historically and heuristically allows for a sharper analysis of each and provides critique of social justice approaches that focus on one without contemplation of the other. Both aspects of Empire are active in the current bio-medical-industrial complex that dominates, via psychiatry and psychopharmacology, mental health discourse and practice in Canada. The production of subjectivity and identity within Empire is shaped by its two aspects, the first one territorializing identity on the nation-state via settler colonialism and multicultural policy. In this regime, reified settler and Indigenous identities, as well as white and racialized identities, are organized and legally presided over by recognition politics, legislation, and education (Coulthard, 2014). The second aspect of subjectivity production is mediated mainly by global capitalism and transnationalism, producing fluid, hybrid, or deterritorialized identities. The tension between the reinforcement of traditional, territorialized, or reified identities by state power and their destratification or deterritorialization by capital is potentially a key point of intervention in power today. Counselling, particularly with majoritarian subjects in crisis, exemplifies the contradictions in power today and can become a site for intervening in the reproduction of Empire as both capitalism and state colonialism. By working through a historical and contemporary social analysis of the emergence of contemporary Empire, we can better understand these ongoing tensions and seek site of resistance.

For Deleuze and Guattari (2004), the state form enabled the emergence of capital by transforming the imperial or despotic relationship to land, wealth, and people to one in which money mediated social relations as an abstract and accumulable expression. Under the regime of the emperor, monarch, or despot, Deleuze and Guattari argue, goods produced by a local group were appropriated through enslavement, and the value of the products seized was limited by perishability and surplus. The state form allowed for labour to be freed of enslavement and

transformed into the capacity to produce surplus value through work. Simultaneously, the state facilitated a central organization and implemented a transition from material accumulation to the abstract money form. Once wealth, via the abstract money form, was no longer concrete and therefore limited and perishable, it could enter into a conjugation with labour that was also deterritorialized or “free” in the sense that it, or its products, was no longer fully in the service of reproducing a specific way of life. In these ways, the state deterritorialized ways of producing and consuming that were immanent to groups of people and reterritorialized these functions on the state. The reterritorialized flows of people, labour, and products were coded in terms of roles and spaces that the state instituted, but they also had to have a greater degree of deterritorialization that capitalism could pivot on and extend for its own ends.

The state form opened the door to capitalist axiomatics by conjugating deterritorialized wealth as abstract wealth and abstract labour as surplus labour. Capitalism, as the conjugation of deterritorialized wealth and labour, could now form as the private appropriation and accumulation as money. While the state form enabled capitalism to be borne by decoding wealth and labour from the material and social realms of their instantiation, capitalism would soon press beyond the state and spread its axioms to flows that exceeded the state form, such as natural resources, human abilities, and scientific knowledge. Holland (2013) explains that capitalism, through its high speed and global deterritorializations, transforms the state by making it responsible for subjectifying populations toward capital accumulation. This takes the form of enforcing neoliberalism, providing job-training programs, and census taking. The state is also now responsible for bringing together flows of raw materials, technology, purchasing power, and untrained labour-power. All the while, capitalism exceeds the state and institutes a global market that treats states as states treated towns in the past: as nodes in a network of comparison and

trade. Once capitalism has pushed past the limits of the state, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue, it begins to set its own limits in the pursuit of unlimited growth and continually pushes past these limits and has to adapt them. In the process, globalized capitalism perpetually gives rise to “numerous flows in all directions” (p. 472) that escape its laws. Capital then needs to extend new limits and codes to recapture these excessive flows and reincorporate them into the monetary system. Globalized capitalism, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue, perpetually gives rise to “numerous flows in all directions” (p. 472) that escape its laws. Capital then needs to extend new limits and codes to recapture these excessive flows and reincorporate them into the monetary system.

These two aspects of Empire, globalized capitalism and settler colonialism, today are neither strictly opposed nor even discrete. Coulthard (2014), for example, argues that capitalism, both historical and contemporary, depends completely on colonization. Using Marx’s concept of primitive accumulation, Coulthard explicates how the violence, enslavement, and robbery of colonialism provided the sustenance for the birth of capital. By violently dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their lands, he writes, capital

forcefully opened up what were once collectively held territories and resources to privatization (dispossession and enclosure), which, over time, came to produce a “class” of workers compelled to enter the exploitative realm of the labor market for their survival (proletarianization). (p. 15)

Coulthard (2014) goes on to explain, however, that Marx’s formulation of primitive accumulation has a number of errors. First, Marx temporally contained the process of primitive accumulation, which ignores the ongoing violent dispossession of lands in the reproduction of capital. As Todd Gordon (2006) argues, for example, Canada is specifically imperialist, both at

home and abroad, in its “agenda of accumulation by dispossession” (p. 46), which began in North America but is quickly extrapolating itself into the territories of Indigenous peoples in South America. Furthermore, Coulthard points out that while Marx’s later work reformulated his teleological thesis, his original conceptualization of the relationship between colonialism and capitalism were normative in terms of historical development, framing Indigenous ways of relating as primitive in relation to capitalism and yet-to-come communism. Coulthard suggests maintaining an analysis of how colonial dispossession is required for capitalism’s ongoing expansion, while also criticizing colonialism on its own terms and for its own horrors (not only because it inaugurates and perpetuates capitalism) and undoing the racism inherent in normative developmental teleology. When this shift to the colonial frame is accomplished, he says, “we might occupy a better angle from which to both anticipate and interrogate practices of settler-state dispossession justified under otherwise egalitarian principles and espoused with so-called ‘progressive’ political agendas in mind” (p. 17). Such tensions between Marxist theory and Indigenous politics have been theorized in Latin America for some time by activist thinkers such as José Carlos Mariátegui and Hugo Blanco, who challenged yet also found some revolutionary potential in solidarity between these political projects.

In applying a decolonizing lens to progressive socialist or democratic politics, a critique of land redistribution and the subject of revolutionary struggle are of paramount importance. I will therefore return to Coulthard’s anticolonial critique of progressive politics when discussing Hardt and Negri’s (2009) thesis of developing what they call the commons. By taking difference as both a problematic and potential in counselling work and social struggle, I will attempt to outline an approach to decolonizing counselling praxis in a globalized neoliberal world.

## **Counselling Under Empire**

In clinical contexts, colonialism is perpetuated by devaluing Indigenous knowledge and healing practices, using white settler people as the standard of normal development and psychology and mindlessly treating the symptoms of colonization, such as entrenched substance use and suicidality, as individual or community problems. The centralized sovereign state form that is Canada continues a 400-year legacy of colonial domination and settler land occupation, and is a primary driver of how we come to understand ourselves as subjects within Empire. At the same time, however, multinational corporations, digital technology, and supranational institutions are propelling a profusion of ever-changing subjectivizing processes.

Life within Empire as capito-colonialism circumvents *and* opens possibilities for clinicians to relate to a generation of young people as they are initiated into a form of adulthood unknown in history. With unprecedented interconnectivity through technology establishing relays among individuals, global and local events, media images, consumerism, and institutions, youth trajectories—psychological, physiological, and social—are significantly impacted (Kontopodis, Varvantakis, & Wulf, 2017). Furthermore, neoliberal globalized economics have changed the nature of work in wealthier nations toward an affective or service-oriented market characterized by short-term contracts and absence of protections (Hardt & Negri, 2005). Quickly globalizing discourses on mental illness furnished by the American Psychiatric Association (2013) have catalogued an array of mental illnesses that are increasingly treated with pharmaceuticals (Whitaker, 2015). While young people are subject to a rapidly shifting landscape of work and affectivity, they have also taken leading roles in resisting Empire in the forms of environmental and ecological manipulation, continued colonization, labour exploitation,

war, and economic inequality (Collin, 2007; Giroux, 2013; Hardt & Negri, 2009; Noguera, Ginwright, & Cammarota, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2014).

Counselling is one of many sites within society where young people engage with adults regarding their values, aspirations, identities, and social contexts. Mapping the social forces at work in producing distress and the codes and categories available for conceptualizing it provides a cartography (Braidotti, 2006a, 2006b) of how living relations are currently organized and what alternatives may be affirmed as relational and socio-subjective change. An understanding of both the colonial and capitalist aspects of Empire is important for thinking about the production of subjectivity and forms of resistance or change that might be enacted or facilitated by counselling. Hardt and Negri (2005, 2009) propose the critical concepts of *multitude* and *common* to explore such forms of subjectivity and relationality which are alternative to Empire. Indigenous scholars and settler allies have proposed reconciliation, decolonization, and unsettling as processes to counteract centuries of colonial conquest. By bringing these politicized theorizations of context to bear on the practice of counselling with young people, we might accurately map the functioning of power in the reproduction of Empire and develop avenues of intervention at the level of relationship and subjectivity. In the remaining sections of this paper, I explore the power of relationship as a productive force within Empire and examine how a decolonizing ethics might guide counselling in the production of new forms of subjectivity alternative to those of the contemporary regime.

### **Difference, Multitude, and the Common**

As the landscapes of capitalism continue to shift in North America and across the globe, young people are differentially propelled into a world of escalating wealth gaps (Maroto, 2016), never-ending wars (Bacevich, 2016; Hardt & Negri, 2005; Hironaka, 2005), and environmental

catastrophes (Chomsky & Polk, 2013) that threaten their existence as subjects and as living beings more generally. With Empire's main spheres outlaid, I can focus on how capitalism and colonialism function in counselling and the production of subjectivity and how these processes might, eventually, be resisted through decolonized living relationships with young people. Developing critical categories of power to understand how the systems of Empire privilege some while disenfranchising others through discourses of mental illness is central to positioning ourselves as counsellors vis-à-vis our clients and society as a whole. Categories of difference historically embedded through colonial, racist, heteronormative, and patriarchal power continue to organize identity and subject positions in North America, while the fluidity of contemporary capitalism makes arrival into privileged and recognizable subject positions unreliable. In the following sections, I outline an understanding of the ethics and practices related to engaging with young people as they produce themselves as particular kinds of subjects in a matrix of politicized identities and deterritorialized flows of contemporary capital concentrated today on affective products and labour.

Hardt and Negri (2005, 2009) focus on subjectivity formation as a key site of both appropriation by and resistance to Empire. They argue that in this new millennium, Empire is particularly involved in the products of affective and immaterial labour, such as communication, relationships, networking ability, and the capacity to create and navigate code. Hardt and Negri (2005) conceptualize *the multitude* as networks of social subjects who produce and share life *in common* through encounter, communication, and collaboration. Once I have elaborated these concepts more fully, I will describe what is at stake in the power of relationship, particularly between adults and young people in mental health contexts.

According to Hardt and Negri (2009), the common is what is produced and held together by people in an immanent relation to one another, or what they call the multitude. The common shifts according to the productivity of those involved in its creation, and decision making is done democratically or in a nonhierarchical fashion. The common is therefore not a stable, territorialized image of ownership but rather a dynamic and immanent product of communication and cooperative effort. As such, the multitude constantly constitutes both itself and the common through its own immanent power, without the transcendent power of the state or leader. Resisting the ineluctable extractive power of Empire becomes a constant work of tactics and strategy, since capitalism has shown an inordinate capacity to appropriate resistance (de Certeau, 1984).

Without dissolving or ignoring differences in positionality within the multitude, Hardt and Negri envision resistance, democracy, and equality as achieved through the development of values, practices, means, and geographies in common among diverse subjects. They propose difference, as enacted through relationship, as a motor for producing subjects of resistance. They write that

the multitude is composed of innumerable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or a single identity—different cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations; different forms of labor; different ways of living; different views of the world; and different desires. The multitude is a multiplicity of all these singular differences. (p. xiv)

Framing difference as the motor of work together places the common as a horizon that must be produced rather than discovered. Furthermore, theorizing multitude in a globalized world, as opposed to a more homogenous Marxist notion of the proletariat, foregrounds living difference, which composes all subjects and groups as the productive force of resistance and creativity. For Hardt and Negri (2005), it is the creative encounter between different forms of life

and subjectivity that will produce alternatives to the current global capitalist order. In the current period, resistance within Empire “is not a matter of everyone in the world becoming the same; rather it provides the possibility that, while remaining different, we discover the commonality that enables us to communicate and act together” (p. xiii).

Hardt and Negri (2009) discuss how many Indigenous communities had practices for holding land and resources in common and how, in today’s globalized society, Indigeneity is viewed through a neoliberal multicultural lens that requires adherence to an idealized identity, tradition, and past. They highlight the complexity in thinking about Indigenous claims to land and life as a source of resistance and alternative to Empire, while also acknowledging the forward-looking, fluid, and changing aspects of Indigenous peoples. Coulthard (2009) enters the conversation by arguing that politics based on essentialized group identities can lead to authoritarian demands for compliance and marginalization, based on cultural norms, particularly for women and children. He contends, however, that anti-essentialist critiques of identity can strengthen colonial hierarchies and undermine Indigenous resistance. Coulthard then goes farther to argue that “what is at issue here is the complex web of interlocking oppressive social relations that anchors the Canadian state’s relationship with Indigenous communities” (p. 140). By foregrounding the relationship between the state and Indigenous communities, Coulthard calls into question white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism. His conclusion is that anti-essentialist criticisms, which can be read in Hardt and Negri, can maintain oppressive power relations in their redeployment of colonialism’s discourses. He suggests eschewing any a priori rejection or acceptance of discourse, whether essentialist or anti-essentialist, and moving instead toward specific analyses that can account for the function of multiple, interacting forms of power.

Hardt and Negri (2005) note an important tension between democratic political sovereignty, such as the settler colonial states in North America, and the dominance of a new form of Empire. They argue that, in general, political sovereignty in the nation-state has been weakening, while a much more dispersed and fluid network of global actors gains ascendancy. While such a globalized Empire is different than traditional imperialist regimes in terms of its territorial boundaries, it continues to feed on the living-and-producing individuals within its rule and hence marshals a form of neocolonialism on a global scale. Jaecheol Kim (2015) here argues that Hardt and Negri downplay the importance of postcolonial struggle in their work. For instance, while consistently attending to national struggles for independence, Indigenous land sovereignty movements, and a host of other localized issues, Hardt and Negri might all too quickly shift to the global field to explain resistance within contemporary Empire. Kim (2015) challenges this passage of sovereignty from the local to the global and endorses a return to anticolonial forms of resistance. Such tensions between the global and local are also challenged at an epistemological level by decolonization authors such as Malini Johar Schueller (2009), who argues that the concepts of Empire and multitude in Hardt and Negri's work reiterate the problem of Eurocentrism as a universalizing discourse. Schueller therefore recommends being vigilant about the colonizing tendencies of global theories to become imperial at an epistemological level.

While Hardt and Negri (2009), Kim (2015), Schueller (2009), and Coulthard (2009) focus mainly on political reality, in the counselling field, particularly in the settler colonial state of Canada, theorizing the complexity of learning from Indigenous people's experiences, engaging with them in decolonizing projects, and, most specifically, negotiating relationships around healing and healing practices is paramount. By revisiting what is coded as mental illness

in settler and majoritarian populations through a critique of capitalism and colonialism, I hope to develop the ethics for a therapy based on communication, solidarity, and the building of a political project adequate to impact the material conditions that stifle alternative ways of life to Empire. While Indigenous scholars, communities, and peoples continue to develop their own forms of subjectivity, resurgence, and resistance, I argue that settlers must orient toward their own locations, histories, states, and practices to develop a praxis accountable to decolonization. Within the discourse on settler colonialism, there has been an attempt to unravel the settler identity that has focused on identities produced from within the colonial state and its institutions (Fitzmaurice, 2010; Morgensen, 2011; Regan, 2010; Ritskes, 2013; Veracini, 2008). Comprehending counselling as a site of subjectivity production within Empire necessitates a specific analysis of power within direct encounter, within the discourse of counselling, and within the realm of becoming different than who we are. Once I have surveyed the more proximal levels of affective labour within contemporary globalized capitalism, I will consider living encounter in a neocolonial globalized world. I then return to decolonization as an ethics in which to ground counselling practice.

### **Power and Affective Labour**

Negri (1991) introduces an analytic distinction between two forms of power to express how the power of the state or capital is different than power as a constitutive force. Drawing on Spinoza (1677), he articulates how statist and capitalist power (*pouvoir*) is a transcendental force that functions by appropriating what it does not have on its own: the ability to create. Individual capacities which are elicited and expressed through encounters, by contrast, are an example of an immanent form of power (*puissance*). *Puissance*, in this sense, is manifested through assemblages of living bodies. Such immanent power precedes state power, although it is often

considered a form of resistance. But power as political and economic usurpation is always dependent on the productive force constitutive of all life because it has not immanent force of its own. For Negri, puissance entails local and immediate acts of actors producing society and materiality of their own accord. This living and producing power which precedes and resists Empire is manifest in the multiplicity of collaborative encounters that are engendered through the networks of the contemporary world as multitude. Even while networks of productive actors become linked through technology across vast expanses of space, the principle underlying the multitude is that constitutive power resides in the encounter of living bodies. Hardt and Negri (2000, 2005) take up a vitalist position here and express productive life as the principal ontological process.

Drawing on the philosophies of Spinoza (1677) and Deleuze (1968/1994; Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, 2004), Hardt and Negri (2000, 2005) theorize life as an immanent process of emerging, self-organizing systems. This perspective extends the notion of labour to include all forms of self-organizing behaviour, such as communication, cultural production, ideas, creative expression, and biological reproduction. Counselling can work with power as puissance by relinquishing transcendent ideas and the hierarchy inherent in professional practice and work instead in the realm of immanent, direct encounter to explore difference as a motor for change (Fink, 2007; Skott-Myhre, 2005; Van Kaam, 1966).

An immanent and difference-centered approach to counselling, then, can harness encounter and immanent power to constitute subjectivity and relationship that is self-organizing. Both practitioner and young people would resist transcendental forces attempting to organize the relationship or exploit its products. Hardt and Negri (2005) argue, however, that in contemporary Empire, affective labour and immaterial production become prime targets for capitalist

profiteering. Developing the concept of affective labour from feminist critiques of invisible and therefore unaccounted-for emotional, domestic, and care work, Hardt and Negri (2005) explain that global capitalism tends toward producing and extracting emotions, images, communication and information networks, data, code, and other forms of immaterial products. That is not to say that the physical labour that transforms raw material into a product is not still a dominant aspect of the global economy. It is to say that all forms of production, from craft to industry to agriculture, are going through an affective and informational revolution. Hardt and Negri (2005) write that “when our ideas and our affects, or emotions, are put to work, for instance, and when they thus become subject in a new way to the command of the boss, we often experience new and intense forms of violation or alienation” (p. 66). In such a context, young people’s creative abilities, their capacities for relationship, communication, and emotion, and their ability to generate and navigate code become the new targets of capital (Skott-Myhre, 2015b). Reframing young people’s experiences of mental illness as a response to and resistance against such a profound form of exploitation is a potential first step in reclaiming human affects, subjectivities, and productive power.

For our purposes, affective labour is important for two reasons. First, clinical practice is, for the most part, affective in that it is relational, communicative, and caring. As counsellors, how we affect and are affected by our clients is of principal importance. Second, as counsellors, we are often tasked with interposing in the ways young people are communicating, behaving, emoting, or feeling. With relationship as the central aspect of counselling, the image of power we take up can reinforce a transcendent or hierarchical form of power as *pouvoir*, or we can engage in a process of exploring the power of *puissance* as produced through relationship. We must therefore take into consideration counsellors’ own predilections for power as *pouvoir* and

analyze counselling as a possible site for the appropriation by and resistance to capitalist appropriation. This consideration calls into question the goals of therapy as normalizing aberrant or atypical ways of being in the world or preparing young people to enter into a particular social structure by being able to adhere to the rules and properly sell their affects (abilities to communicate, feel, imagine) for profit. As an alternative to the exploitation and appropriation of human affects and our relationship to the more-than-human world, I will explore living encounter as a basis for ethical relationality.

### **Living Encounter in a Neocolonial Globalized World**

Taking globalized capitalism and settler colonialism as contextual factors that seek to appropriate the products of human relatedness—our affects, ideas, cultures, and creations—is precisely what it is to reimagine engagement, living encounter, and relationship in an ethics-based counselling paradigm. At a time where war has become ontological because the total destruction of human life is possible (Hardt & Negri, 2005), the Western subject—particularly our capacities to think, feel, communicate, and relate—has come to be nearly completely part of the machinery of capitalism. Contemporary globalized capitalism now endeavours to expand past the material realm to extract even our most personal capacities, such as our ability to feel, communicate, and relate. We find ourselves in a paradoxical system where, on the one hand, our affects, thoughts, and communicative abilities are always for sale, while on the other hand, these capacities are rendered as code in a machine that is distant from the lived material existence that produces it. The basics of subjectivity and social life—relationships, love, and communication—are now contractual elements in a pay-for-service machine where unions and careers are undermined and citizens have little to no protection (Skott-Myhre, 2015b). The tendency toward affective labour within capital thus becomes a site of appropriation and resistance—the grounds on which to

build an alternative: a relationality of living encounter among the multitude (Hardt & Negri, 2005).

Affective labour directly produces cooperation, communication, knowledge, and social relatedness and, as such, is biopolitical, yet, simultaneous with the biopolitics of affective labour within Empire are the *necropolitical* powers over life and death. Achille Mbembé and Libby Meintjes (2003) developed the concept of necropolitics to describe how the ultimate manifestation of sovereignty is expressed in the power to decide who must die. Mbembé and Meintjes explain that, for Foucault (2008), biopower was a differentiating function, separating out those who must die from those who must live. Necropolitics, in contrast, is the deliberate application of violence, war, and terror to exterminate people. The total domination and planned extermination of people that constituted early colonialism takes much more subtle forms today, such as ignoring the violence inflicted on Indigenous women and children, destabilizing family structures through child apprehension, withholding medical services, and destroying land and water through industrial pollution or resource extraction.

Miriam Tola (2015) introduces feminist reflections on the body, matter, and nature into the discussion about productive labour. She argues that the more-than-human world of nature and earth forces is underplayed in Hardt and Negri's (2000, 2005, 2009) formulation of labour and the common. According to Tola, constructing an alternative to Empire requires deep consideration of earth forces, not only how human productivity shapes them and creates with them, but the way subjectivity is produced in relation to them. In challenging the notion that increased networked productivity is an avenue for constructing the common, Tola draws on Elizabeth Grosz and Rosi Braidotti to rethink the roles of sexual difference and the body in relation to the earth and human projects. Tola proposes a more embedded notion of the human

that can break from the Eurocentrism of continental philosophy. By foregrounding ecology in any project of the commons, she argues, greater focus can be put on those whose territories and habitats have been stolen. It also places much greater emphasis on participation in sustainable ecologies and cohabitation with earth others.

By returning to the material actualities of human relationships, Hans Skott-Myhre and his colleagues Brad McDonald and Kathy Skott-Myhre (2017) propose, human service work might resist the fanatic individualism and consumerism of contemporary society and foster the development of new modes of value and praxis. In the multitude, the individual is not required to subject their own thoughts, affects, or abilities to the dictates of a transcendent or sovereign authority in relation to which they are not self-determining. Instead, the multitude characterizes differences brought together for common purpose to solve specific problems of a place and time. In the multitude, individuality and collectivity are not dichotomous, because the singularity of any individual is actualized only in living relationships in an ecology. Furthermore, the goals that the multitude aspires to achieve are thought to be immanently determined by all those involved. Hardt and Negri (2009) here envision a form of direct democracy as a means of achieving an ongoing reevaluation of the multitude's goals and direction. The multitude, therefore, neither invigorates an individual agentic self nor requires one to subsume one's individuality to a collective value or authoritarian leader. Differences contained in the multitude include the unique experiences, knowledges, histories, and problems of the diverse bodies that compose it. In this way, no knowledge or problem is calcified as belonging to a particular group or time. Rather, the opportunity to address a lifeworld produced by historic and identitarian situations can be engaged with contemporaneously and through difference.

The challenge to consider, for practitioners who hold particular theories about people and their psychologies or about the problems of mental illness, is how to work with others to explore the potential for creative change through the encounter of therapy. This approach will require that what we are open to the alchemy of relationship in the localized context of the present. In a similar vein, Skott-Myhre, McDonald, and Skott-Myhre (2017) detail how engaged work with others, in this case counselling, must be sensitive to the lived experience of those being served. These authors also suggest that unfinished projects, such as those grounded in immediate encounter in material existence, might serve as a way to ground a praxis of liberation in contemporary Empire. These may be anticolonial and anticapitalist struggles, as well as revolutionary movements engaged with by young people, including environmental, educational, or political struggle. In North America today, racism, poverty, environmental degradation, and Indigenous rights struggles have emerged as pressing issues around which counsellors might orient their work. By returning to decolonization and settler ethics to ground an immanent counselling praxis based in relationship, I end by mapping the present, not only in terms of its enclosures and horrors, but with one eye to an ethical appreciation of what else might be.

### **Toward a Decolonized Praxis of Counselling in Empire**

Despite persistent, methodical attempts by the settler state to end Indigenous life and culture and usurp Indigenous lands, the peoples of Turtle Island have resisted and persisted as dignified communities. Through centuries of oppression, Indigenous peoples have cultivated forms of self-protection, healing, revitalization, and resurgence that defy settler attempts at domination (Hill, 2009). Where there is power, there is always resistance (Foucault, 1980; Wade, 1997). Many settlers, particularly those being educated in the new millennium, are being confronted with horrific Indigenous ancestral histories and have little guidance in responding, either internally to

the affects of guilt and shame, or socially and politically to the systemic realities and living relationships we settlers have with Indigenous people. Some settlers are offered the opportunity to witness and understand how Indigenous people have resisted colonial occupation and continued their traditions, languages, and connections to land. Indigenous history and knowledge are only beginning to be respected, and there are opportunities for people of experience to guide and counsel white settlers, and vice versa, on how to engage with Indigenous people, knowledges, and communities. White settlers need to work with each other honestly to develop their ethics as they apply to themselves and Indigenous people.

To be forceful as decolonized practice, counselling with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must be accountable to the repatriation of Indigenous lands and the ending of colonial violence. Diversity work and decolonization cannot be limited to working with marginalized people. Young settler people arrive at knowledge of colonization and Indigenous people through a variety of educational and life experiences. Depending on the contexts, relationships, discourses, and environments of such consciousness raising, combined with each individual's history and previous assumptions, their reactions can vary, from empathy and justice seeking, to disgust, denial, guilt, or a perpetuation of colonial codes of relating (Wade, 1995). With settlers specifically, we need to develop ways to work with the defences of repression and denial and the affects of guilt, disgust, and shame. Kouri and Skott-Myhre (2016) have argued that the settler unconscious is a site of repressed knowledge of historical genocide which requires that the shame and guilt of acknowledging our history be suspended by any means available. Under such foreclosures of knowledge, the settler, for example, perpetuates the illusion that colonization is in the past and that any and all harm, trauma, and associated accountability has no contemporary reality. In this way, settlers live in an illusion that prevents their full engagement

with life and traps them in a simulacrum of family, home, and relationship. Such conditions fuel violent rebellion against any disruptions to the fantasy, perpetuate the harms of colonization through blatant denial of reality, and attenuate settler people's ability to live fully engaged lives because they are cut off from the history and relations that are their living ecosystem.

Settler practitioners have a responsibility to work with other settlers to undo this repressive fantasy and engage in the hard work of truth telling and recrafting relationships with each other, Indigenous people, history, and the living ecosystem. As schools in Canada begin to shift curriculum in response to the TRC's (2015a) recommendations to explicitly acknowledge colonization and the residential school system, counsellors can act as allies to Indigenous colleagues and Indigenous people in general by attending to the wide variety of responses of settler people as they confront their colonial history and unconscious. For too long, Indigenous people have had to experience violent backlash as they shoulder the work of educating settlers alone. In a decolonizing counselling praxis with and by settlers, we can find ways to ethically approach Indigenous teachings, practice on Indigenous lands, and, perhaps, work with healing practices from Indigenous teachers and colleagues. In the contexts of broad and local struggles for life, justice, health, and equity, the engaged and direct work counsellors do with young people must not only account for such circumstances but find ways of relating that provide avenues of social change. Colonialism persists and influences all aspects of our lives and practice; it is what we bequeath younger generations; and its mentality structures how we experience meaning in the world (White, Kouri, & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2017). As counsellors, we can potentially intervene in the production of settler subjectivities by engaging with young settler people's experiences of angst and guilt about colonization, as well as their moral outrage, thereby working toward a healing that is ethically grounded and has systemic implications.

Tuck and Yang (2012) explain that decolonization is specifically about the repatriation of Indigenous land and the valuing of Indigenous life and ways of being. These authors warn that to use the language of decolonization in education, science, personal growth, and human service practice without specific links to material and systemic change for Indigenous people is to do an injustice to true decolonizing struggles. Perhaps decolonizing counselling, particularly in its delivery by and for settlers, is an impossible task within this paradigm. Perhaps recuperating counselling is itself a settler “move to innocence” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3) and anathema to true decolonization. With these standards and risks in mind, challenging the colonialism bred in and through counselling and developing a praxis more commensurate with decolonization has many already developed lines. Glenn Adams and his colleagues (2015), for example, summarize the approaches to decolonization found in liberation and cultural psychology. They suggest that privileging the experience and epistemologies of people in marginalized conditions can disrupt domain constructions of reality, contest epistemic violence, and “*denaturalize* standards of thought and feeling that hegemonic perspectives propose as natural standards” (p. 219, italics in original). In their view, rather than perpetuating the production of neoliberal individualism, liberation and cultural approaches might value collective well-being over the pursuit of individual growth and satisfaction. They propose decolonization as Indigenization and accompaniment, the former being the practice of valorizing traditional knowledge born in particular histories and environmental conditions, and the latter being an allyship practice whereby non-Indigenous people walk humbly alongside, learn from, and join in the efforts of transforming unjust systems with Indigenous people.

Mainstream counselling has promoted the interests of the privileged minority in affluent global centres for a century, and it has yet to be seen if counselling can act as a decolonizing and

anticolonial force. The reiteration of colonialism and capitalism through counselling and psychology occurs through the naturalization of particular epistemic and ontological ways of being, as well as through particular frameworks for value and meaning (Adams, Dobles, Gómez, Kurtiş, & Molina, 2015). Alongside Indigenous people's decolonizing of counselling by promoting Indigenous ways of knowing and being, settler counsellors can be accountable by supporting these activities and undoing both their own colonial mentality and that of their settler clients. There is a growing literature of counselling practice by settlers working with Indigenous people (e.g., Crocket, 2012; Richardson & Reynolds, 2014; Thomas, 2013; Wade, 1995; Watkins, 2015), however, remarkably little research has examined using counselling with settler people as a vehicle for disrupting the reproduction of colonial mentality. Indeed, colonial mentality is ardently reinforced by most settler people and by their sciences and knowledge (Becker & Maracek, 2008). It is settlers' responsibility to challenge and undo these structures of thought and the institutions that support them. The challenge of a critical counselling practice commensurate with decolonization is to find avenues for praxis that intervenes in the settler psyche to loosen its colonial grip on all forms of land and life. My proposal that working in ethical living relationships with young people, particularly those in distress and crisis, might prove to be a productive space for recrafting less colonized subjectivities.

With mainstream counselling fixated on supporting young people in their transitions between childhood and adulthood, an alternative is called for that seeks to challenge Empire while young people are in this liminal stage. The majoritarian subject is confronted by their failure to arrive at a desired position within a system that is thoroughly corrupt, unjust, and life depleting. Due to generations of privilege and power, young white settlers have experienced a small fraction of the challenges, repressions, and threats that Indigenous and minority people

have experienced, yet they experience these as an existential threat. Privilege and entitlement, in this way, can paradoxically be read as undermining resilience at individual and group levels. While other individuals and groups have developed smart forms of resistance and expressed incredible resistance in the face of brutal capitalism and settler colonialism, majoritarian young people lack community and hardiness in the face of today's challenges.

For the most part, therapy is seen as a hopeful—or perhaps, at this juncture of history, natural—response to and remedy for a young person's mis-fit in society or their marked difference from a norm in thought, affect, or behaviour. Parents, teachers, professionals, and doctors send young people to counsellors for mental treatment because they locate the problem at the level of the individual. In my experience, however, young people are markedly more heterogeneous in regards to how they understand the problems that bring them to therapy. Numerous young people share with the adults in their lives a story of individual pathology and look to counsellors for ways of coping or curing their disorder. Others, in contrast, are disillusioned by the lives that their families, schools, and cultures have promised in exchange for their participation in Empire. Others, still, find something in themselves that is incapable of belonging to the status quo and relay how they are frustrated and angry or feel creative, eccentric, and outside the systems they inhabit. A counsellor's conceptualization, orientation, and ethics in relation to how the problem is understood and how difference or nonconforming elements and ways of being are treated are paramount for decolonizing and resisting global capitalism through counselling practice.

In the context of Indigenous wellness research, Tuck (2009) argues that a damage-centered approach—one that centers the “vulnerable child” or the “at-risk family”—potentially “reinforces and reinscribes a one-dimensional notion of ... people as depleted, ruined, and

hopeless” (p. 409). Instead of beginning our understanding of mental illness with the isolated and damaged young people or family, we need to theorize our own socio-political context and seek productive ways to implicate and transform our counselling praxis. Tuck suggests desire-based frameworks that center the wisdom and hope of communities within an understanding of the “complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives” (p. 416) as such an approach. Taking a desire-based framework into counselling work, we might sidestep the dialectic between illness and health by focusing instead on how young adults—as well as practitioners—simultaneously replicate and resist their constitutive social relations while reassembling elements of those relations in ways that hint at new ways of living life. This way of reading desire is what brings Skott-Myhre and Skott-Myhre (2015) to argue that it is not about lack (the desire to satisfy something you are missing) but rather about “the desire to act, to create, and to produce . . . [that is] the foundation of all forms of human creativity and hence all forms of human sociality” (p. 583).

Hardt and Negri (2009) extrapolate from Marx in proposing the formation of the common as a way for people to reclaim, not only natural resources and territory, but also such biopolitical products as language, collaboration, and affects. Far from resolving the complications of striving for the common on occupied lands, it is in this complex alchemy of history, politics, and economics that Hardt and Negri propose revolutionary subjectivity and the body as the quintessential sites of struggle, contradiction, and contestation. Specifically, they argue that, in Empire, it is our ability to relate to one another through affect and language, now to extraordinary degrees through technology, that is both the target of capitalism and our greatest tool for resistance. Rather than view global capitalism as a distinct enemy, Hardt and Negri propose that we might best resist capitalism by using its greatest strengths against itself. For

example, they argue that it is the interconnectedness of the globe and the deterritorializing force of capitalism which tear asunder previous hierarchies and regimes of dominance. Through our encounter with difference opened up by globalized capitalism and the ongoing disestablishment of rigid hierarchies of gender, race, and ability, majoritarian subjects may begin to give up structures of power, willingly or not, and become something other than what they currently are.

Young people embody very specifically a creative force within globalized and technologically mediated society that is enacted through relationship, communication, and the production of culture and subculture (Skott-Myhre, 2008). Engaging with young people to respond to the affects of contemporary Empire seems to require both an openness to what is possible as well as a highly grounded and localized analysis of the current moment. It is our willingness as counsellors to be vulnerable to both the pain young people feel within Empire and the changes that young people propel from their different social locations that might open us to the difference within ourselves. By firmly situating an immanent counselling praxis within the context of settler colonialism, I argue that the power of relationship inherent in counselling might ethically engage in transforming settler subjectivity toward new forms of community that might resist the capito-colonial enclosures and appropriations embedded in the mental health system. Situation difference, living encounter, affective labour, and ethics at the centre of counselling may contribute to a project of sustaining life in common, a common within which we can maintain our politically situated differences and be accountable to them.

## **Paper Two: Majoritarian Identity and Subjectivity: A Conceptual Framework**

Experiences that come to be coded and treated as mental illness occur within intertwining systems of capitalism and colonialism. These systems operate directly through land, labour, and resource usurpation, affective and material exploitation, and direct violence. They also operate through discourses that organize people into groups based on manufactured categories of race, class, sex, gender, and sexual orientation, among other taxonomies. In this paper, I explore facets of identity to develop the concept of the majoritarian subject and explore crisis as a potential intervention into the reproduction of capito-colonial Empire. This theoretical and conceptual work will politically situate what comes to be understood as mental distress in young adult populations. It will also expose how difference is politicized and pathologized in Empire and how the inherent individualism of contemporary mental health discourse decontextualizes suffering and inequity. By mapping the mechanisms of power within Empire, with a particular focus on majoritarian subjectivity and its undoing through relational praxis, I will problematize mainstream counselling, developmental theory, and mental health discourse.

I begin this paper by locating myself as a white male settler working and studying on occupied Indigenous territories. I intertwine my life in settler colonialism with discourses on white supremacy, hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity, and Eurocentric humanism. By engaging with Indigenous, queer, feminist, trans, and intersectional accounts of identity, I attempt to locate myself and white majoritarian subjectivity in general within networks of power, privilege, discourse, and oppression. I also draw on posthumanism and the philosophy of immanence to account for the living body and relationship in the production of subjectivity. I end by providing a conceptualization of majoritarian subjectivity which reformulates mental distress as an opportunity to intervene in the reproduction of social and identitarian power. This

conceptual development will be specifically tied to counselling praxis with young people. My position therefore adapts critical theories of identity to challenge taken-for-granted notions of well-being predicated on the ideal of the white male majoritarian subject of Euro-Western enlightenment.

With clinical notions of change, intervention, and knowledge resting on the humanist subject, a critical departure from that foundation is required to adequately prepare counselling practitioners for the contemporary world of global capitalism, within which subjectivity is not secured (Deleuze, 1992). Many laudable values of counselling, such as personal agency, well-being, self-awareness, authenticity, and change, are based on humanism and enlightenment. A departure from this foundation is particularly relevant as decolonization, reconciliation, and Indigenous revitalization grow in social discourses and hold the potential to challenge the centrality of the Western subject—if, as Coulthard (2014) insists, decolonization is not framed within the settler framework. Understanding the differences between majoritarian problems and the challenges faced by young people from marginalized locations may also provide openings onto new forms of accountability, solidarity, ethics, healing, and social justice. To address the dramatic challenges that young people will face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I propose an approach to counselling that might challenge the reiteration of majoritarian subjectivities complicit in globalized capitalism, settler colonialism, and the bio-medical-industrial complex. The formation of subjectivity, therefore, is the critical point where I reexamine counselling practice as a site of production of subjectivity within the context of contemporary colonization and capitalism.

### **Identity and Subjectivity in Clinical Contexts**

The categories of youth and young adulthood are historically located and contested (Burman, 1994; Skott-Myhre, 2008). Developmental categories, furthermore, are traversed by other aspects

of identity and subjectivity. Young people in Canada are highly diverse in terms of background, socio-economic status, gender and sexual expression, ethnicity, beliefs and values, culture, among many other factors (Statistics Canada, 2011). Given this diversity, it is essential that counsellors put the experiences of distress and mental illness of youth into a socio-political context. In this paper, I will critically explore identity and subjectivity as it relates to power-laden sociocultural contexts through concepts from intersectional, race, queer, Indigenous, and poststructural theory. The tensions, productive or incommensurable, between these concepts make up my framework, or, as Deleuze and Guattari (2003) call it, a plane of immanence. Such a plane of thought provides the conceptual tools to create a cartography of power and subjectivity in relation to specific locations and problems (Braidotti, 2006b). I define of the concepts of majoritarian and minoritarian subjectivity and situate these in relation to counselling work with young people in “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 2004, p. 17). Critical theories are used to figure the subjects of Empire, particularly young people in majoritarian roles, in their relationship to mental illness and counselling. Analyzing the interrelationships between Empire as capito-colonialism and mental health will map counselling work with young people and its contradictions and possibilities to be otherwise. Following Braidotti (2010b), I attempt to connect critique to creativity in an ethical move to accurately map the present while affirming what else might be.

Like young people, counsellors themselves are a diverse group in terms of their identities, positionalities, ideologies, and practices. I argue that counselling is a site of subject formation (Foucault, 1976/1978, 1980) for both counsellors and the young people they work with: a site for the production of meaning, values, goals, and behaviour change, primarily through identifications and the formation of subjectivity. In counselling, individuals recognize one

another through discourse, reinforce performances of identity, and introduce novel renditions of themselves and relationships (Butler, 1997). Counselling is also a situated process of direct encounter which can elicits capacities and emergent properties that exceed their socially organized codes and identities (Skott-Myre, 2005; Van Kaam, 1966). The analysis of the subjectivities of majoritarian counsellors and young people in their mutually constitutive relationship, therefore, will center history, context, power, and identity, as well as what might be aberrant, different, and in excess of social codes. I see the work of mapping out discourses of identity as a preliminary step in developing a minoritarian counselling approach (Skott-Myhre, 2005).

Much of the literature which follows suggests that we cannot deal with any facet of identity or power in isolation, nor is it useful to reduce the complexity of power to any single issue (Coulthard, 2009). I have therefore surveyed a number of facets of identity and power, but for this breadth, I sacrifice some depth. I have chosen to aim for a broad understanding of the issues and to focus on connections, tensions, and general trends. As in counselling, having a broad range of conceptualizations for problems enables us to meet a diverse range of people. With an expansive map at hand, we can locate points of connection and understand their interaction. From there, local and nuanced accounts can be developed for specific situations and the needs at hand. This analysis emanates from a particular location saturated in power, discourse, and privilege, and so it is to my specific location as a settler academic and counsellor that I turn first.

### **Settler Location**

As a third-generation Lebanese-English white-skinned settler living and working on the traditional and unceded lands of the Lekwungen, SENĆOTEN, and Hul'qumi'num speaking

peoples, I recognize historical and contemporary colonialism's insidious functioning *and* Indigenous people's continued resistance. Specifically, I have lived on the traditional and unceded territories and waterways of the Songhees, W̱SÁNEĆ, and T'Sou-ke peoples for nearly 20 years as well as worked on the lands of the Esquimalt, Pacheedaht, Lyackson, Stz'uminus, and Penelakut peoples. As a settler, my acknowledgements of Indigenous territory are troubled in that they also are also complicit, to some degree, in continued colonization. The acknowledgement of territory is an Indigenous practice embedded in histories of peacemaking, alliance building, and kinship systems (de Finney, Kouri, Brockett, & Anderson-Nathe, 2017) and for Indigenous peoples, the practice follows protocols situated in traditions. Settler academics who now practice territorial acknowledgements simultaneously make colonialism visible and continue to appropriate what is not ours. Territorial acknowledgements illustrate a key axiom of colonialism: settler attempts to challenge or undo colonialism inevitably replicate it. We might also, through our acknowledgements of territory and social location, be attempting to move ourselves to a place of innocence by differentiating ourselves from less knowledgeable settlers (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Attempts at accountability through acknowledgements and positioning are never perfect, simple, or clean. As "visitors" and "guests" who will not leave, our practices of recognizing our settlement often more deeply ingrain it as we move ourselves to a place of less guilt and shame through saying the right things and having reconciliatory answers to calls for true decolonization.

I recognize that historic and ongoing colonization is foundational to Canadian nation building and settler life here (Kouri, 2015). The Canadian educational, governmental, and social systems are inherently oppressive to the Indigenous peoples whose cultures, lands, and languages were systematically undermined in efforts to appropriate and occupy these lands and steal its

resources (Coulthard, 2014; A. Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). The intentional spread of disease, treachery and duplicity in treaty making, and direct use of military, carceral, and police violence characterize settler culture (Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004). Prison and death camps for children, euphemized as residential schools, were integral to the Canadian, Christian, and capitalist projects of genocide and land appropriation (Richardson & Nelson, 2007). The racism, classism, and sexism that accompanied Canadian colonial nation building has, at this point, become the dominant norm and the languages, philosophies, beliefs, and histories of Euro-Western settlers the dominant ideology (Watts, 2013).

To locate myself in this ongoing colonial history, I turn first to my Lebanese ancestry. Kouri is a Lebanese name referencing Christian priesthood in the Middle East. As a minority in the Middle East, Christian Arabs have an indirect connection to the colonial conquest of Turtle Island. My great-grandparents came to live on territory that was taken from Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) people and is now known as Montreal. Christian Arabs, particularly those of the pre-war Lebanese diaspora, settled in Eastern Canada through what Jodi Byrd (2011) calls a transit of empire. This particular transit connected the French settlement project of Quebec to its nation-building project in western Syria. In the early 1800s, France was attempting to gain a foothold in the Middle East by supporting the formation of an independent Christian state, a state which they succeeded in creating at the end of the First World War through an accord with Britain. That accord, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, is historically foundational to contemporary conflicts in the Middle East, and this transit continues to function today as Arabs continue to flee Syria, as my great-grandparents did, crossing from Lebanon to eastern Canada. Transits of empire connect historical to present-day colonialisms as well as to diverse forms of oppression and social justice. Reading transits (Byrd, 2011) such as these allows us to highlight key

differences in how people and groups are differentially positioned and have uneven access to movement within and across settler states.

While my paternal ancestry traces to the Middle East, my maternal family was English, hailing from the heart of the British Empire: Manchester, England. As in my childhood, my father identifies as a Canadian and not as Lebanese. My mother takes very little notice of her background, as anglophone British whiteness is an unquestioned norm in Canada. That being said, she was probably the first to teach me acceptance and interest in all people, having herself married a person of Lebanese descent. My parents' marriage seemed to nearly complete the integration of my Arab ancestry into the colonial mainstream. My siblings and I were the first mixed-“race” white-skinned children in the Kouri lineage, we learned English and French rather than Arabic, and were put in schools outside our highly racialized community. While all of these moves aimed toward long-term economic success, the racial backdrop and internalized racism is now unmistakable. Little did we know what an additional privilege achieving whiteness and integrated citizenship would be as new waves of Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment encompass much that is Arab today. My identity was, in these ways, crafted by large-scale and historic forces, as well as immediate discourse, family and community, and relationships. All the while, however, I was unconscious the function and power of my social location, particularly as it related to settler colonialism.

### **Self-location**

I occupy the position of a white, middle-class, home-owning, employed, educated, able-bodied, cisgender, straight, married, male settler, father of three, living on occupied Indigenous territories. Through these social locations, I have access to power and privilege. I have, for example, been able to easily access education, work, and health care for my whole life; I am not

racially profiled in my daily activities (walking, shopping, driving, etc.); I can travel freely with a Canadian passport; and I have not been subjected to racial, gender, or class discrimination. As an educator and counsellor, my voice is imbued with expertise, and I can make pronouncements with a high degree of truth and power attributed to what I say. I have never been subjected to formal assessments of my parenting or been threatened with the apprehension of my children. I have always had access to food, shelter, and clothing. My social location as a white settler male both provides a power-laden identity and masks the living difference that constitutes my lived experience.

My identity is one saturated in privilege and power, clearly situated at the top of a number of social hierarchies. At the same time, each one of these categories, for me, contains difference, contradiction, and nuance. For example, my white skin hides my Lebanese ancestry and both shelters me from racism and distances me from that blood line. Accessing middle-class home ownership came at the price of over a half-million dollar debt to a multinational bank and has put the long-term security of my family in the hands of housing markets. I have never been formally diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder; however, I have experienced symptoms that would be classified as attention deficit hyperactivity, anxiety, and panic disorders. My family is marked by sexualized violence, depression, panic, and suicidality. I have intervened in a rape and supported numerous survivors of sexualized violence. I have experienced physical abuse, crossed paths with gangs, been arrested (but not charged), and, in an unrelated incident, been shot.

My education and employment, while providing me with immense power, have been in critical human services and have focused on challenging the very structures through which my privilege has been achieved. In my care work, paid and at home, I challenge the feminization of love, vulnerability, and emotional labour. I use my expertise in counselling to critically

questioning the knowledge claims and authority of other experts in the mental health system. I parent in a blended family and lived with that stigma for the early years of my children's lives. My sexual identity as a cisgender straight married man is traversed by homoerotic and polyamorous fantasy and exploration. I've experienced hegemonic masculinity as asphyxiating and spent many years self-medicating for shame and insecurity. These elements of my experience coincide with and disrupt my majoritarian identity. It is to these molecular elements that seethe within every majoritarian identity that I hope to turn for resource in interrupting the ongoing reproduction and consolidation of the straightforwardly white heterosexual settler male identity in counselling.

It has consistently been relationships with marginalized people, or other majoritarian folk in crisis or protest, that have opened me up to revolutionary love and commitments to solidarity and other ethics. For example, when I was young, my parents tried to maximize our class mobility by sending me to schools outside my Arab neighbourhood. Sending me to schools within the Protestant School Board of Montreal, however, inadvertently put me in close contact with many other racialized people. Quickly, the vast majority of my friends were Black and I felt more tied to Black culture than to either my Arab or my white culture. I grew up playing basketball, listening to hip-hop music and dressing the part, eating Jamaican, Haitian, and African foods. I learned more about slavery, civil rights, and Black struggles than about the Arab diaspora or English colonialism. I spent as many nights in Black neighborhoods and homes as I did my own. I did not have the language of solidarity available to me at the time, but I did call teachers out on racism and challenge the negative stereotypes against Black people that were rampant in my Arab home community. My early experiences with Black people helped me to develop the beginnings of a critical consciousness of race and question my own white Lebanese

identity. At the time, I did not understand the problems of appropriation or white-saviour complex (Cole, 2012), and in hindsight, I realize that it was in my attempts to help through my privilege, a form of helping that is troubled because it often reinforces entrenched power dynamics and can cause both subtle and overt forms of harm, that my learning was done. Learning about race for white settlers is often done at the expense of and on the backs of racialized people. It was probably these experiences that prepared me for the work I do now with racialized or otherwise marginalized people, and many of my early experiences and friendships are still at the forefront of my ethical considerations.

As a person with a majoritarian identity, it has mainly been my encounters with people outside the dominant coding of identity that have opened me up to different experiences of myself as well. It has been through my engagement with Others that the minor elements of my own experience have been recognized, explored, amplified, and put to work. On occasion, however, critical encounters with people who hold dominant identity locations have been a site for challenging repetitious performances of myself and exploring minoritarian elements. I recognize, in this regard, other settler activist who have raised my critical consciousness and invited me into more ethical stances and courses of action. I also recognize the influence of the people who responded in critical and loving ways to my own mental health crises, as well as people whom I have supported through theirs. These have been teachers, friends, counsellors, activists, allies I have met in protests, and counselling colleagues and clients.

In the remainder of this paper I develop the concepts of minoritarian and majoritarian to think about the coexistence of dominant identity formations and the living molecular elements that compose them. I am cautiously curious about the possibility of majoritarian counsellors exploring minoritarian elements in themselves and their clients—that is, seeking ethical ways for

majoritarian people to explore parts of themselves that either have suffered under heteronormative-racist-settler patriarchy or found escape routes from it. Without making all suffering equal—or worse, appropriating the pain of others—I wonder how majoritarian subjects can find their own ways to challenge Empire and align with minoritarian people in embodied, ethical, and relational ways. After more fully elaborating my identity in relation to settler colonialism, whiteness, and hegemonic masculinity, I work through intersectional, queer, and poststructural theories of identity to develop a conceptual framework for interrogating the interruption of dominant identity production in majoritarian counselling. In doing so, I outline the ethical stakes in new forms of relationality that trouble majoritarian identity in counselling settings.

### **The Multicultural Settler Unconscious**

Growing up and attending public schools in the 1980s, I learned that multicultural and democratic citizenship in Canada meant that diversities were to be included within a single state. I also learned to feel entitled to what state and land have to offer: residence, resources, mobility, and livelihood. At no time was I aware that these entitlements significantly depended on removing rights to land and livelihood from the original and rightful inhabitants of this land. I was unconscious of the colonial reality that structured my life and identity. According to our settler histories, we negotiated fair treaties in which we legally exchanged goods and rights for land, and, through these treaties, Indigenous people became a minority group who were due special privileges and protections. For the Canadian citizen, one of the most persistent erasures continues to be the terrors of colonialism that deny Indigenous presence in any temporal priority (Kouri, 2015) or contemporary affective relationship with us (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016).

Under such omissions of knowledge and affect, the multicultural Canadian must believe that Indigenous presence is historical, that land dispossession was lawful, and that all harms to Indigenous people have no contemporary actuality. This state of misapprehension and denial, however, impoverishes the settler subject's ability to understand themselves in relation to the living world, their relationships with each other and Indigenous people, and their responsibilities to land, life, and history (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016). A subjectivity crafted in such awful misapprehension and propaganda will forever be dislocated, not only in the material sense of not knowing their actual history, but also affectively, because we and the world around us are composed of our shared histories. In this sense, erasing Indigenous presence and adhering to abstract accounts of colonial history sanitizes our actual encounters and geographies, and produces a settler unconscious of repression and stasis. This state of repression, tied with a felt entitlement to the bounty of colonization, founds much of the background of racism, resentment, dislocation, and, perhaps, the affects synonymous with mental illness (Alexander, 2008; Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016).

The unconscious that is produced in a system of denial constitutes the multicultural settler citizen as a subject free of the violent conquest of these lands. Colonialism is abstracted, historicized, rationalized, and in every other way disconnected from our living cognitive, material, affective, and sensorial reaches. In an attempt to mute the weight of history, settlers must disconnect from their phenomenological encounter with life as a living geography composed by history. The unconscious here is a site of repression where particular histories and living relations are taboo to know and experience. Such an unconscious produces the multicultural Canadian citizen as an identity to stand in for a subjectivity overwhelmed with shame and guilt, in desperate need to defer any debt due on the terms of its survival (Kouri &

Skott-Myhre, 2016). We, as settler Canadians, must not know, in any real sense, the pain we have caused to land or to Indigenous peoples. Such repression can only be sustained through ongoing violence to others and to one's own integrity. Affectively, that which is repressed will contort and damage the mind, spirit, and body. The horrible truth of genocide that must be repressed places a barrier between us, Indigenous peoples, and our now-shared lived experience of being on Indigenous homelands.

### **Consciousness Raising**

With recent recommended changes in education following the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015a), young people are learning more than their parents did about colonization, the residential school system, and Indigenous cultures, peoples, and histories. Adult settlers are now encouraged by the Canadian state and provincial educational ministries to work with Indigenous people to more accurately portray the history of colonization and Indigenous presence within public school curriculum. These adult settler Canadians, however, might not have themselves been taught history accurately, had any relationships with Indigenous peoples, or been guided in attending to the affects or ethics of such engagements. A recent study in Ontario, for example, showed that there are significant challenges in implementing Indigenous content in schools due to unawareness and within-school intimidation among settler educators (Milne, 2017). Cindy Blackstock publicly summed the situation of implementing TRC recommendations, saying "there's lots of good talk and not a lot of action in terms of translating those political statements into real change" (Forrest, 2017). While some debatable work is being done over curriculum content and teacher training, any analysis or plan for attending to the affects and cognitive dissonance produced by such education has not been adequately attended to.

As settler Canadians become more aware of their own and Indigenous histories, there is a desperate need for people working in human service to be prepared to understand and translate powerful affects into new forms of ethics. Some scholars, such as Michael Asch (2014), believe that increased awareness might produce a more lawful citizen who is meaningfully related to treaty law and settler responsibilities. To overcome colonial relations, Asch argues, settlers must recognize themselves as honourable people who can and must live according to the principle of law. To me, Asch both underestimates the potential backlash of settler people as they are challenged to confront coloniality and, on the other end of the spectrum, the radical possibility of settlers undoing coloniality (Kouri, 2015). Other non-Indigenous authors (e.g., Fitzmaurice, 2010; Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016; Morgensen, 2011; Regan, 2010; Ritskes, 2013; Veracini, 2008) contend, for example, that such a radical change is possible, one in which settlers might participate in active decolonization. To approach such ends, however, both settler colonialism and the systems of whiteness, masculinity, capitalism, and other facets of identity and power that contribute to settler hegemony must be confronted, and alternatives must be provided so that children do not feel immobilized by and further alienated from these debates.

The concept of multiculturalism has been pervasive in public education in Canada and has functioned to historicize Indigenous peoples and invisibilize the genocidal regime of residential schools, land theft, and resource extractivism. My own early education was typical of those in the public school system in the 1980s and 90s. I was taught to think of myself as a multicultural Canadian citizen with an important ethnic background. Multiculturalism extended to people of other nationalities and ethnicities, but nothing was said about the need to exterminate Indigenous peoples to achieve a multicultural state. In my undergraduate education in child and youth care (CYC) at the University of Victoria, self-location was used as a tool for

teaching how identity was situated in power-saturated structures of social privilege and power. Self-location was combined with Indigenous teachings regarding the importance of understanding both ancestry and the histories that ancestors participated in related to the lands I now live on. I now better understand how the ideas I held before the program were inextricably tied to systems, discourses, and practices that marginalized other bodies and ways of knowing and living. Throughout my education, and even more poignantly as I began to practice as a counsellor, I was confronted with complex dilemmas related to my social location and ways of knowing. Through my CYC work related to counselling and settler ethics, I became involved in supporting the health goals of the Penelakut First Nation as a community counsellor. My counselling work with Indigenous peoples has primarily been with Penelakut but has also included Indigenous people in urban, postsecondary, and wilderness contexts. In my work as a counsellor with the Penelakut Nation, I have worked on awareness campaigns, community gardens, and suicide and violence prevention. I also organize canoe trips for young people and Elders and have attended numerous outings in which I have learned about history, tradition, medicines, and teachings about the waters and land of the Penelakut people. I call many Penelakut members friends and a few I see as mentors who help guide my counselling practice, as well as my academic work and my parenting practices. My family has joined me on numerous visits to Penelakut and my wife and youngest son were involved with Penelakut families in developing a community garden. Over time I came to know many band counsellors and the chief. I learned about the complexity of Indigenous health and intergovernmental politics. These experiences challenged my acceptance of mainstream counselling, the individualism that underpins it, and its goals. Working in support of Indigenous peoples' wellbeing, I was confronted by the contradictions in my theoretical attachments and my social justice ethics. I

came to see that not only do historical and political realities figure hugely in experiences that come to be coded as mental illness, but that for social justice and Indigenous peoples' wellbeing to be supported by settlers, something drastic needed to change in our ourselves and our communities. I also came to better appreciate the importance of tethering activism, education, and social critique to my counselling work.

My activist work is mainly in environmental and Indigenous contexts. I became involved in Indigenous activism initially through the Idle No More movement and have since worked as a director of the Friends of Nemaiah Valley (FONV), which is a not-for-profit that assists Xenigwet' in First Nation and the Tsilhqot' in national government in reclaiming, protecting and preserving their homeland. FONV is also directly connected to Respecting Aboriginal Values and Environmental Needs (RAVEN), which fundraises for Indigenous peoples' defence funds to protect environmental, territorial, and constitutional rights. I participate in protests against resource extraction and stand with Indigenous people in their fights for sovereignty. I am particularly invested in efforts to protect the Salish Sea and the life in and around it, and in the return of stolen lands and waters to the Indigenous peoples who are their rightful stewards. In terms of decolonization as land repatriation, I currently support Indigenous people's land claims through academic, solidarity, and fundraising avenues, and I am working on developing a land covenant system by which settlers can repatriate land back to the Indigenous peoples who are the rightful stewards. None of these activities move me to a place of innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012) but instead have made me aware of the failures of white settler activism and pushed me to question my practice more deeply.

I consider much of my academic work to be activist oriented if not informed by activist theory and practice. As I attempt to put mental health practice within colonial and capitalist

contexts, I am committed to putting analyses of power at the forefront of my teaching, activism, and clinical work. My research areas include settler colonial studies, youth suicide, counselling training and supervision, CYC theories of self, identity, and subjectivity, and praxis. My teaching areas include mental health and addictions, practicum and practitioner training, human development, and ethics. I supervise practicum students in mental health and addictions, many of whom are on the front lines of the current opioid epidemic or working in Indigenous contexts.

My long-term goals include building a low barrier clinic to serve children, young people, and families. I envision a place where training can be held, practicum students can intern, researchers can do studies, and groups can get together to work on supervision, solidarity, and collective action. My clinical goals are to center radical practice and develop new ways to work that take into account and respond to the capital and colonial contexts of care today. To do so, I am researching radical clinical approaches, putting pressure on ideas of identity and subjectivity, and elaborating an ethics for critical counselling in today's complex world of power and resistance.

In my counselling practice with diverse young people, I have wrestled with how dominant models of counselling focus on individuals rather than acknowledging and analyzing the social, political, and historical forces that affect all of our lives, albeit differently. Diversity perspectives (e.g., Casas, 2017; Sue & Sue, 2008) aim to respect divergent worldviews, values, and ways of relating, yet often lack a sustained engagement with issues such as settler colonialism, the fluidity and intersectionality of identity, and the embeddedness of Eurocentrism in counselling work. Following an analysis of contemporary Empire, cutting-edge identity and postidentitarian theories can help to further develop critical lines of counselling, particularly with the group that holds enormous power in society yet is not specifically addressed in much

contemporary diversity writing in counselling majoritarian subjects. Throughout this paper I use identity as a particular site of analysis through which to question my research and clinical ethics and articulate the tensions of counselling work for those in positions of power and privilege who work at dismantling the systems of dominance that provide them their very ability to speak and act with relative potency and influence. The next four sections focus on articulating the discourses of identity that help mediate the power of Empire in Euro-Western countries. From there, I explicate the concept of majoritarian counselling and set the stage for an analysis of counselling young majoritarian subjects within Empire.

### **White Supremacy**

The European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness (EACCW) explains that the term white supremacy refers to a system of thought that takes for granted white norms and values and thereby “maintains the institutionalization of privilege based on race” (2002, p. 74). Rather than referring to extremist individuals or a group of people intent on perpetuating or reestablishing racial separatism, the EACCW argues that all white people are involved in white supremacy through participation in an unjust social distribution of power and privilege. This analysis challenges well-intentioned whites who deny their complicity in racism on the basis of their attitudes or individual actions. To the contrary, white supremacy is often furthered by the individualizing and psychologizing of racism. Raising consciousness about how white values and structures saturate our lives must therefore be tethered with an examination of how personal attitudes are linked with social power and privilege. These links are often invisible in many groups, such as well-intentioned whites, people who have repressed guilt or self-hatred as a dominant person, or whites who are explicitly racist.

Nicholas Wood and Nimisha Patel (2017) argue that white Western hegemony in clinical psychology is linked with imperial colonialism, and that in a “Trumpian/BREXIT world” (p. 288), practitioners must find ways to challenge systemic injustice and foreground ethics in practice. The authors suggest that human rights discourse, raising awareness of racism and colonialism, and values of equality serve as a foundation for addressing whiteness and colonialism in psychology. It is important to note that feminists and people of colour have critiqued the liberalism and ethnocentrism in much human rights discourse (Heinze, 2007; Parisi, 2002). While human rights values have been useful in making whiteness, capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism more visible in counselling, continued analysis and action is needed to address historical wrongdoings and epistemological and ontological dominance. Going further than Wood and Patel, for example, the EACCW (2002) argues that a counselling praxis that is specifically aimed at transforming racism must take racist people, discourses, and structures into its purview. In line with my argument for a majoritarian counselling approach outlined below, the EACCW suggests that practitioners need to specifically work with affects of guilt, isolation, and despair that are often associated with challenging structural and internalized racism. It is imperative that such work is aimed at white settlers. Such a counter-racism would begin with a criticism of racism and work toward material, subjective, and relational changes.

Avenues for further exploration in counselling for, by, and with white settlers therefore include challenging reified identity roles of the majoritarian subject, working with negative and reactive affects related to racism, and investing in alternative modes of value, subjectivity, and sociality. Counselling may perhaps be one site where majoritarian people can be vulnerable in examining how their personal values are structured by white colonial supremacy, how their lives and actions intersect with the harms that others experience, and where they can engage in a

process of critical self-reflection and subjective transformation. Counselling may also be both a place of psychoeducation, where new knowledge can be tied to new performances of identity, and a place of developing new forms of action and ways of being in the world. Racism and white supremacy must continually be connected to colonialism and hegemonic masculinity, because racism relies on and is reinforced by other aspects of social structuring that normalize and set as a standard the white, heterosexual, able-bodied, cisgender male.

### **Hegemonic Masculinity**

The term hegemonic masculinity was coined by R. W. Connell (1995) to describe the social ideal that guides the development of men's personality, ambitions, and actions in Western societies. This ideal is founded in white patriarchy and is replicated through gender socialization. Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity is a principal mechanism for legitimizing men's role as dominant within society and reinforcing unequal economic, health, and social outcomes across genders. Michael Kimmel (2013) explains that hegemonic masculinity is invisible because of its ubiquity, and this paradox of prevalent unseeing is one facet of reinforcing masculinist privilege. Kimmel (1997) warns that not all masculinities are equal, and brings attention to the double facet of hegemonic masculinity being both a power over women while also devaluing other forms of masculine expression. Hegemonic masculinity is composed of a variety of behaviours and attitudes, such as sexual domination, homophobia, bullying, misogyny, and domestic violence. In 2005, Connell and Messerschmidt reconceptualized the concept of hegemonic masculinity to address criticisms of essentialism and a narrow focus on sex and gender to the exclusion of other aspects of identity, such as whiteness. In their revised description, the authors also focus more on men's economic and social power.

Scholarship in Indigenous masculinities (Innes & Anderson, 2015; Kemper, 2014; McKegney, 2014a, 2014b), Black (Abdel-Shehid, 2005; Mutua, 2006) and other racialized masculinities (Dubinsky, Pagés, Rubenstein, Kaufman & Zarza, 2014; Huynh & Woo, 2014; Riofrio, 2008; Suh, 2017), and queer masculinities (Landreau & Rodriguez, 2012) provides analyses of specific issues of masculinities in different contexts and for different people, while also laying bare the impact of hegemonic white settler masculinity on other forms, conceptions, and performances of masculinity. Abdel-Shehid (2005), for example, places Black sporting masculinities in the context of the African diaspora, consumerism, celebrity, and Canadian nationalism. He argues for a diasporic understanding of Black sporting masculinities as tied to heterosexual and misogynist stereotypes and, in this way, is able to make the functioning of capitalism and colonialism more visible in the production of various masculinities in the Canadian context. Innes and Anderson's (2015) edited text *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration* foregrounds a gender lens in analyzing colonialism and Indigenous experience. The book includes chapters that focus on relationships, representation, social spaces, violence and the impacts of heteronormative patriarchy on Indigenous people of all genders. The final section of the book includes conversational chapters that highlight the diversity of Indigenous masculine experience and foreground relational ways of producing knowledge and sharing experience. Indigenous queer and Two Spirit scholars and activists have further problematized the violent imposition of the colonial gender binary onto Indigenous peoples (Hunt & Holmes, 2015).

A revalorization of traditional and new Indigenous masculinities (Innes & Anderson, 2015; Kemper, 2014; McKegney, 2014a, 2014b) bequeaths majoritarian counsellors a responsibility to broaden their understanding of Indigenous gender formations and issues and

develop an ethics of relating to these men. Clearly, heteronormative white colonial masculinity suppresses an array of experiences across various racial, class, geographic, and sexual lines. This being the case, there is also a discourse of a crisis in masculinity that refers directly to hegemonic masculinity, and it is to this perceived predicament—which, as we will see, is related to the growing awareness of diverse masculinities and a critique of heteronormative patriarchy—that majoritarian people are oriented.

Michael Atkinson (2011) explores the concept of a crisis in masculinity, explaining that men “are actually privileged by impossible or untenable expectations, standards, and norms of manliness extolled in Western nations like Canada” (p. 2). Atkinson goes on to paint a picture of a cultural discourse of crisis within which men, particularly middle-class white men, perceive themselves to be in a state of loss, anxiety, doubt, and confusion. While patriarchy and masculinity are still firmly established in Western societies, there is also a narrative and experience of individual crisis, represented, for example, by Susan Faludi’s 1999 follow-up to her 1991 *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*. In *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, Faludi argues that men have it harder than women due to issues such as unemployment, lower wages, and rising house prices. Rather than challenging hegemonic norms, Faludi figures crisis as the breakdown of such norms and the increasing social barriers to men achieving them.

The waves of feminism and queer theory that have challenged essentialist notions of masculinity associated with traits like strength, action, reason and assertiveness have been perceived, according to Atkinson (2011), as interrupting men in taking up their entitled positions of power within society, and hence have been blamed as the catalyst for the perceived crisis in masculinity. Further, at an ideological level, the deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity has

also ushered in individual and cultural chaos for men, who no longer have a clear sense of gender-role expectations or how to embody gender-appropriate behaviours. Atkinson articulates five important features of this perceived/experienced crisis: (1) the state of existential anxiety, frustration, and anger regarding perceived loss; (2) the collective organization of men who fight back either politically or individually to defend hegemonic masculinity; (3) a crisis in representation, particularly around cultural practices and body projects; (4) the postmodern loss of meta narratives and general ontological uncertainty; and (5) heightened discourse about the potential violence of men and boys, which often leads to increased surveillance even while racialized males are substantially more surveyed, violently policed, and incarcerated.

In terms of the globalizing of hegemonic masculinity, Christine Beasley (2008) argues that not only is the American brand of white masculinity becoming pervasive across the globe as an ideal, it is also firmly embedded in diplomacy, neoliberal market economics, and global politics. Recent studies (Regnerus, 2017) have also investigated how masculinity in North America and abroad has morphed and been amplified due to technologically mediated changes in sexuality, including pornography, hook-up culture, loneliness, sex travel, and new media. Furthermore, Anastasia Salter and Bridget Blodgett (2017) explain how violent masculinities are now expressed through social media, including internet gangbanging in which gang members use Twitter and Facebook to make threats or represent gangs. The authors also tie such violent internet posturing to urban masculinity and globalized hip-hop culture.

In the specific context of youth counselling, Vincent Marasco (2018) connects hegemonic masculinity to emotional restriction and body image issues in the lives of young boys who attend counselling. Marasco recommends deconstructing hegemonic masculinity with young men, expressing and validating a range of emotions, and suggests that male counsellors can model

healthy forms of masculinity. The depth psychology approach to masculinity, heralded by men like Robert Bly (1990) and James Hillman (1972, 1995), attempts to connect contemporary gender issues to archetypal patterns and social change (Moore & Gillette, 1990; Tacey, 1997). There are also focused attempts to restabilize connections between men through fellowship, mentorship, and friendship (Gareau & Waugh, 2018). In a time when advocates of white male entitlement, such as Jordan Peterson (2018) and Mark Manson (2018), are sponsoring a renewal of hegemonic power, counsellors require nuanced politicized analyses of men's issues and their relationship to mental health and illness.

bell hooks (2004) connects hegemonic masculinity directly to mental illness, arguing that patriarchy is at the root of men's psychological ills and can literally cause insanity. Furthermore, she argues, a core tenet of masculinity within patriarchy is the need to be in control. hooks here argues that while men as a group are dominant, the underbelly of hegemonic masculinity is that individually men are often insecure or in crisis. She suggests that care, understanding, and acceptance are integral to men's ability to be seen as other than hegemonic and to act in counter-oppressive and loving ways toward themselves, women, and young people. Lastly, hooks argues that masculinity cannot be considered in exclusion to other facets of identity and social power. She therefore locates masculinity in heteronormative capitalist colonial racist white patriarchy, arguing for an intersectional analysis of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity, arguably in crisis, is also challenged by alternative masculinities and directly critiqued by critical theories of gender and race. In the following sections, I explore intersectional, queer, and posthumanist views in their own right and in terms of their critique of hegemonic white settler masculinity.

## **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) has been and continues to be one of the most robust and useful conceptual frameworks for understanding relationships among multiple facets of representation, social structuring, identity, power, privilege, and oppression. Indigenous feminism have pointed out for over half a century that violence has nearly always been gendered, racialized, and related to land dispossession (Clark, 2016). Mainstay ideas of intersectionality used in feminist and critical theory today were born of the Black feminist movement, such as the Combahee River Collective (1986), to conceptualize and politically address the interlocking system of dominance of race, class, gender, and sexuality. By analyzing how these three main lines of social structuring operated together, Black feminists were able to better respond to oppression in the context of different facets of identity impacting individuals' experiences within particular minority groups. While the application of intersectional analysis to legal and academic discourse began with Kimberlé Crenshaw's work in the 1980s, abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth (1851) spoke to Black women's rights in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century anti-slavery movement and activist Black feminists such as Audre Lorde (1972) and the Combahee River Collective exercised intersectional politics in the 1970s.

Today, gendered violence, sexual exploitation, and racism are pressing fourth-wave intersectional feminist issues (Munro, 2013; Rivers, 2017). They are issues that are increasingly visible in media and brought into counselling. Understanding the social contexts of rape culture (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017; Henry & Powell, 2014) and the racialized and classed experiences of sexualized violence is critically important for understanding power relations, preventing further harms, and supporting victims and survivors through counselling. As with other facets of structural violence, those people who hold more power, such as white men and boys, must also

be engaged with in a way that alters their reproduction of a harmful society (hooks, 2004). Adult men, and particularly those who hold professional, racial, and class power, such as counsellors, must have an analysis of intersectional identity and structural power if they are to engage in ethical practice with young women, people of diverse genders, ethnicities, and races, and those who are gender nonconforming, fluid, trans, or queer. In a digitalized world of hyper-connectivity, this also means working with internet-based performances and experiences of gender, cultural or ethnic belonging, desire, and sexuality.

Due to intersectionality's analytic power to describe and address discrimination, it has been extended to analyze other facets of identity, such as age, language, physical ability, sexual orientation, religious discrimination, and citizen status (Association for Woman's Rights in Development, 2004). While early intersectional theorists foregrounded the multilayered and interconnected aspects of identity, privilege, and oppression, they often relied on binary ideas (white/black, male/female) of identity that were used to establish oppressive relationships in the first place. Nuanced intersectional theories subsequently developed that attended to how each identity variable could have a different salience, or how the importance or consequences of any facet would change depending on context, and how identity could be ascribed, recognized, or self-asserted (Carastathis, 2008). Not only are identities contextually constructed, they also change over time, particularly in childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood (Ecklund, 2012).

There are, however, critical voices within gender and race studies who caution that intersectionality is often deployed in ways that betray its political force. Vivian May (2015), for example, argues that often intersectionality in mainstream settings focuses on describing identities without radically challenging the systems of dominance that produce them. She describes how depoliticized academic and professional contexts have, at times, appropriated

intersectionality while diluting or divesting it of its revolutionary aims. Sirma Bilge (2013) similarly criticizes academic feminism for “neutralizing the critical potential of intersectionality for social justice-oriented change” (p. 405) by confining it to an academic or theoretical exercise. Furthermore, Bilge critiques white feminists claiming that, at times, they have appropriated the genealogy of intersectionality and uprooted it from its origins in race struggle. Indigenous scholars such as Natalie Clark (2016) argue that Indigenous identity, sovereignty, and nationhood have been eclipsed in some intersectional accounts and must be foregrounded to challenge the colonial violence which is at the root of much gender and racial oppression. Lastly, many forms of performativity theory and queer theory more generally grew out of intersectional feminism yet consistently sought to challenge the very structures and discourses through which difference was established and maintained (Butler, 1990).

Despite these criticisms, intersectionality remains one of the most powerful tools used in much diversity and social justice counselling. Liane Cheshire (2013) argues that Canadian graduate training programs in counselling offer minimal LGB or race considerations and that intersectionality can be a key pedagogical tool for preparing students to work with diverse people. LaMantia, Wagner, and Bohecker (2015) extend the notion of preparing students for diversity counselling through intersectional theory and argue for a more thorough allyship development. These authors argue that experiential learning based in feminist pedagogy, including a recognition of their own privilege, power, and authoritarian tendencies, is essential in developing an ability to take action as an ally. In the remainder of this paper, I will turn to queer, trans, and posthuman theories to explore the potentials of a critical counselling praxis that challenges the discourses and structures of identity brought under critical scrutiny by intersectional theory.

## **Performativity, Trans, and Politicized Queer Theory**

It has been 45 years since homosexuality was removed from the DSM as a psychopathology, yet heteronormativity continues to structure much of counselling by denying LGBTTTQIAP people adequate service and by reinforcing sexual and gender norms. At its apex, heteronormativity is expressed through denial of services or, worse, conversion therapies (Bieschke, McClanahan, Tozer, Grzegorek, & Park, 2000). As Croteau, Lark, and Lance (2005) argue, LGB affirmation must make its way more fully to the centre of counselling practice and training, yet such practices also reinforce the reification of identity categories. While some queer theory grew out of and built on intersectional theory, poststructural queer theorists informed by psychoanalysis and located mainly within the white Western philosophic tradition, such as Judith Butler, Deborah Britzman, and Lee Edelman, critiqued the binary or categorical structures of intersectional frameworks, particularly as they related to language, agency, and desire. Critical trans theorists such as Dean Spade (2015) push this critique of categories of identity to the political level of recognition politics and argue that inclusionary politics reinforce the dominance of the state and hegemonic thought.

Spade (2015) appreciates the gains that politics of inclusion and rights have attained for people discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, and sexual orientation. He cautions, however, that policy changes have rarely, if ever, achieved radical social transformation or emancipation of oppressed people. In advancing a critical trans politic, therefore, Spade proposes a relentless pursuit of liberation by way of questioning what law and power fundamentally are and what role political change can have in ending injury to trans people. Spade proposes the concept of subjection to talk about “the workings of systems of meaning and control such as racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and xenophobia” (p. 5), because subjection

specifies how power relations mediate our relationships to others and how we know and understand ourselves and our bodies. Subjection further references resistance and the strategies of people identified by a perceived failure to meet societal norms. A trans politics, according to Spade, therefore, questions how norms come to be and are maintained, as well as how they are resisted and what strategies can be used to prevent harm and bolster those enacting refusal.

Judith Butler's (1990) performativity theory understood identities as embodied reiterations of discursive constructions that individuals and communities enact, always with at least a minimum amount of difference or divergence from the abstract identity that discourse delineates. Performances, for Butler, are citational and iterative of an identity insofar as they are socially recognized, read, and spoken as such. Identity, in this case, is some socially coded aggregate or average of similar performances that is composed of singular instantiations of the system it reproduces or performs. In every iteration of identity, however, there is also an expression of limited agency that inserts a divergence from or challenge to any fixed or ideal notion of a gender. Performativity (Butler, 1990), therefore, proposes a limited agency between material and discursive systems, and thereby challenges any notions of essential or fixed identity. Skott-Myhre (2008) engages Butler and locates this agency within the body and explains that the ecosystems of life of which the body is part always produce idiosyncratic difference and novel evolutions that exceed our reified concepts of identity. Contemporary capitalism, however, has shown an incredible capacity to appropriate creative, novel, and productive difference, and other systems of power can make novel performances of identity and subjectivity precarious, either by exclusions or direct attack (Butler, 2004).

Deborah Britzman (1995, 2009), a psychoanalytically informed queer theorist in education, outright refuses any essentialist positions on gender or sexuality and questions the

epistemological foundations of “bodies of knowledge and knowledge of bodies” (1995, p. 151). Britzman proposes queer readings of knowledge and bodies as a study of limits, particularly of where thinking halts or breaks down, to more critically attend to the power of discourses that regulate what is thinkable in a given regime of knowledge. At the level of the body or subject, such a study of limits aims to map and enact different responses to normalcy and identity.

Britzman asks us to consider risking ourselves in our knowing, to explore what becomes unthinkable, in an “attempt to exceed the injuries of discourse so that all bodies matter” (1995, p. 165). In terms of human service practice, Britzman (2009) cautions against skills supplanting ideas and the repression of contradictory experiences and feelings. Here, Britzman argues for the importance of theory and critique, even or especially at its points of failure. Furthermore, she emphasizes countertransference reactions when a professional’s limits are exposed and transgressed in encounter. Britzman proposes that queer action is an engagement with impossibility and uncertainty, a move to an aesthetics of living against the odds, and of crafting creative potential at the limits of knowability. I will return to this concept of the limits exposed through countertransference in the final section to explore crisis as opportunity.

The differences, debates, and synergies between intersectional, trans, and queer theories bring to the foreground epistemological, ontological, and political questions. Anna Carastathis (2008), for example, argues that the universalism or essentialism that underlie more traditional forms of intersectionality invoke and sustain the ontology that many feminists and queer and race theorists challenge. Drawing on Louis Althusser, Carastathis argues “that race, gender, and class are not identic properties of individuals or groups, but rather, are political relations which structure the lived experience of the subjects they interpellate” (p. 29). From this perspective, analyzing and changing the power structures and modes of articulation that make identity

disenfranchisement possible is a primary objective. Queer theory, read in this way, challenges earlier intersectional logics in favour of what Michael Warner (1991) calls “a more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal” (p. 16). Rather than a politics intended toward tolerance, representation, or inclusion within and against existing power structures, some variants of politicized queer theory reject identity politics, and perhaps even identity altogether, as a frame for conceptualizing difference and resistance.

Heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity facilitated and were fuelled by settler colonization. In *When Did Indians Become Straight?* Mark Rifkin (2011) highlights how heterosexual and nuclear models of the family were part of the process of assimilating Indigenous peoples into settler states. Rifkin shows how dismantling Indigenous kinship systems was imperative in land usurpation and how this process was mediated by the enforcement of heteronormative coupling, kinship, and community relations. *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature* (Driskill, Finley, Gilley, & Morgensen, 2011) traces the histories, productions, knowledges, and representations of GLBTQ2 Indigenous people. As an edited text, this book brings a variety of voices to the fore, most of which are galvanized around themes such as revitalizing traditional Indigenous sexualities, kinships, and relationality and a critique of settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and nationalism. While the authors are generally united on their overarching analysis, the book points to productive tensions in theorizing gender at the intersections of Indigenous and queer theory, in discussions of the production of two-spirited identities, the role of desire in queer and Indigenous theory, and the level of analysis from the subject to the ideological or material structures of colonialism.

Queer theory calls into question “the conceptual geography of normalization” (Britzman, 1995, p. 152) and seeks to transgress the limits of certainty and of binary categories. Rather than

challenging heterosexuality from a directly oppositional yet equally essentialist identity position, such as gay or lesbian, queer theory attempts a more radical subversion of the straight/gay binary by proposing processes that escape or rupture to destabilize the dichotomies of identity. Such postidentitarian positions, however, risk invisibilizing the structures that reproduce oppression based on identities. The challenge seems to be that to name and resist the violence that is enacted on a particular population, people's identity risks being reified. Politicized queer theory therefore entails a trenchant critique of the very real politics and power relations that structure contemporary life, while attempting to escape and create alternatives to the dominant language and, in suit, identities that sustain these structures. Such tensions among the agentic body, community practices, and the structures, discourses, and politics of identity are alive for those majoritarian young people who identify as belonging to Generation Queer (Lyell, 2014; Yoon, 2012).

Undoing the dominance of heteronormativity and patriarchy in counselling practice with majoritarian young people will require attending to material and systemic differences while also locating minor elements of these subjects which escape the dominant codes and performances of gender, sex, and sexuality. It will require that we as counsellors unpack, be accountable for, and begin to undo our own attachments to white heteronormative colonial patriarchy. From a localized analysis of our own positions, we can explore the counselling relationship as one of direct encounter, which might provide resources for challenging the structures that maintain majoritarian and minority identities.

### **Posthuman Theory, Immanence, and Becomings**

Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) work grapple with many of the same problems as queer theorists, particularly around issues of power, representation, and desire, albeit with different theoretical

tools. Deleuze and Guattari (2000, 2004), for example, directly challenge how categories and taxonomies stratify the seething productivity of life and famously express diversity in terms of “a thousand tiny sexes” (2004, p. 213). Deleuze and Guattari push their criticism of power and language’s ordering function to an ontological level and even question how the concept of the human functions to limit life’s complexity and profusion. They offer a philosophy that articulates the subject as a multiplicity and assemblage and, in so doing, provide posthuman feminists such as Braidotti (2003, 2011) with an ontology that puts even the concept of the human under pressure as an aggregate and fixed category. It is to the shifting multiplicity of life as pre-personal forces that I will return, in order to reframe counselling, after I more thoroughly elaborate the ontology behind the production of majoritarian subjectivity out of life as immanent force.

Building on Spinozist (1677/2007) immanence, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) and Braidotti (2011) propose that life is composed of flows and forces in relationships between ever-changing bodies. It is from this immanent life flux that concepts such as human—and later concepts of identity—come to be abstracted, taxonomized, and put into a structure that organizes difference into identity. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming, for example, populates the dominant categories of man and woman with affective, perceptive, and sensorial micro-relations to each other and to the realms of plants, animals, and minerals that sees every aggregate (such as an individual human or a group of people) as a multiplicity or assemblage of molecular combinations and organizations. Their analytic terms of minoritarian and majoritarian, therefore, do not refer to specific subjects or groups, numeric majorities or minorities, but rather to the relation and organization of any living assemblage (subject, group, political body) to the dominant ordering language and aggregate formations that come to name and subject them. All

subjects and groups are ever shifting multiplicities from this perspective, and it is the ordering functions of language and power that stratify such life into the categories we come to take as reified identities.

Taking the abstract image, name, or code of the white, rational, male, able-bodied heterosexual as a central point in the transcendent taxonomic system of identity, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) help us to see that all other identities get organized in relation to it, thus making it the majoritarian identity. Regardless of how this dominant identity is represented numerically, it is majoritarian as the central organizing principle or top of a hierarchical system. Subjects who come to be referenced as other or different to the white heterosexual settler male through some binary or categorical differentiation become marginalized within this system. These othered identities are identified in reference to the taxonomy organized around the majoritarian and become part of the hierarchical system as a comparison or point of contrast. Minoritized identities, therefore, are abstract codings of life, just as majoritarian identities are. They do, however, provide degrees of difference from the majoritarian identity, as well as directional line away from it. Minority identities may even make the possibility of escaping from the system itself seem possible inevitable reintroduce the system by reintroducing its dividing lines and categories.

As bodies, practices, and ways of living and speaking that are marginalized by the dominant social formation, the other of majoritarian code is the minority. Beneath the entire system of language and power, taxonomy and organization, however, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) propose that there is always life as productive becoming. The productive force of life that comes to be appropriated and organized by transcendent systems of thought also provides lines of escape from the systems trenched ground—it is the living alternative to the abstract system of

code. Hence, the term *minoritarian* as a radical alternative to majoritarian standards never references an individual identity or group, because all coded identities are trapped within the dominant system. Instead, *minoritarian* is a placeholder for a movement away from the dominant system, its codes, and identities. Minority identities and groups are already, almost by definition, marginal to the system and hence hold a greater relative degree of excess and escape, but can replicate the system through reifications of its codes and identities. *Minoritarian* movements, instead, reference departures, breaks, or creative force within and outside the system. This is what brings Deleuze and Guattari (2004) to claim that “even women must become-woman” (p. 291). In patriarchal societies, they say, women may be nondominant; however, the abstract code of “woman” continues to reiterate the system as a whole. The becoming-woman of women, or anyone else for that matter, is the process of becoming other to the normative male that does not get trapped or reappropriated by patriarchy and capitalism. It is a movement away from the system rather than an identity minoritized within the system.

Braidotti (2003, 2010a, 2011) builds on Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) concept of becoming-woman to push equality-minded feminism to a point of rupture in the gender binary of society. Such a move had been made previously by queer theorists and people of colour; however, Braidotti turns to the living world of relationship to foreground the intensities and flows of living interaction as the force that exceeds the codes of heteronormative, colonial, and racialized capitalism. While arguing that identity politics are necessary to locate starting points in the struggle, she also proposes a process of becoming different than what we are by affirming what is possible but not yet actualized in living relationships. Here, Braidotti argues that there are speeds and forces of change found within life that come to be coded as masculine and feminine, white and black, and it is experiments with reorganizing these original forces that

provide lines of flight out of dualistic thinking and reified identities. To identify as a woman and be represented through the stratifying nomenclature of patriarchy, for example, is vastly different than a process of becoming-woman, which is a movement away from man as the dominant aggregate and central point within an arborescent system and woman as its binary opposite. The challenge, then, is to accurately map a system of power within which one is subjected and find avenues for relationship, experimentation, flight, rupture, or escape.

The production of majoritarian subjectivity is an attempt to limit the excesses, flows, and variations that are outside the abstract ideal that organizes the system (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). That is, it is an attempt to impose an ideal on a perpetually generative life process. More intensive variation, expressions outside the dominant form, and novel performances—those intensities more often associated with the minority than with the majority—constitute the escape routes from any binary pair, but can also be appropriated by the system through identitarian nomenclature, politics, and group formations. As processes of intensive variation, escape, flight, and rupture, we can speak of minoritarian movements or becomings. Once an identity which began as an alternative to the dominant form begins to reify as an identity, however, they begin to reaffirm the binary or set logic that keeps the dominant as the central point of recognition and relation. The processes of becoming other than what we are is clearly very different for people in different social locations or occupying different identities. Undoubtedly, vast numbers of people live lives outside the prescribed designs of identity and subjectivity and seek greater integration into the system to secure basic security and means of sustenance. As described above, there are numerous political projects aimed at seeking acknowledgement and inclusion, rights and protections, as well as projects to dismantle hegemonic forces. There is no question that these are ethical and necessary projects. What I am proposing here is a parallel project of challenging

hegemonic power through the exploration of difference accessible through the undoings of majoritarian subjects, explorations that can simultaneously support minority struggle even while challenging the categories that many identitarian struggles are reliant upon.

Minority struggles, or struggles against the oppressive and violent structures of capitalism, the nation, and colonialism more generally, are sites of resistance that often rely on identitarian claims. Minorities are often defined by their exclusion from the state or their precarious and exploited place within capitalism. Rather than imitating or attempting to become a minority, becomings that are minoritarian in their relationship to capito-colonialism seek lines of escape from the dominant reproduction of its axioms, processes, and structures. Furthermore, in contrast to social-level minority struggles and identifying as being-(in)-a-minority (Holland, 2013), becoming-minoritarian entails the formulation of immanent problems and solutions that are immediate, creative, and local. Both levels compose and organize one another and minority struggles cannot be considered as outdated or a clinging to identitarian vestiges. Resistance, political struggles, sustaining personal and collective identity, and recovering suppressed forms of knowledge and life are perhaps the most pertinent projects in the contemporary world.

This is also not to say that class, gender, or racial struggles are not fought on local and immediate grounds, but rather that in the very intimate proximities of encounter, all forms of difference, nuance, and exception are produced. Minoritarian becomings in these contexts are effectuated within the multiplicities that constitute us as individuals and peoples; they are immediately related to social relationships and relationships to land, animals, plants, and minerals. Of course, the struggles on the levels of the axioms of capito-colonialism and the struggles to formulate one's own immediate problems pass back and forth, and neither can be ignored. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) differentiate here between molar struggles, which are

trapped in a dialectic with power and its codes (taxonomies, recognitions) and procedures (state and bureaucratic processes), and minoritarian becomings, which attempt to undo the determinations of the past and explore the virtual potential for things to be otherwise than as they are.

Expressions of life that are in excess or outside dominant formations can and do become repetitious and begin to channel all forms of novel creativity toward the establishment of some ideal of minority identity. This also often happens in the area of art where novel expressive creativity becomes a new genre or standard and, over time, begin to stifle or eclipse fresher expressions. Furthermore, novel performances of identity or art are also quickly appropriated and made into a commodity within contemporary capitalism. Capitalism has shown both incredible resilience to challenges made through novelty and a capacity for turning alternatives into new markets, for example, hip-hop culture, environmentalism, and various forms of spirituality. Indigenous culture is a very specific site of struggle in this dynamic with all forms of resistance and resurgence, in the forms of dress, language, music, art, spirituality, and images, becoming targets of capitalist appropriation.

As compared to a minority identity, therefore, minoritarian movements are those lines of creative force that precede capito-colonial capture and find, are excessive to it, or find exits from it. Minoritarian, therefore, always references a movement and not an identity or artifact that has been categorized within Empire. As a standard measure, the major is abstract and consolidated: there is no becoming-man. The minority, as conceived of as deviant from the dominant form, is a marginal identity, whereas there are no minoritarian identities. Minoritarian flows, expressions, and languages are the raw living force that constitute both the major and its minority once it becomes ordered within a transcendent system. Hence, even majoritarian subjects are composed

of creative force prior to their appropriation by capital (Skott-Myhre, 2008, 2015). The vibrations, intensities, expressions, and material that constitute all life are flattened out and averaged to approximate a concept, an image, and an imaginary, whether majoritarian or the minority. Ontologically, all life, as immanent flows, forces, and intensities, are becomings that disrupt stable ideas and identities that are abstracted through majoritarian language (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). It is left to see if engaging in direct encounter with young people might return us to production as a life force capable of creating alternatives that are sustainable and able to resist, be in excess of, or escape the appropriations and ordering functions of Empire.

Here, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) analyze some of the risks and potentially positive aspects of the networked yet destabilizing forces of Empire. First, the breakdown of identitarian codes by globalized capitalism, such as the importance of race, gender, or sexuality might provide some relinquishing of oppressive structures. There is a tension between the deterritorializing forces of globalized capitalism, which are ever more indifferent to race and gender, and the reterritorializing forces of contemporary nationalist politics, which are increasing racial and gender divisions. We have seen some powerful progressive use of global interconnectedness for liberation such as in the Arab Spring, yet the state form and its military tends to reterritorialize on nationalist or other identitarian grounds, preventing a truly globalist movement. Furthermore, capitalism has shown an incredible ability to appropriate and turn into commodity all forms of non or precapitalist culture, as well as many forms of resistance. Moreover, in an age of increased interconnectivity, new objects and images, bodies and forces can combine in exponentially more diverse and rapid ways.

Young people's engagement through social media has created global networks of mainstream and niche interests. This opportunity for mixing again, however, requires an analysis

of who benefits from such mixings and minglings. Brian Massumi (1987) warns, for example, that “deterritorialization is effected only in order to make possible a reterritorialization on an even grander and more glorious land of worldwide capital reborn” (p. 7), and Hardt and Negri (2000) argue that “theorists who advocate a politics of difference, fluidity and hybridity in order to challenge the binaries of essentialism . . . have been outflanked by strategies of power” (p. 138). The work, therefore, is to understand how to channel capital’s deterritorializing forces toward different ends and how to use the open spaces and combinatory possibilities to produce new ways of living. This is where counselling can enter as a liminal space in the transitions between territorialized and deterritorialized affects and codes. With young people’s experiences of identity and normalcy held in an open space—even though this open space is always constrained and surveyed, always at risk of attack or appropriation—new ethical forms of constituting ourselves and relating through minoritarian counselling may be possible.

### **Minoritarian Counselling in Colonized Space**

While the ontological and epistemological status of traditional identity claims and politics are troubled by intersectional (Bilge, 2013; Carastathis, 2008), queer (Butler, 1990; Britzman, 1995), trans (Spade, 2015), and poststructural (Braidotti, 2003, 2011; Deleuze & Guattari, 2004) theories, they also foreground an ethic of aligning with a particular oppressed or minority group, at any given time in a given social sphere. As I write on colonized lands that were and continue to be inhabited by highly organized groups, kinship networks, nations, and governments prior to the invasion of Euro-Western empires (Chansonneuve, 2005), postidentitarian politics of the intersectional, queer, or Deleuzian vein must specifically deal with the historical and contemporary Indigenous politics of Turtle Island. Newer renditions of intersectionality include dozens of facets of identity (Collins & Bilge, 2016), and debates continue regarding when and

how to foreground particular analyses or how to render complex articulations that elaborate the mutually constituting and reinforcing facets of oppression and identity (Kouri, 2014). Capitalism, furthermore, shifted drastically in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and again around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the figures of class resistance have also changed in tandem with gradual changes in patriarchy and heteronormativity brought about by queer and third- and fourth-wave feminist theories. While social critique, Indigenous theories, and gender studies have led the way in developing lines of analysis to adequately describe contemporary global capitalism and neocolonialism, counselling, and particularly counselling with young people, lags behind.

Exploring the conceptually tenuous and complex terrain of subjectivity at the intersections of Empire today requires foregrounding colonization and capitalism. Young people, like most people, learn, internalize, experience, become conscious of, construct, and perform their identities in sexed, gendered, classed, and desiring ways. Immersed in language and data, these young people experience joy, sadness, hope, anger, and a range of other affects and emotions as each relates to their identities and positions within living systems and systems of transcendent power. Critical theories of identity and subjectivity are therefore central aspects of developing a counselling praxis adequate for today's mental health work with young people. Some counselling theorists, such as Winslade (2009), have explored narrative practice and poststructuralism as a way of challenging or escaping dominant discourses through counselling. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, Winslade proposes that people are composed of a multiplicity of creative possibilities that can be drawn on to escape from dominant forms of understanding themselves or living in the world. Such creative shifts in living "constitute lines of flight that are about the escape from places where lines of power squeeze out the sense of being alive" (p. 338). Winslade maps the relationships between dominant discourses and the material realm of direct

encounter. Building on this and specifically looking at the encounter with otherness, I propose that a minoritarian counselling praxis is specifically about becoming something other than what we are as majoritarian subjects through living relationships. This process is one that is fraught with ethical and political difficulties and also leaves neither participant in the process unchanged.

Young people, particularly those whose social identities resemble those in power, are the recruits for the perpetuation of capitalism and colonialism. To set up a false dichotomy between majoritarian identity and becomings, the majoritarian elements of young people can be thought of in their reinstatement of dominant social orders, whereas where these young people get swept up in a practice or assemblage that liberates them from these social investments are their becomings. Capitalism is an abstract composition of code and a force for appropriating life to its transcendent system (Deleuze, 1992). Every young person, of course, is a living being and therefore compositionally different than the codes of capito-colonialism. Young people cannot truly become an abstract code, but they can be appropriated as code and act according to its dictates. Their composition as living assemblages inherently resists being appropriated as code, and it is at this level that relationship might intervene in the appropriations and extractions that capitalism usurps from young people. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue that while capitalism approximates full immanence in the sense of it being imbricated in all life, it can never be fully immanent because it is incapable of producing anything but code and requires living systems for their productive and reproductive capacities.

Being a majoritarian white male settler, for example, is an identity, an identity as abstract coding. It is a social location saturated with significant discursive and material benefits and consequences. The codes of capitalism and colonialism continue to organize individual bodies and their affects, their belonging practices, politics, and investments. It structures the formation

of groups and the ways in which societies as a whole are organized. The white male settler identity is a majoritarian coding because it is a dominant coding within the systems of capitalism and colonialism. Living beings, however, are always incapable of being fully identified with abstract code and are always in excess of it. While acknowledging the privilege and power enshrined in being coded as a white settler male, I also follow Deleuze and Guattari (2004) in understanding that living beings are not reducible to an abstract code. Along with the privileges of dominant positioning, majoritarian subjects are disconnected from their living reality through apparatuses which capture their creative force.

The becoming-minoritarian of the white male settler is the moment at which the dominant identity fails in the encounter with otherness. Otherness, in this sense, can be an experience of oneself or the unconscious, a living relationship to a place, person, or people, or with ideas, media, or works of art. Relationships with difference can cause crisis, elicit capacities that were not previously known, or free creative force that was previously appropriated or captured. This crisis, elicitation, or liberation might intervene in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity. My gambit here is that mental health crises may be read as such a crisis or creative rupture. If this is the case, counsellors have an ethical problem of either returning majoritarian young people to normalized identities which can cover over the fissures of crisis or exploring these young people's minoritarian elements and being swept away in the process of becoming with them. Such a reading of crisis requires an analysis of both the minoritarian elements within young people and the counsellors who are engaging with them. This is where Britzman's (2009) analysis of the ethics and practices of clinical work at the limits of a counsellor's ability to know is paramount. Such a process of mutual becoming, where both counsellor and young person are swept away past the limits of knowing that are provided by identity, disperses risk and

vulnerability unevenly. To explore the ethics and potentials of such a project is specifically the work of minoritarian counselling yet to come.

Deleuze and Guattari (2004) talk about minoritarian becomings in terms of the anomalous. They explain that it is what is anomalous in each of us—that which does not fit the taxonomies and codes of capito-colonialism—that enters into becomings. Becomings act at the level of the elements that have been buried or overcoded in our own historical configuration. Within each majoritarian subject, there is a multiplicity of forces, capacities, affects that have been either suppressed or appropriated by capitalism. It is in our living relationship with others that we can explore and extend these forces. These minoritarian becomings connect us directly to the life we share in common with others and may, under a particular ethical rubric, further develop our interests and investments in the struggles of the minority. In this way, minority struggles challenge the axioms of capitalism and the state form at the molar level while minoritarian becomings constitute alternative ways of relating and being at the immanent level of life's composition. Minoritarian becomings explore the immanent local and relational problems of living together differently. Again, these two levels are not separable in that they compose one another. The point for direct encounter, however, is that immanent power, difference, and creativity are specifically manifest in localized relationships. Direct living encounter is the vessel for the anomalous, where difference is produced and embodied.

The anomalous is that which cannot be counted within Empire, which escapes its grasp or is produced by its excess. The anomalous has been dealt with through brute force, suppression, and gradual integration. In and through the bio-medical-industrial complex, for example, the anomalous is a limit which it creates and by which it is repelled by. The mentally ill are produced as psychiatry's farthest reach and frontier, as well as the market on which it depends.

Not unlike the military-industrial-complex, it must create new markets for the continual development of its pharmaceutical products. As counsellors, we sit in relation to this machine that produces subjects and consumers. Our relationship to the anomalous, to those who are being counted and who escape or trouble the taxonomies of psychiatry, and what those relationships provoke in us, is a site of resistance and possibility. Counselling can be an extension of the bio-medical industrial complex or a milieu of transformation, one in which we create a patchwork of becomings and explore the possibilities for life that our connections allow for.

In minoritarian becomings, one does not become the other; rather, the other elicits capacities that make one other to oneself (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). This is not something chosen but a moment of crisis and collapse. These are the moments during which young people often find themselves in therapy, on the verge of the collapse of their dominant identity as abstract code. This experience of crisis, that who they have known themselves to be is not functioning, can be seen as a failure that needs remedy, or as a possibility. Much counselling attempts to return people to work and social life by helping them understand their experience in through dominant codes. Counselling often aims to modify those in crisis, improve their functioning, foster integration, and re-establish normalcy. We aim for the reintroduction of a happier, healthier majoritarian subject or a less oppressed/more resilient minority subject. Read from the angle of becomings, this practice is to excise people from the reality of their lives and return them to simulacrum: a copy of themselves, an encoded version that fits more seamlessly into capito-colonialism. The minoritarian elements in all people, however, are always gnawing at the edges, provoking discomfort and anxiety, which reintroduces the possibility of collapse. These may be our greatest unexplored potentials for change, both individual and collective.

### **Paper Three: Clinical Praxis in Majoritarian Space**

As capitalism aspires to full immanence (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000), biological and immaterial processes of the human and more-than-human world continue to produce the life that capital needs to fuel itself. Our capacities to feel, think, and relate are becoming the new targets for capital (Hardt & Negri, 2005). To resist capital, therefore, one avenue must be to seek forms of relatedness to ourselves, each other, and the lifeworld that hold out hope for a livable present and future for all people on the planet. For many, it is clear that the search for meaning, sustainability, and health in Empire ends in abysmal dismay. Some people are therefore actively trying to change themselves and join a growing community, sometimes led by young people, who seek justice and social change (Tuck & Yang, 2014). As a counsellor who works with young people, I include myself in that community, and I propose that counselling has the potential to intervene in the reproduction, under Empire, of neoliberal settler subjectivity at the points of its full articulation and failure, marked by mental illness.

In this paper, I argue that mental illness in the current moment can be directly connected to a festering climate of white resentment, purported crises in masculine identity, stratified drug epidemics, and ongoing clashes between multinational corporations and Indigenous peoples and their allies. I explore this complex context of capito-colonial Empire in relation to the challenges and potentials I see in my counselling practice with young people. After first summarizing counselling's mainstream and critical modes, I formulate the problems of arrival in control societies, figure the subject-supposed-to-have, and sketch the contours of a counselling praxis in majoritarian space.

As I directly examine the contexts and processes of the majoritarian subject and argue that all people have elements within themselves that are complicit in capitalism and colonialism,

I attend to the elements, no matter how small or hidden, that resist and exceed those structures. Clearly the mix and balance of these elements varies depending on social location, history, and relationships, among other factors. Exploring and amplifying elements that do not or cannot belong to Empire may be one of the first tasks of a minoritarian counselling practice (Skott-Myhre, 2005, 2014). It will be equally pertinent to understand counselling's aims and values within the current context of Empire. Indeed, any counselling that will be politically, relationally, and ethically engaged must confront both counselling's dark history and its actively oppressive present. It also behooves us to propose a creative and affirmative approach to explore what counselling might become. Our ability to comprehend how the majoritarian subjects of counselling are produced in the context of capitalism and colonialism provides us ways to critically map the present and seek alternatives to replicating these oppressive systems. Not only do majoritarian subjects populate the dominant mainstream therapeutic landscape, they hold tremendous political and economic power, intensifying the importance of linking the clinical, personal, and social.

On the practitioner's side, working with young people in crisis who are struggling to attain or are rejecting majoritarian role consolidation calls our own identities into question. As a counsellor, I find myself responding in various ways to the disruptions that engaging with young people entails, such as performing mastery, modelling particular subjectivities and identities, and offering expertise on how to manage affects, think about problems, and resolve crises. Critical theories of gender and masculinity (Atkinson, 2014; hooks, 2004; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016), whiteness (Ahmed, 2007; Kimmel, 2013), capitalism (Skott-Myhre, 2005, 2014), and colonialism (Regan, 2010; Tuck & Yang, 2012) have helped me to interrupt my own replication of majoritarian subjectivity while entering into a questioning process with young people.

Elsewhere, I have described this process as a relational encounter within liminality (Kouri & Smith, 2016) in which consolidated subjectivity and the mastery of affect and identity are subjected to a process of immanent encounter with the other and the living world.

The crises, questionings, or full-out rejection of traditional identities that young people sometimes enact pose a challenge for practitioners who make themselves vulnerable to such disruptions. For example, I have found that resistance or confusion in relation to prescribed identities based on heteronormative capitalist coloniality (hooks, 2004) embodied by young people in my practice often throws my own sense of self and identity into question. Young people question gender, sexual, colonial, and other identities and practices that we often rely on for bolstering our own identities and positioning as professionals. Fifty years ago, the heteronormativity of therapy attempted to cure gay and lesbian young people of what was then understood as disease. Today, older forms of discrimination continue while newer forms of gender and sexual policing oppose and objectify transgender and gender-nonconforming people (Bieschke et al., 2000). At the same time, large numbers of digitally connected young people learn about, question, and build community around gender and sexuality through the internet (Siebler, 2016). Engaging with openness to young people who challenge conventional identity practices can provoke deep reconsideration of our own boundaries of sexuality, gender, and desire. We could take a nonjudgmental view and learn to work with that difference and/or become social justice advocates for/with these young people, as many diversity and multicultural approaches propose (Burman, 2008; Casas, 2017; Monk, Winslade, & Sinclair, 2008; Sue & Sue, 2008), and/or we could let their actions and ways of being destabilize us, unleashing our own becomings. These considerations raise questions about how practitioners conceptualize and code identities, particularly those young people seen as in crisis. Lastly, the differences and challenges

that young people experience in relation to identity and fitting-in beg questions about counsellors' own identities and how we ethically engage in relationship with young people.

Therefore, I ask: What are the ethical, relational, and political responsibilities of counsellors engaging with majoritarian young people in crisis? Does counselling have a role in the affective and ethical development of the majoritarian young as they adapt to the realities of contemporary Empire? What theories of identity are available to us, and what do they do? What are the clinical approaches that may produce new forms of subjectivity in the context of Empire? What other ways of helping and healing have always been around yet have been discredited under the evidence-based psychiatric apparatus? Can critical counselling approaches develop points of connection with alternative economies, protest movements, Indigenous ways of life, environmental advocacy, and numerous other projects within and outside Empire's rule? Can we resist the normalization and reproduction of the white neoliberal subject through counselling? Can counselling be a site for unleashing the vital force of living encounter between young people and adults?

As this project is written by a settler living on stolen Indigenous lands, I begin by asking: In the particular context of counselling within settler colonial states, what are the ethics of settler practitioners learning from and using Indigenous knowledge and healing practices with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people? I argue that as Indigenous peoples work to transform the structures of colonization, such as education, health, and human services, settlers have a responsibility to meet them and undo their own colonial epistemology, ontology, and practice. Decolonizing counselling will mean, among other things, valorizing local and time-tested wisdom, legitimizing Indigenous sciences and knowledges, and placing Indigenous people's distress in the colonial context. Settlers will need to find ethical ways to learn, hold, and take up

Indigenous knowledge and healing practices, particularly with other settler people. Throughout this paper I try to deliberate on how, in the process of relating to those who are othered within Empire, might majoritarian subjects ethically navigate appropriation, belonging, and longing and create futures that do not replicate white entitlement to Indigenous knowledges, cultures, bodies, and homelands.

In this paper, I also outline what I understand to be the immediate circumstances of young majoritarian people as they are integrated into the world of Empire. I explore the problems of arrival and entitlement in connection with mental illness and the bio-medical-industrial complex. Elaborating on how Empire functions through affective labour and how racial, gender, and colonial privilege have functioned to produce a particular subject-supposed-to-have in contemporary society, I will then be able to interrogate mental illness counselling in a politicized way. In the section that follows, I provide a brief history of counselling practice and review a sample of the critical approaches to counselling that have been deployed in previous decades, mapping potential avenues for further conceptual and practice development. With such a history at hand, I can then explore critical therapies and forms of clinical practice today that respond—adequately and ethically—to the rapidly changing affective, psychological, spiritual, subjective, bodily, and material conditions of 21<sup>st</sup>-century young people.

### **A Brief History of Critical Counselling Practice**

In this section I briefly review counselling history and theory, focusing on its main variants and critiques from within and outside the field. I end with a review of two new cutting-edge counselling texts, one on Indigenous counselling and the other on critical psychology. This review will provide a theoretical base from which to work toward a politicized counselling praxis within majoritarian space.

Just as subject positions and experiences of life and death have been shaped by capitalist and colonial histories, so has counselling and its aims and practices. Counselling practice proper has roots in psychology, Christian pastoral work, and vocational training (Robertson & Borgen, 2016). In Canada, the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association is over 50 years old. It emerged from a confluence of vocational services in the Depression era and the work of Carl Rogers, who, without the medical requirements needed to be credentialed as a psychotherapist, coined the term *counselling* (Gladding & Alderson, 2012). Rogers (1939, 1967), whose early work focused on “difficult” children, is generally known for his nonjudgmental, emotionally attuned orientation to personal growth. The change from a vocational service to a broad focus on human development and life satisfaction was noted in the first issue of *Canadian Counsellor* in the 1960s (Nevison, 1967). More sinisterly, Counselling was also involved in and continues to live in the shadows of the eugenics movement (Pilgrim, 2008) and the ill-conceived campaigns to normalize LGBT and gender-nonconforming people (Drescher, 2015; Goldberg, 2001).

The theoretical foundation of early counselling was in psychotherapy, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis, which, when they arose, were not differentiated as they are now. Sigmund Freud (1899) and Carl Jung (1951, 1964) were medical doctors and students of Emil Kraepelin and Eugen Bleuler respectively. Together, these men defined psychiatry in modern Western culture and inaugurated what they called “the talking cure.” Wilhelm Wundt (1906) proposed that experimental practice in psychology could elevate the previously philosophic and speculative approach to understanding consciousness to the level of other sciences. Counselling also has roots in Western philosophy (Seidmann & Di Iorio, 2015), specifically humanism (Rogers, 1967), existentialism (Frankl, 1967, 1985; Sartre, 1943/1962), and phenomenology (Husserl, 1964). Behavioural (Skinner, 1971), cognitive (Beck, 1961), and reality (Glasser, 1970)

therapies, developed from the 1960s to the 1990s, continue to influence evidence-based counselling practices such as cognitive behavioural therapy (Dobson, 2014). This brief and limited summary already demonstrates the heterogeneity of counselling theories. Counselling has drawn on diverse epistemologies, albeit predominantly Euro-Western ones, and developed different approaches in responding to a variety of issues in order to promote human development and intervene in what has come to be understood as psychological, emotional, behavioural, relational, and existential challenges.

As part of a response to the patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial regimes that dominated 20<sup>th</sup>-century life, counselling entered into a dialogue with feminism (Enns, 1997; Worell & Remer, 2003), anticolonialism (Fanon, 1952/2008, 1961/2004), Marxism (Reich, 1973), postmodernism (de Shazer & Berg, 1992, 1997; White & Epston, 1990), queer theory (Butler, 1997), and poststructuralism (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000; Skott-Myhre, 2014), among other critical interchanges. In addition, numerous accounts of critical counselling with marginalized, racialized, and oppressed people have included, for example, multicultural (Casas, 2017), diversity (Burman, 2008; Sue & Sue, 2008), and social justice counselling (Chung & Bemak, 2014; Reynolds, 2013, 2016). These critical approaches were developed from within the traditions of counselling and represented a response by practitioners to address social justice, immigration, and diversity issues. With connections to the broader end-of-century focus on diversity and human rights, the variants in counselling attempted to address identity, privilege, and power and to formulate a response to “the other,” who had been excluded from the counselling mainstream. Many of the debates in diversity counselling focus on the identities of clients and counsellors. Sue and Sue (2003, 2008), for example, elaborate a cultural and racial identity development model for counselling, and Casas (2017) and Jones-Smith (2012)

emphasize practitioners' ethics, politics, and therapeutic approach. Other tensions relate to how power and language are conceptualized and mobilized in therapy (Guilfoyle, 2014).

Many critical questions have been posed to counselling from outside and within its borders. For example, Carolyn Zerbe Enns (1997) challenged counselling and psychology's androcentric structure of studying men and creating norms for humans based on the findings. Early feminists, as well as seeking parity in pay and rights, pushed for the female experience, values, and knowledge to be acknowledged on par with those of men. In turn, intersectional and feminists of colour challenged the hegemonic, heteronormative whiteness of early feminist theory (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991). Postmodern and queer theorists, such as Judith Butler (1990) and Deborah Britzman (1995), criticized gender and sexuality assumptions—our knowledge of what gender is—altogether and introduced new theories of desire that drew on psychoanalytic feminism. Early feminist theories influenced counselling by linking individual experiences to social change (Hanisch, 1970), such as naming violence against women as structurally embedded in and furthering patriarchy. In counselling practice, second- and third-wave feminists promoted an egalitarian stance (Enns, 1997), empowering individual women and accurately naming gender-based violence, which often gets blamed on female victims, as the impacts of trauma get coded as mental illness. Today, fourth-wave feminists raise awareness that sexual assaults are pervasive and occur across women's lifespans. While many feminists and queer theorists challenge gender binaries, it is also critical that male-identified counsellors take responsibility for themselves and other men to speak out against gender-based violence and find therapeutic approaches for working with male-identified young adults being raised in patriarchal societies. With books by Jordan Peterson (2018) and Mark Manson (2018) that advocate a resurgence of white male entitlement and power topping the Amazon best-selling books list,

critically informed ways of challenging toxic masculinity are as pressing now as ever (Henry & Powell, 2014).

The politics of psychoanalysis have always had radical edges as theory challenged the rationalist doctrine central to the Western psyche. Psychoanalysis, at its outset, called self-knowledge and mastery into question (Freud, 1930/2004; Lacan, 2014) and has since been used to critique normative gender, xenophobia, and war and violence (Butler, 2008; Žižek, 2006). Recently, Stephen Frosh (2010) has explored the applications within and outside the therapeutic encounter of the critical edge of psychoanalysis, arguing that Freud's original understanding of the "cure" as an ability to work and love must be rethought, along with contemporary notions of mental health. Frosh took up Jacques Lacan's (1991) critique of the bureaucracy of analysis and its "university discourse" to query how analysis can be less of a colonizing science and be applied as a shockwave in the areas of normalized child development, ideas of the traditional family, and mental well-being more generally. Deleuze and Guattari (2000, 2004) specifically critiqued and reformulated the links between psychoanalysis and society, describing how oedipalized family systems and child development discourse serve capitalism and colonialism. Skott-Myhre (2016), in this regard, argues that we must question the concepts of youth, family, and development to scramble the codes of capitalism and find new forms of relating, belonging, and collectivity.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, numerous philosophers, activists, and political figures drew on psychoanalysis and psychology to interject in social issues. Critical theorists such as Max Horkheimer (1982) and liberation psychologists such as Ignacio Martín-Baró (1994), for example, asked us to examine the ideological underpinnings of behaviour and argued for a psychology that was situated and responded to social ills. Seeking counselling approaches

that are situated as opposed to universal must consider both the material and social circumstances of the times and the way people's identities are shaped by them. Where Horkheimer questioned the possibility of psychology under conditions where the individual was subsumed in discourse and power, Martín-Baró suggested that oppressed people should be the motor of conceptual and skill development in psychology rather than being psychology's target. Both clearly argued that to ignore social circumstance in counselling, particularly oppressive circumstance, was to be complicit in oppression. Both Horkheimer's collective psychology and Martín-Baró's liberation psychology are important in considering a counselling practice that seeks to unveil our complicity in Empire.

Narrative therapy emerged in the 1980s (White & Epston, 1990). Building on the work of Foucault, it is informed by social constructionist and poststructuralist epistemologies. Law and Madigan (1998), for example, explain that narrative therapy situates client stories and understandings of themselves and the reasons that brought them to counselling within political, historical, and power-laden discourses. Rather than treating language as direct representations of reality, they locate speech within institutionalized symbolic frames of reference in which some speakers are endowed with expertise and their speech has material effects. The discourses of psychology, psychiatry, and mainstream counselling, construct meanings of experience and reproduce dominant narratives of mental health and illness within which clients are rendered passive and dependent. Law and Madigan (1998) explain that these discourses attribute meaning and provide or prohibit avenues of action.

Narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990) draws on Foucault's analysis of discourse to critique how counsellors and therapists take up techniques of knowledge that disempower clients, such as collapsing the difference between people and discourses of pathology. To counter

such practices, narrative therapy takes up practices that externalize problems from individuals, locate people's resistance and exceptions to such pathologizing discourse, and empower people to create preferred narratives for their lives. Narrative therapy draws on the unique and novel accounts people might have of themselves, social events, and personal relationships to challenge the overriding meanings attributed to experience by dominant discourse (Madigan, 1998).

Winslade (2009) draws on Deleuze here to discuss shifts in a narrative as a line of flight and a becoming that escapes a dominant line of power. Michael White (1995) and other narrative counsellors, drawing on Foucault's analysis of discourse, always understood the social context of the story and emphasized the importance of having narratives witnessed within a social network. Narrative therapy, in these ways, has provided a critical analysis of the power embedded in counselling practice and has connected counselling with structures of power including capitalism, racialization, and colonialism.

Narrative therapy has also made key contributions to a social justice perspective in counselling. Kahn and Monk (2017) summarize these contributions and explain that five principles help to organize narrative therapy's integration of social justice theory. First, narrative therapy acknowledges itself as political. Unlike many other approaches, narrative situates counselling within structures of power and seeks to ascertain how social forces influence identity constructions and people's experiences. As such, narrative therapy explicitly asks counsellors to position themselves in relation to political realities, power, and discourse. Second, perceived mental pathology is consistently related to social context, privilege, and oppression within society. Individual or internal pathology, such as those dispensed by psy-knowledges, are challenged. Third, narrative practice challenges normalization and the standards embedded in dominant discourses. For example, evaluative mechanisms that assess normal functioning at the

individual, family, or community level are challenged and related to social norms and the authority of those who produce knowledge or provide assessments, often using their location and identity as a standard for what is healthy. Fourth, narrative therapy seeks the revitalization of subjugated knowledge. For example, drawing on Foucault, Law and Madigan (1998) explain that for any dominant knowledge system to gain supremacy, it must suppress and silence other forms of knowledge. These subjugated knowledges, however, are never fully silenced and can be resources for alternative constructions of life and identity. Lastly, narrative counselling promotes the agency of individuals, families, and communities and advocates for and supports people's self-determination.

While poststructural analyses of power provide the foundation for narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990) and narrative counsellors such as Karl Tomm (1993), John Winslade (2009), Charles Waldegrave and Kiwi Tamasese (1994) at the Dulwich Centre, and Sarah Kahn and Gerald Monk (2017), among others, are centering social justice in their narrative practice, clear analysis of capitalism and colonialism, particularly as it operates in North America, do not yet permeate the counselling field. Narrative practice is highly reliant on the knowledge and creativity of clients, particularly in developing alternative stories or new narratives. Without a committed analysis of capitalism and colonialism on the part of a counsellor, client stories may easily reintroduce capitalist and colonial values. I argue that we need a more steadfast critique from counsellors engaging in re-narrating client stories to bring out contextual elements that may not be in the purview of some clients. Also, as opposed to the work of the Dulwich Centre, some institutions of narrative practice have become large businesses and have appropriated social justice discourse in the development of their power, capital, and prestige. Building on the work

of Foucault and social justice activism, I believe narrative practice can more fully center anticapitalist and anticolonial values through its institutions and approaches.

Also building on the work of Foucault and, to a limited extent, narrative therapy, the response-based practice approach developed by Linda Coates, Allan Wade, Cathy Richardson, Shelly Bonnah, and Nick Todd is specifically and unflinchingly attuned to social justice realities. Response-based practice (Coates & Wade, 2007; Richardson & Wade, 2009; Wade, 1995, 1997) foregrounds a critical analysis of discourse and both social and individual responses to oppression, aggression, and discrimination. It is a therapeutic approach that interviews for people's continual resistance against violence and indignity. With somewhat less of an emphasis on anticapitalism, response-based practice attempts to be thoroughly feminist and anticolonial. For example, response-based practice has analyzed "psycholonization" and the colonial code of relations (Todd & Wade, 1994; Wade, 1995), which supposes the proficiency of the practitioner, the deficiency of the client, and the assumed rights of the counsellor to fix, diagnose, change, or intern the client in the name of the client's own well-being. Response-based practice has also proposed alternatives to horrific practices of apprehending Indigenous children, such as the Islands of Safety model (Richardson & Wade, 2010), in which dignity, safety, and violence prevention are centered in work with Indigenous people and communities. In therapeutic work, the structuring safety approach (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014) uses response-based and activist ideas to challenge injustice, negotiate consent, anticipate backlash, and create safer space for Indigenous people to speak out in tribunals, testimonies, commissions, and witnessing processes.

Narrative therapy and response-based practice are examples of critical counselling and psychology which can inform the continuing development of social justice approaches to counselling work. With some of the main lines of critical thought in the history of majoritarian

counselling outlined, I will turn to recent publications in Indigenous counselling and critical psychology to bring this review up to date. While it is far beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comprehensive assessment of critical counselling, the brief historical summary and the following review provide the theoretical background for my assessment of the current contexts of majoritarian counselling with young people. With the summaries and reviews in hand, I will provide a cartography of youth mental illness in a neoliberal and neocolonial world, outlining what I see as the pressing questions for critical counselling under Empire.

### **Indigenous and Critical Counselling Literature**

Despite millennia of development through diverse, well-established knowledge systems, centuries of contact with Western thought and medicine, and an enduring global movement to validate Indigenous knowledges, Indigenous ways of healing have only begun, in the last ten to fifteen years, to formally be appreciated by North American counselling theorists and researchers (Stewart, Moodley, & Hyatt, 2017). Indigenous ways of healing have found their way into conversation with Western counselling via multicultural counselling and Native American studies. Indeed, “through the ruthlessness of colonialism, Indigenous healing was delegitimized, prohibited, and forbidden” (Stewart, Moodley, & Hyatt, 2017, p. xiv), yet some attempts in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century were made to include Indigenous healing in multicultural counselling discussions (e.g., Arthur & Collins, 2005; Pedersen, 2010); however, due to the breadth of issues to be attended to in that context, Indigenous frameworks for healing and wellbeing did not receive the attention it deserved. Indigenous issues were mainly viewed from a Native American studies perspective, such as *Counselling Native Americans* (Heinrich, Corbine, & Thomas, 1990) and *Seeking a New Paradigm: Counseling Native Americans* (Herring, 1992).

In 1995, Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran's influential *Native America Postcolonial Psychology* was published and much greater attention was given to issues of intergenerational trauma and the importance of Indigenous people's own knowledge in counselling. Other authors, such as McCormick (1995), focused on the differences between First Nations people and the majority culture in Canada, particularly as it relates to counselling concepts, approaches, and goals. In the early 2000s, Laurence Kirmayer and Gail Valaskakis did extensive research on Indigenous mental health and edited *Healing traditions: The mental health of aboriginal peoples in Canada* in 2009. As time moved forward, Indigenous scholars shed light on the role of land theft, racism, cultural suppression, assimilation, child apprehension, and state violence on the wellbeing of Indigenous people.

Recently, there has been a focus on more accessible publications on Indigenous counselling, for instance, whose *Indigenous Cultures and Mental Health Counselling* (Stewart & Marshall, 2017), which attempts to inaugurate a focused discussion on Indigenous healing, with integration into mainstream counselling being a main goal, along with innovating practice approaches and an Indigenous view of trauma. In one of the chapters in *Indigenous Cultures and Mental Health Counselling*, Stewart and Marshall (2017) argue that "counselling Indigenous individuals from a non-Indigenous perspective (i. e., Western perspective) is a form of continued oppression and colonization" (p. 74). They include diversity and multicultural approaches in their critique and foreground the diversity of Indigenous knowledge systems while also attempting to make more general statements about Indigenous approaches to healing. They explain that Indigenous healing is holistic, considers spirit along with mind and body, and values interconnectedness, including community-based approaches and those that have grown out of the medicine wheel teachings. While the authors and editors of the book highlight the diversity of

Indigenous approaches to health and healing, there is always a risk in putting forth concepts such as the medicine wheel. While Indigenous content is sorely needed, inclusion of concepts independent of their historical, territorial, and cosmological context risk homogenizing Indigenous knowledge and reducing it to particular concepts. Furthermore, using individual concepts, such as the medicine wheel, can give an unfounded sense of understanding over great and complex worldviews. Lastly, there is little discussion in Stewart and Marshall regarding the politics of identity in the application of Indigenous healing models but rather a suggestion for more collaboration across Indigenous and non-Native communities. The complexities of non-Indigenous people taking up Indigenous perspectives and practices is not fully dealt with.

In another chapter, Oulanova and Moodley (2017) discuss the integration of Indigenous healing by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous counsellors. They situate their analysis in a discussion about Canadian diversity, arguing that due to the mental health system's failure to provide adequate services to diverse and minority people in Canada, Indigenous healing, such as drumming, talking circles, smudges, and medicine wheel teachings, are sought after as alternatives to mainstream counselling. Although they do not differentiate the pathways to integration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous counsellors, they found that six factors tended to influence the decision to attempt integration of Indigenous healing practices in counselling: ancestors, Aboriginal community, mainstream education, referral, collaboration, and approach. Without much discussion on the ethics of non-Indigenous practitioner integration, they argue that without strong influences in many of these areas, "it is not advisable for a mental health worker practicing exclusively from a mainstream orientation to incorporate elements of Indigenous practices" (p. 100).

In the final section of *Indigenous Cultures and Mental Health Counselling* (Stewart et al., 2017), Chandler (2017) discusses the clashes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge in higher education and training. The focus in this chapter is on Indigenous learners navigating epistemological divides in postsecondary education and counselling training. Finally, O'Neill (2017) discusses the gap between Indigenous and Western belief systems about mental health as a tyrannical space. To negotiate and understand this space, particularly what causes distress and how healing occurs, O'Neill offers the analogy of alliance. She cautions, however, that non-Indigenous counsellors who are not critically aware of their cultural bias replicate racism in their practice, and she also warns about "the disrespectful and inappropriate use of Aboriginal traditional activities and rituals by non-Aboriginal practitioners" (p. 178). There is clearly a great need for non-Indigenous people to find ethical ways of understanding and learning from Indigenous healing, without replicating colonialism by usurping and appropriating Indigenous knowledge.

Entering the conversation of addressing capitalism and colonialism through counselling from the critical psychology side of the discussion, the 2015 publication of *Handbook of Critical Psychology* edited by Ian Parker is a cutting-edge exposition of current trends and radical edges of critical counselling today. Parker provides an overview of critical psychology, explaining that this approach takes the intersection of social context and subjectivity as a starting point. One of the most prevalent themes of the 46 essays in the handbook is an analysis of society through the processes which, in mainstream psychology and counselling, end up being diagnosed as individual pathologies. Critical psychology attempts to make the value-laden interpretations that foster mainstream psychology and counselling visible and provide alternatives to them. Parker proposes five practices that make up the critical project: (1) crafting alliances between

academics, professionals, and mental health users that resist hierarchy; (2) practices that are contextualized and attuned to culture; (3) overcoming the alienation in capitalist societies and restoring humanity; (4) developing ethical practices that foster social change; and (5) a move to subjectivity which emphasizes users as agents in partnership with practitioners who are active and self-reflexive.

The opening chapters of *Handbook of Critical Psychology* critique the mainstream of psychology and counselling. Essays analyze the Euro-Western positivist foundation of quantitative methods (Cosgrove, Wheeler, & Kosterina, 2015), bourgeois individualism that masks class struggle in psychological analysis (Arfken, 2015), and the pathologizing of suffering through conceptualizations of normality and abnormality of human experience (Seidmann & Di Iorio, 2015). Burman's (2015) contribution explicates some of the ways that psychology facilitated colonization through surveillance and evaluation of colonized peoples. By placing views of child development within the temporal contexts of colonization, industrialization, and neoliberalism, Burman works to deconstruct developmental psychology's universalism and Eurocentrism. She seeks, in the ruins of such a deconstruction, an ability to ally with other disciplines and address the representations and political economy of child development. Other chapters in Part One deal with psychotherapy as change versus normalization, issues of oppression and resistance, and a questioning of the mainstream from Black, feminist, and queer perspectives.

In the second part of the book, the authors investigate the theoretical lines and practices of critical psychology. Chapters by Dafermos (2015) and Elhammouni (2015) introduce a Marxist analysis that highlights the role of activity within a cultural and political economy in the production of consciousness. Such an analysis sheds light on the role of labour, specifically the

experience of alienation related to the exploitation of labour, as a key point of analysis for critical psychology. Skott-Myhre (2015a) takes up the philosophy of Deleuze to transform Marxist and psychoanalytic critique and render the forces of desire as that which might exceed the appropriations of life by capital. Critical psychology, figured here by Skott-Myhre as schizoanalysis, might resist alienation, the encompassing language of psychology, and the separation of individual consciousness and social organization by directly reconnecting with the power of desire and assembling through joyful processes that engage the unconscious. Other chapters in this section deal with discursive and deconstructionist perspectives, as well as psychoanalytic views of the subject.

The third and final part of *Handbook of Critical Psychology* explores standpoints and geographies of critical psychology. The first section provides feminist, queer, Indigenous, and postcolonial approaches to critical psychology. Peñaloza and Ubach (2015), for example, take up queer theory in the works of Foucault, Derrida, and Butler to trouble the heteronormativity and standards of normal behaviour within psychology. They propose a queering of psychological practice that disarticulates the lexical nature of identities and the normative agenda of psychotherapy. The final section of the book expands the horizons of mainstream Western psychology by inviting articulation of critical practice from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, the South Pacific, and the Arab world. While these essays, like the ones contained in the first section of Part Three, are highly heterogeneous, they critique and provide alternatives to the universalizing, individualizing, and pathologizing discourse of psychology and counselling.

Throughout the majority of *Handbook of Critical Psychology*, the criticism of mainstream practice is combined with an alternative or affirmative vision of what could be otherwise. In the astounding breadth of theory, criticism, and practice represented, there is also

an intimation that practice must attend to the specifics of local experience within the broad social contexts that shape the subject of counselling.

Taking these theoretical and practice lines into account, I next reformulate the problems of majoritarian counselling within the context of 21<sup>st</sup>-century North American Empire. Placing counselling within the contexts of lost privilege, biomedicalization, and affective labour, I work toward a politicized counselling praxis with majoritarian young people. I move to from the broad macro forces of Empire, through discourses on identity, to the specific experiences of majoritarian young people in today's society and how counsellors meet them. In the next section of this paper, I reformulate mental illness broadly as a product of the formation of neoliberal individualism and then connect this process to discourses on youth development, experiences of entitlement and privilege, and life within the digital age of control societies. I end by delineating a politicized praxis of counselling within Empire.

### **Mental Illness Under Empire**

Mental illness is primarily diagnosed, or, perhaps better, constructed, through taxonomic systems developed by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and catalogued in tomes such as the *Diagnostic and Statistics Manual* (DSM). Now in its fifth edition, the DSM represents an ongoing attempt to categorize psychological deviance from population norms into discrete mental disorders (Paris, 2015). While the APA claims that the DSM is descriptive and epidemiological rather than etiological (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), the individualism and assumption of normalcy that founded the project led to understandings that verge on the ontological, producing depressed people, anxious individuals, and schizophrenic patients. Every disorder in the DSM is assigned a numerical code that represents an algorithm of symptoms that are said to deviate from a statistical norm (American Psychiatric Association,

2013). With rising rates of common mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression (Statistics Canada, 2012), it is even questionable whether statistical difference will remain a ground for identifying psychopathology.

The DSM has been critiqued for low reliability and validity and even questioned in terms of clinical utility (Duncan, Sparks, & Timimi, 2018; Frances, 2013). Joel Paris (2015) and Allen Frances (2013) note the influence pharmaceutical companies have on the APA in the development of their diagnostic criteria and categories. Furthermore, Thomason (2014) outlines how disorders such as homosexuality and attention deficit / hyperactivity have been influenced by special interest groups, dominant ideologies, and other imperatives. Lastly, the APA was criticized for its collusion with the Bush administration and the US Department of Defence in developing interrogation tactics and other forms of torture (Elkins, 2015).

According to Foucault (1980), psychiatry is specifically not ontology but rather a coding practice that serves the interests of those in power. Foucault (1980) articulated how practices such as psychiatry, rather than describing an object of study, bring it into being through coding practices. He argued that, through a regime of intelligibility and study, an object becomes knowable and invested with currency in a discourse, including the formation of particular subjects and their methods of treatment. Importantly, Foucault showed how such constructions are power laden, can only be brought into being by particular actors, mediate subjectivity, and reinstate ruling structures. Psychiatry has been a dominant force in the production and categorization of difference for a century, and recently, with its venture into the human brain via medical technology, genetic code information, and pharmacological interventions, has increased its power and reach. Psychiatry and biomedicine are making quick inroads into the spiritual, affective, neurobiological, and cognitive levels of the individual. New diagnoses, furthermore,

are being created to pathologize resistance as uncivilized, impulsive, or irrational (Theodossopoulos, 2015), and new drugs are being developed to act as chemical restraints (Whitaker, 2015). In a capitalist and colonial system that cannot be maintained without sustained violence, psychiatry acts as a more subtle and invisible form of control than explicit violence and is increasingly being chosen as the way to maintain capitalist and colonial relations. As Foucault (1980) argued, power is more efficient when it is invisible and subtle.

In the past fifty years, the codes of the DSM, although still not scientifically connected to biological markers (Paris, 2015), have been nearly fully connected to pharmacological interventions that target human neurophysiology, albeit not successfully as a long-term treatment (Whitaker, 2015). While new brain science and pharmacological interventions gain ground, the role of counselling in the coming years will be in greater question, because direct encounters between individuals might pose a threat to the full subsumption of mental health by pharmaceutical companies, psychiatry, and internet technology. There are movements within the APA and in the counselling field toward a more dimensional or constructionist approach to understanding mental illness (Maddux & Winstead, 2012), and interpersonal neurobiology is gaining force in tying biology to social realities, particularly trauma (Fosha, Siegel & Solomon, 2009; Van Der Kolk, 2014). More forcefully, however, critical and liberatory perspectives grounded in notions of neurodiversity have recently sought to make connections between mad politics, critical disability studies, and other counternormative movements (Beresford, 2016; Cresswell & Spandler, 2016; Desai, 2015; Goodley, Liddiard, & Runswick-Cole, 2018; Grandin & Panek, 2013; McWade, Milton, & Beresford, 2015; Menzies, Reaume, LeFrançois, & Beresford, 2013; Reaume, 2014). The longstanding antipsychiatry movement (Burman, 2012; Lang 1965, 1967; Szasz, 1974, 1994) that has resisted the dominance of the APA for over half a

century is slowly being vindicated as pharmacological management for mental illness is now being shown to be short term and questionable at best (Whitaker, 2015). Meta-analyses and long-term studies on pharmacological intervention are now showing that placebo plays a major role in short-term benefits, while negative long-term health consequences can far outweigh any short-term gains (Margraf & Schneider, 2016; Penn & Tracy, 2012; Whitaker, 2015). Counsellors are clearly faced with theoretical and ethical tensions between working with or against psychiatric and pharmacological interests and discourse.

### ***Mental illness among young people***

Epidemiological research is useful to track differences in experience, but it also reiterates a problematic discourse that reifies identities and masks the social forces that perpetuate differences of experience. I therefore use the nomenclature of disorder and state-defined categories of identity as an opening gambit to explore further into the processes of diagnosing, understanding, and treating mental illness. According to Canadian national research grounded, for the most part, in psychiatric and biomedical understandings of mental illness, 70% of mental illnesses have their onset during childhood and adolescence (Government of Canada, 2006), and youth aged 15 to 24 are more likely than any other age group to experience mental illness or substance use disorders (Pearson, Janz, & Ali, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2017). Mood disorders, such as depression and mania, are particularly inflected during youth and young adulthood (Statistics Canada, 2012). The Canadian Mental Health Association (2017) estimates that 10 to 20% of young people in Canada are affected by mental illness, while suicide is a leading cause of death in young people 15 to 24 (Butler & Pang, 2014). Anxiety, depression, addictive behaviours, suicidality, and a host of other “disorders” are viewed as jeopardizing people’s inclusion into the labour market and property ownership. In Canada, people with severe mental

illness have unemployment rates of up to 70–90% (Dewa & McDaid, 2010) and it is estimated that mental illness costs \$51 billion per year, including care costs, loss of productivity, and loss of quality of life (Lim et al., 2008; Smetanin et al., 2011). Coding people’s suffering as individual pathology and calculating it through “loss of work” or “economic drain” metrics opens new markets for pharmaceutical companies and evidence-based therapeutic approaches. Those in power not only exploit people to the point of psychological distress, they capitalize on that distress through “healing” or normalizing interventions, such as pharmacology and therapy.

Young people are not a homogenous group and their identities intersect with multiple and shifting identity markers. In particular, Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, and racialized groups have specific, structurally produced within- and across-group differences in terms of their experiences of mental illness (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2016). In Canada, Indigenous, racialized minority, and other marginalized young people experience poor social, economic, and health outcomes (Pendakur & Pendakur, 2011; Veenstra, 2011; Wu et al., 2003), are underrepresented in political decision making (Black & Erickson, 2006), and suffer high rates of mental illness and suicide (J. White, 2015), criminalization (Johnson, 2010; O’Grady, Gaetz, & Buccieri, 2009), state intervention (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a), and racialized, gendered, and sexualized violence (Statistics Canada, 2013). Marginalization is a complex process that places individuals, often on the basis of identity, in physical or mental peril and outside of adequate support. Given the rapid diversification of Canadian young people, spurred in part by increasing immigration from outside Europe and high birth rates in Indigenous communities (Statistics Canada, 2011), it is urgent to understand how counsellors engage with issues of diversity, power relations, and marginalization—particularly

counsellors who are, even beyond their professional power, also privileged by being white, male, of European decent, heterosexual, or able bodied.

Marginalized or minoritized young people often face many of the same issues that mainstream, white, affluent, and gender-normative young adults contend with, such as anxiety and depression. In addition, however, they also experience various forms of structural oppression, including violence, criminalization, systemic discrimination, and extreme poverty. Indigenous young people, while a diverse population themselves, have upwards of six times the rate of suicide compared to their settler counterparts due to historical and ongoing colonization (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007; Canadian Federation of Medical Students, 2017; Chrisjohn, McKay, & Smith, 2017). Studies show that poverty, land theft, racism, and violence, as well as ongoing disruptions to language, culture, kinship, and connections to land are directly related to disproportionate levels of mental illness, trauma, substance abuse, and suicidality in Indigenous populations, particularly young people and residential school survivors (Chrisjohn, McKay, & Smith, 2017; Kirmayer & Valaskakis, 2009; Nelson & Wilson, 2017). Furthermore, there is growing evidence that in health settings, racism continues to fuel inequitable treatment of Indigenous clients, including treatment for substance use and mental illness (Goodman et al., 2017). While some refugee and racialized populations have lower reported mental health challenges than other groups, some distinct patterns are a concern. For example, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression are high among refugees, and substance misuse and suicide are prevalent in numerous immigrant groups (Bourque, van der Ven, & Malla, 2011; Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005). We also know that, in general, Indigenous, refugee, and racialized groups often have difficulty accessing services due to language, cultural, geographic, and economic barriers (Canadian Mental Health Commission, 2016). Placing experiences of

mental illness and suicide in sociocultural and historical contexts of colonialism and capitalism is an essential step in shifting discourse and practice away from an individualizing and strictly biologically based psychiatry.

### *Neoliberal individualism and the formation of subjectivity*

In terms of majoritarian subject formation, capitalism and colonialism function by promising white and middle-class subjects ascension within its now transnational ranks—or by instilling fear in them of becoming a disposable other (A. Smith, 2010). Globalization and technology now allow for positions of power and wealth to be spread around the world and to be extremely consolidated and stratified. Empire today brings the real possibility of utter poverty to the doorsteps of majoritarian young people, deterritorializing disposability from its historic ties to particular regions and peoples and reterritorializing poverty and precarity into the heart of Empire. I believe that, in many ways, individualized distress at finding one's place in society hides the reality that great swaths of young people who historically would have been the beneficiaries of systemic oppression can no longer count on their place within Empire's favoured ranks. Identity factors will, without a doubt, continue to organize economic stratification in North America for some time to come, however, the growing wealth concentration and gaps leave very few with any security. Illusions, defences, and ideology allow majoritarian subjects to maintain a semblance of normalcy, but at an unconscious level, most of us know that none but the very elite are served by the capito-colonial system, and even they are served at material levels that leave affective emptiness in their wake.

Plan C (Weareplanc, 2014), a network of anticapitalist theorists and activists, argues that every stage of capitalism has a dominant affect that, importantly, is blamed on the system's victims for the suffering it causes. Their analysis leads from the dominant affect of misery in the

modern era to boredom in the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century to the contemporary condition of anxiety. Given the history of psychiatry and its current symbiosis with Big Pharma (Whitaker, 2015), my proposal is that anxiety, depression, addictive behaviours, and suicide in emerging adult populations must be analyzed in terms of how they are coded and treated within a regime of neoliberal and neocolonial imperatives to fully develop adequate and ethically driven responses.

Neoliberalism is the dominant social diagram for the production of majoritarian subjectivity and the reproduction of Empire as capito-colonialism. Adams et al. (2015) describe neoliberal individualism as an investment in the production of people as free agents with limited restraint in their access to capitalist markets. The foundation of agency in this paradigm is the individual's ability and freedom to calculate benefits and costs to them in economic form under conditions of increased financial deregulation. The neoliberal subject, under late capitalism, is produced as flexible, entrepreneurial, and optimizing. Such a subjectivity is commensurate with declining social relationships and programs, including labour unions, participation in public life, solidarity, and grassroots collective action, and focuses instead on its own proximal growth. Connell and Dados (2014) connect neoliberal individualism to overconsumption, ecological calamity, mounting social inequality, and the prioritizing of the global North. This brand of individualism sees self-fulfillment through an economic lens and focuses on personal effort, thereby invisibilizing structural forces and unequal access to agency and material requirements for participation (Becker & Marecek, 2008). Hussein Bulhan (2015) argues that the pervasiveness of neoliberal subjectivity is a veritable occupation of being, or mental colonization, where short-term individual happiness dislodges collective visions of well-being, bottom-up and collectivist approaches to decision making, and alternative epistemologies and

ontologies. Neoliberal individualism promotes those “habits of thinking and feeling associated with Euro-American foundations of the modern global order” (Adams et al., 2015, p. 222).

As an appendage of Empire, mainstream counselling practice with young people can be seen as a facilitator of individualism. Health behaviours conducive to contemporary work life, “normal” neurological functioning, and particular attachments to people and objects are promoted through counselling. Furthermore, counselling is a site for training in what are commonly understood as appropriate values and communication patterns for society. With capitalism as a dominant force, even the most humanistic values, such as health, happiness, and a good life are reoriented and find their teleology, through neoliberal individualism, in the abstract value of the dollar sign (Skott-Myhre, 2015b). Young people’s entire relational lives become important for the development of soft skills, a person’s marketing profile, and a network of technologically mediated relationships oriented toward financial and popularity growth. Counselling, by way of treating those who are seen as aberrant to these dictates, becomes overinvested in establishing and maintaining the normative baseline of mental functioning for success in the areas of work and school. Counsellors can be normalizing agents, committed to evidence-based forms of practice and bent on stabilizing identities, or, alternatively, counsellors can explore difference, including their own internal difference, elicited by encounter with the other. Subtle and explicit forms of revolt, idiosyncratic thought, and expressive singularity can be amplified or recoded and territorialized in ways that produce profits for capital or a response to a social situation (Samuels & Veale, 2007; Samuels & Warnecke, 2016). Rejection of the current normal—or deviance in terms of behaviour, cognition, or affect—is pathologized by psychiatric and psychological systems.

We must, therefore, following Samuels (2016) and Hardt and Negri (2005), begin to discuss the formation of subjectivities that have the capacity to meaningfully and potently engage in political life. Without resistance at the level of counsellors and counselling, the bio-medical-industrial complex fuelled by the APA and Big Pharma threaten to completely code resistance, the anomalous, and difference as psychopathology. The central issues of technological mediation, the changing nature of work to an affective and immaterial labour paradigm, and the longstanding issues of privilege, expectation, and entitlement must be fully theorized to understand the production of subjectivity in Empire today. We need counselling theories and approaches that make the political landscape of the young people we work with visible, and we need to find avenues for amplifying differences that lay outside of or resist the contemporary world order. To develop such lines, in the next section, I explore what I understand as the new context of youth development, particularly for majoritarian young people who most approximate, via the codes of capitalism, colonialism, racialization, ableism, and heteronormativity, those in positions of power. Following that elucidation, I then theorize how mental illness and distress can be reconceptualized as resistance to being integrated into Empire and how returning to living relationship via counselling work with critical practices may be one point of intervention in the reiteration of Empire.

### **Arrival in Control Societies**

Gilles Deleuze (1992) foreshadowed the difficulties the subject would have in arriving in a digitalized information society, one he called a society of control. Rather than the docile, disciplined body required for industrial capitalism that Foucault (1977/1995) theorized, Deleuze pointed out that where code and signs reign, a new flexible subject would be required. Again, industrial, agricultural, and other forms of production continue to exist and continue to be

territorialized on racialized bodies and class-stratified geographies; however, in Canada, particularly in metropolitan areas, code and affects reign as new sites of appropriation. Young people's attitudes, ways of speaking and relating, and ability to develop and use digital media are the primary grounds of training and labour. Organizing and managing young people's affects is a primary work of counselling and thus can be seen as a collusion or form of resistance within capital.

In a control society, such as we find in neoliberal and globalized capitalist Empire, individuals must constantly interchange within dispersed yet highly connected networks that are mediated by technology (Deleuze, 1992). Social media platforms are quickly becoming undifferentiable from marketing sites and professional networking communities. Hardt and Negri (2005) point to a blurring of the private/public divide in which young people are increasingly expected to be available, on call for the boss, responsive to the call of a friend, always checking emails, tags, Snapchats, Facebook, Instagram, and messages, exploring opportunities, yet not acting on them. Computing and internet technologies fuel this near-complete subsumption of life to corporatization (Poster & Savat, 2009). While affective and immaterial production through technology is a site of appropriation, it may also serve as a major platform for resistance and struggle (Lemmens, 2017).

Advanced technologies such as the internet, cloud computing, data banks, and smartphones obliterate the divisions between public and private life and differentially place individuals in advanced technological societies in an open society as compared to the enclosures of the factory and home that characterized discipline societies (Hardt & Negri, 2009), which continue to exist in some areas of society. Here, Deleuze foregrounds the paradox that control is actually increased when people can travel in seeming freedom along networks of information.

While stratifications of race, gender, geography, and wealth mediate experiences of openness and autonomy, in general, there are fewer restrictions on the mobility of information and communication. As flexibility, mobility, and interconnectivity are increasingly becoming requirements of life in Empire, it is more difficult to extricate oneself and subjectify and relate outside information and data networks. Here, Deleuze and Guattari (2000, 2004) theorize that capitalism is approximating the level of full immanence, because there is very little outside of it and it is immediately imbricated in all of life. Ontologically, however, life is always in excess of its abstraction and appropriation by capital, and the products of living relationship continue to proliferate despite being mediated, appropriated, and captured by techno-capital.

Control societies operate by providing the illusion of freedom as a cover for new requirements, increased integration into capitalism, and new forms of exploitation and alienation. Deleuze (1992) argues that the pace and modulations of an open digital society require individuals to be in a state of perpetual connectivity, training, and adaptation. In contrast to discipline societies (Foucault, 1977/1995), where a job or career would require a particular education, control societies demand constant upgrading, and young people can expect numerous changes in their work life with less and less in the way of protection, rights, or notice (Hardt & Negri, 2005). Work now usurps innumerable aspects of subjectivity, including the body, thought, spirit, relationship, and creativity, abstracting much of life and productivity to the sign of the dollar and leaving grief and emptiness in its wake. The concept of the *gig economy* (Mulcahy, 2017), for example, which is meant to describe work as a series of small “gigs” or contracts and in which all work is temporary, shifting, and flexible, is not resisted but is sold as a liberating opportunity. While temporary and shifting work has been pervasive in many parts of the world since industrialization, the gig economy is specifically a concept that contrasts the privileged

work conditions of white Western people for the past century. The concept of a gig economy seems like a rebranding of precarity, an example of the contradictions of freedom that Deleuze foresaw. It is not yet clear whether the gig economy will replace secure, unionized work, and the subjective anxieties that accompany these new “freedoms” have yet to be explored clinically, particularly for their revolutionary potential with young people. Even when we are not at work or school, our presence online, the data we produce and share, and the networks we entrench ourselves in simultaneously implicate our labouring life. Young people are immersed in the world of work and labour long before they have completed basic schooling. Online data collection, for example, is constantly profiling young people as to their desires and offering training and employment opportunities through social media and networking sites. The worlds of work, private life, and social life are inseparable for young people in today’s technologically connected world (Kontopodis, Varvantakis, & Wulf, 2017).

Today’s majoritarian subjects who have the means and resources of access are at the near-constant disposal of capital, work, data mining, and marketing through technology and social media. Rather than statistically quantifying how much young people are online or connected to devices, Robards and Bennett (2011) argue that there is no easy distinction between online and offline and that young people’s interactions with the world often “embody a merging of offline and online qualities and characteristics in a seamless fashion” (Bennett & Robards, 2014, p. 2). Furthermore, the researchers argue that belonging to social networks that are data rich and sensation poor, where bodies are no longer in direct contact, pushes belonging to potentially all corners of the globe, but less and less in ways that include direct social interaction in shared space.

Slick commercial marketing, instant communication on social media, and neocolonial relations to land and property constitute the landscape of nearly all dominant subjectivizing processes. Only particular subjects can participate in the knowledge, affect, and digital economy, and, with escalating wealth gaps in Canada and the US, affective labour is set as the new terrain of class struggle. People excluded from the new economy and those depleted and crushed by continued attempts to access it may provide some grounds for common resistance to Empire. While Indigenous scholars (e.g., Byrd, 2011; Coulthard, 2014; de Finney, 2014; L. B. Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Watts, 2013) seek to identify ways to resist Empire from Indigenous and resurgent subject positions, my focus is on studying the places where subjectivity is being crafted for inclusion in this new globalized and digital economy. This economy, while potentially destabilizing previously enshrined neoliberal identities, continues to function through many of the same hierarchies and power structures of colonial history.

The entitlements and privileges that white male settlers could previously count on are being challenged by the contemporary world of globalized capital and, as Kimmel (2013) explains, this is producing anger and scapegoating along race and gender lines. Clearly, Empire as settler colonialism and globalized capitalism works in tandem with heteropatriarchy, racialization, and other structures of oppression. Framing the subject as majoritarian attempts to name these shifting and difficult-to-resist structures and also foregrounds living relationship and the productive body. Building on James Cairns' (2017) reframing of entitlement as a potential locus of hope for changing capital's devastation, I see counselling work as an intervention into the negative affects of capito-colonialism and an opportunity to reorient entitlement towards a desire for a better future for all. It is yet to be determined how the fear and rage wrought by loss of privilege and the emptiness of a technologically mediated life will be interpreted, embodied,

and acted on. Counsellors have a specific vantage point and opportunity to intervene in the reproduction of a subject constituted by precarity, fear, and entitlement.

### *The subject-supposed-to-have*

In struggling to arrive in a control society, today's majoritarian young adults must compete for dwindling resources with people historically excluded from recognizable positions in the globalized social system. Indigenous and racialized people, immigrants and migrants, temporary and foreign workers, sexual and gender minorities, and foreign labourers and property owners can all be seen as threatening the entitlements that structure a subject-supposed-to-have (Kimmel, 2013). Young people who occupy positions of privilege through accumulated family wealth, geographical location, citizenship, ethnicity, language, ability, education, and/or identity markers such as skin colour, sex, and physical ability are precisely the main targets of control societies and immaterial labour, particularly through their ability to develop sellable affects and their competency in creating and navigating code. Coupled with feelings of entitlement, superiority, and laudability, many white middle- to upper-class young people expect to find a consolidated site of privilege in society (Cairns, 2017). Increasingly, however, young people are living at home longer (Statistics Canada, 2016), partially due to the unavailability of secure, high-paying jobs, interminable education and training, and out-of-control housing markets in North American cities.

In Victoria, British Columbia (BC), Canada, where I live, study, and practice, there is currently a three-pronged crisis comprising a raging opioid epidemic that has reached the level of a public health emergency (Vancouver Police Department, 2017), swelling off-label pharmacological use by young people (Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology, 2014; Waddell et al., 2013), and a housing shortage that has ballooned

homelessness in metro areas by over 30% in three years (BC Housing, 2017). While opioid deaths are occurring with distressing regularity in marginalized, poor, and Indigenous populations, middle-class opioid addiction is also burgeoning (Government of British Columbia, 2018). Middle-aged males continue to make up the bulk of opioid related deaths in Canada (Government of Canada, 2019). Young people, for their part, are being treated with barbiturates, antidepressant SSRIs, and antipsychotics at alarming rates, and are also self-medicating with and using these same substances recreationally (Di Pietro & Illes, 2014). Off-label use, therefore, includes both psychiatric treatment using drugs not tested or approved for use with young people, as well as illicit self-medicating with pharmacological substances. Lethal substance use is now affecting middle-class and affluent young people, bringing much greater public attention to issues that the poor have faced for decades.

Finally, as in most Canadian cities, there has been a drastic increase in housing prices coupled with a shortage of available rental units. Housing provides a striking example of the interconnections of colonialism, globalization, racism, and affective labour. It is commonly believed that the housing crisis in BC is spurred by foreign buyers who then elicit racist backlash from middle-class white people who cannot afford to enter the market, leaving the colonial occupation and land theft that underpin the real estate market invisible, except when poor Indigenous people congregate with other homeless people in tent cities or places like Vancouver's Downtown East Side. We know that substance abuse, particularly opiate use, is connected to historical and personal trauma and can quickly lead to homelessness when treatment is neither available nor relevant to the root causes of the harm (Alexander, 2008; Maté, 2009). Together, these three issues—the housing crisis, opioid epidemic, and mushrooming off-

label prescription pill use—have taken a substantial toll on the well-being and prospects of young people in lower- and middle-class society.

The distress arising from deferred or failed arrival into majoritarian role identification signified by house ownership, heteronormative marriage, and stable career is often experienced, coded, and responded to as individualized mental health issues. In neoliberal global capitalism, difficulty is unquestionably coded as a personal failure. While some young people double down on capitalism's and colonialism's promises through increased efforts and professional supports to attain expected positions through amassing debt and delaying or sidestepping other aspects of heteronormative lives, such as marriage, home ownership, and parenthood (Vespa, 2017), other young people recognize the parasitic nature of Empire and resist or work socially to create alternatives through youth activism and resistance (Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017; Giroux, 2013; Mueller & Tippins, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2014). Young people are certainly heterogeneous in their awareness of, acceptance of, and resistance to Empire, and our theories of development and counselling must be attentive to both this heterogeneity and the multitude of social circumstances that structure young people's lives. As counsellors, how we come to understand young people and our roles in their lives is mediated by discourses on identity, our theories of counselling, and what I will outline, in the next section, as our concepts of development and its aims.

### ***Developmental psychology refigured***

Developmental psychology has attempted to describe the interaction of innate, biological, and culturally bound factors in the experiences of young people as they grow throughout their lives (e.g., Gardiner, 2017; Ludlow & Gutierrez, 2014; Santrock, 2008). By deconstructing developmental psychology (Burman, 2017) and placing it in the context of contemporary Empire, we are able to understand particular mental health crises of many of today's privileged

emerging adults. Much developmental theory coming out of psychology, such as assessments and interventions, is decontextualized and subjects parents, young people, and young adults to normalizing discourses (Burman, 2017). As Foucault (1961, 1963) poignantly argued, the scientific and humanistic pretence of psychology and clinical practice often covers domineering and exploitative social formations.

As an example of early developmental psychology, Erik Erikson (1968) theorized normative stages of human growth, such as adolescence, which he argued is characterized by tasks related to identity and role confusion, and young adulthood, where love, intimacy, and inclusion are primary undertakings. Erikson also, however, noted the contextual dimensions to development, pointing out how identity crises relate to communal expectations and changing social structures. It is my clinical experience that today, social inclusion and failure, expectations and entitlements, and loss of meaning saturate the psyches of young adults in North America.

Jeffrey Arnett's (2000) more recent concept of emerging adulthood is a theoretical contribution that characterizes young people in contemporary society as stuck between adolescence and adulthood—struggling with issues of identity, independence, and responsibility. The elasticity, challenges, and tasks of this new stage are not yet clear. Arnett's category, while descriptive, lacks an economic and political reading to contextualize the struggles of young adults in wealthy nations. His analysis places young people's experiences back into the individual psyche and neglects differences in experience based on race, gender, or social class, among many other factors. Arnett does flag that research demonstrates that young people consistently say that initiatory transitions, such as starting a career, getting married, finishing education, and becoming parents—hallmarks of white able-bodied heterosexual settler

subjectivity—now rank at the bottom in importance among criteria considered necessary for becoming an adult, while becoming financially secure ranks at the top.

As an example of a more critical developmental theorist, Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1980, 1986) drew on Marx's dialectical method to explore how psychological development was achieved through activity in material contexts. Vygotsky proposed a stage theory of development that foregrounded contradiction in social relations that forced changes and new positions in consciousness to be achieved. He argued that, rather than being preprogrammed, higher psychological functions develop through relationships in social environments. His main contributions to mainstream counselling are the concepts of scaffolding and the zone of proximal development, which suggest an educational approach based in constructivism and behaviourism. In *Thought and Language* (1986), Vygotsky analyzed the connections among speech, mental functioning, conscious awareness, and internal dialogue. He drew on Marx's notion of contradiction to explain how conflict between a currently held conscious position and the experiences one has in relationship create a crisis or conflict that must be transcended through further socially located learning. Throughout his work, he maintained a strong analysis of social and cultural processes in the formation of consciousness, understanding development as ultimately a socially mediated process that was situated and collaborative.

Skott-Myhre (2004), for his part, traces the emergence of the “youth” category of development to the 1800s, when white young people in factories and mills began to organize themselves as a political force to resist appalling work conditions. In response to such youth resistance, Skott-Myhre explains, early youth organizations were formed to depoliticize their activities and reintegrate them into capitalist society. There were also parallel, and sometimes entangled, programs to reinvigorate Christian morals in young people. These trends in youth care

have continued into the present and are evident in all counselling and developmental psychology that uses normative constructs of personhood, values, and well-being based on white neoliberal settler subjectivity. For counselling to move beyond its collusive roots in capitalism and colonialism, analyses of context and power must be foregrounded in collaborative practices that seek escape through mutual liberation. As Skott-Myhre explains, young people are explicitly a radical force within society, and they have the capacity, through direct caring engagement, to help unshackle adults from the very structures they are also resisting being appropriated by.

While developmental psychology begins to take into account the shifting economic factors in North America (Arnett, 2000; Burman, 2017), it lacks a critique of the normative majoritarian subject of late capitalism, the colonized relations to land and resources, and the whiteness and oedipalized familialism that underpin it. Moreover, in North America we have seen a recent resurgence of religious fundamentalism, political conservatism, heteronormativity, and nationalistic social discourse that frames nonconforming or diverse young people as particularly abject and “at risk.” Majoritarian subjects are habitually insulated from race-based stress, and when confronted on racism are conditioned to respond with denial, guilt, fear, argument, and anxiety (DiAngelo, 2011). While such experiences may open onto an unravelling of majoritarian subjectivity, such affective responses to a minimal amount of racial stress or confrontation function to reinstate dominant white racial equilibrium (DiAngelo, 2011). Nonwhite agency threatens the supposed entitlements and unearned privileges of white settlers, unleashing anxiety, often expressed as whitelash (Kellner, 2017), by young people who confuse their experiences of discomfort and suffering with actual oppression and violence that others within Empire experience. White settler young adults, saturated in racist and capitalist discourse, often experience themselves as suffering more than marginalized and disenfranchised people or

because of them (Kimmel, 2013; Norton & Sommers, 2011). Scapegoating and the normalization of racism function in this context to turn those most oppressed into oppressors in the minds of the subject-supposed-to-have, leaving the capito-colonial system unaltered and reproductive of the misery it set in motion.

Attachment to the processes and values of Empire underpins much of what becomes known as mental illness and provides the coordinates for what is seen as counselling's ends. Mainstream counselling is characterized by the cutting off of suffering from its socio-political context, invisibilizing and replicating its functioning, coupled with clinical goals of reconciling people to Empire. Counselling in North America has been a nebula for the production of subjectivity for a century, and it continues to offer opportunities to reconfigure one's relations to others, the unconscious, and the living world. As counsellors now deal with issues of majoritarian subjects' social disappointment, confusion, anxiety, frustration, resentment, depression, and violence in shifting global and local contexts, we have an opportunity to place majoritarian normative development into a social context and to critically analyze the function and outcomes of macro-level processes as they are produced and experienced subjectively.

### ***The dark shadows of majoritarian life***

It is important to note that what is also possibly happening at the level of the psyche or unconscious in what comes to be coded as mental illness might be an intuition or perception of the terrible dark side that achieving a majoritarian placement might entail. Lukianoff and Haidt (2018), for example, argue that Generation Z is coddled to the point of being hyper fragile. He explains that those young people born in, around, and after 1995 have been victims of a North American fear discourse that has seriously circumscribed their experiences of engagement with the living world (e.g., not being able to play outside due to "stranger danger" and attempting to

eliminate all risk and hardship from their lives). At the same time, this generation has experienced near full emersion in social media landscapes that are self-reinforcing and politically polarized, the culmination of this being young people's inability to experience tensions, challenge, or discomfort and a habit of creating an enemy other, which elicits fear—arguably a cornerstone of young people's skyrocketing anxious and depressive symptoms.

Anxiety and self-destruction, at this moment, seems to be the natural extension or actualization of capitalist logics (Weareplanc, 2014). Young people, figured in this way, are perhaps a transit in a bio-medical system that engenders and capitalizes on anxiety. Symptom profiles of what are considered psychiatric disorders would therefore no longer represent abnormal experiences, but rather would be the logical expression of capitalism. As pharmaceutical companies and psychiatric groups profit handsomely from newfound markets in youth populations, it seems that Empire may be content with suffering young people as a market as much as a labour force. Counselling can therefore be seen as a process of healing and resistance or yet another apparatus of capture that continues to produce subjects as target for exploitation. Where disorders were previously defined by a statistical deviance from normal functioning, the anxiety and depression that ensues from majoritarian life is quickly becoming the norm and a precise target of capital.

Beyond the relational crisis of today's young people, including loneliness and isolation, is the disconnection from their ecological systems. Today in Canada, one of the most polluting countries per capita on the planet, Indigenous activists and community members lead many environmental justice projects and collide with energy corporations over mining, oil extraction, and forestry (Boothe & Boudreault, 2016). Majoritarian subjects variously respond to these issues with backlash, ignorance, racism, allyship, and solidarity. A number of movements and

counselling practices are revaluing wilderness experiences, land-based practices, and outdoor therapies (Davis, 2013; Jordan, 2015; Smahel, Wright, & Cernikova, 2015). Many of these counselling approaches aim to provide white settlers with an imagined natural, direct, and/or innocent connection to land in order to heal mental illness or provide holistic healing for disconnected urban young people. Putting such nature-based practices in a colonial and capitalist context is imperative for ethical practice, because these practices often take place on unceded Indigenous territories and with little to no regard for Indigenous realities. There are serious tensions between white and affluent people's attempts to reconnect with nature, with or without environmental consciousness, and Indigenous sovereignty and perspectives on relationships among humans, animals, plants, and the more-than-human world. Furthermore, many of these practices that are seen as healing are moving to the high ends of the class system, while others are based on the biomedical model of treating pathology, thereby commodifying relationships to the living world as sellable goods and services. Settler colonialism continues to be a denied reality of much of the ecopsychology field yet a growing number of practitioners are attempting to engage in unsettling practices of accountability and ethical relationship when doing counselling work on Indigenous territories (Jones & Segal, 2018).

Not only do young people have to navigate the tensions of responsibility and shame connected to taking on a position of privilege in a world of inequality and environmental collapse, but they perhaps intuit the dark shadows of majoritarian life that await them. For example, older, middle-aged and middle-class white males are dying disproportionately from alcohol- and opioid-related deaths and suicide (Case & Deaton, 2017). These suicides are being called despair deaths and are connected with the loss of social mobility once promised on the basis of identity. James Rowe (2016) builds on Noam Chomsky's (2016) existential explanation

for support of Donald Trump, which argues that the loss of white privilege brings about anxiety around the decline of white dominance. Rowe's contribution is to extend this analysis into the ecological realm, claiming that feelings of despair and anxiety fuel unbridled consumption. Using Ernest Becker's anthropological analysis of ritual and ceremony for achieving symbolic immortality in different cultures, Rowe points to Western cultures' consumerism as a failed attempt to cope with existential terror. Paradoxically, consumerism fuels the existential threat, this time not only a projected racialized fear of the other, who is taking what is imagined to be rightfully theirs, but an ecological instability that threatens continued human life on the planet. Young people who would inherit the material bounty and social benefits of centuries of consumerism also become heir to an unconscious of despondency and fear.

As perhaps the darkest shadow of majoritarian life, historically and continuously into the present, the capito-colonial system has benefitted from the liquidation of hundreds of thousands of Indigenous and racialized people as a precursor for nation building in North America and elsewhere (Coulthard, 2014; A. Simpson, 2014; L. B. Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Not only has capitalism required what Marx (1908/2013) and Coulthard (2014) refer to as primitive accumulation via slave labour and the appropriation of Indigenous lands, industrial capitalism has required disposable bodies to work in conditions that guaranteed death (Richardson & Reynolds, 2012). In our contemporary world, racial and gender differences continue to structure precarity and vulnerability to violence (Butler, 2004). At the same time, the middle class is disappearing, creating increased concern for those who are used to a modest amount of privilege and safety. This loss of privilege, coupled with cultural dislocation, accompanies ongoing racist and colonial violence in the desperate search for a safe position within society, yet also opens opportunities for a broader ethics of solidarity. In terms of mental health, counselling practice

with white, middle-class young people often demonstrates how a deferred arrival into a system of privilege and safety manifests as internalized anxiety and depression.

The subject-supposed-to-have feels anxious as their self-determination loses ground. Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007) explains that the Western subject sees themselves as self-determining, as opposed to racialized and affectable others who are subject to the Western subject's determinations. The Western subject's prime anxiety, argues da Silva, is the loss of its assumed self-determination and an exposure to being affectable, as it sees racialized others to be. One problem with inclusive politics, from this perspective, is that it maintains the illusion of the self-determining subject by suggesting that the affectability of others can be overcome by including them into the order of humanity previously reserved for the Western subject (A. Smith, 2010). The spectre of affectability that the racialized other poses for the subject-supposed-to-have is further ignored by the even more grandiose notion that the Western subject has the ability to raise others to the level of invulnerability and self-determining power. As opposed to this, counselling may be a vehicle for the Western subject to come to terms with its own vulnerability, its own contingency and affectability.

In North America, large swaths of majoritarian subjects are cathecting their loss of entitlement and privilege as hate, scapegoating, frustration, and backlash toward people more oppressed than them (Cairns, 2017). Others, however, are directing affects bound up with entitlement towards social justice as decolonization, economic equity, anti-racism and sexism, and environmental sustainability. Media, political parties, nation-states, and multinational corporations perpetuate xenophobic, colonial, and racist discourses intervene and interact in this affective alchemy and generally work to maintain the power of corporations, wealthy individuals, states, and supranational organizations (Giroux, 2017; Lazaridis, Campani, &

Benveniste, 2016). The rage, hate attacks, and white terrorism of today are consistently framed as mental health issues (Hoffner, Fujioka, Cohen, & Atwell Seate, 2017; Metzl & MacLeish, 2015), while Black people are described as inherently violent (Leonard, 2017) and radicalization discourse is unilaterally applied to racialized people, particularly Muslims (Coppock & McGovern, 2014; Frisby, 2017). It is vitally important to intervene in how all people's productive power is usurped by Empire and reinvested in parasitic forms of power. By reading the mental ailments of majoritarian emerging adults as a byproduct of Empire, counselling gains a foothold in the horrific replication of capitalist, racist, and colonial relations.

Unlike marginalized young people, who often lack the financial means to seek counselling or are forced into hypernormalizing state-run programs, majoritarian young people often come to counselling when they experience distress, or when others, such as parents and teachers, sense something is wrong with them. Such experiences of "mental illness" are intimately tied to normative concepts of development (Burman, 1994, 2008) and ideas of meaning and purpose in life. As counsellors, we provide understandings of what mental well-being is and how healthy relationships are enacted. Behind the closed doors of counselling offices, young people explore what it means to be a person in a particular society and are initiated into a form of subjectivity that fits neatly into the current economic, sociocultural, and familial context. Counselling and other mental health spaces provide young people with the concepts through which they can comprehend their life purpose, particularly as it relates to ascension within the capito-colonial order. We may be able to find ways, as counsellors, to intervene in what is considered a good life in a settler state and engage young people about the raging violence and crises abounding all around them. Counselling can be an active reinstatement of the dominant order or, perhaps, it can also serve as a productive, disruptive,

and/or creative intervention at a point when young people are questioning themselves, their culture, and the global system. As majoritarian young people inherit the power of their social positions, they also inherit its dark shadow. I end by asking how we might reconfigure our practices to work with what is coded as mental illness towards eliciting the radical, ethical, relational, and communal capacities of young people and ourselves.

## **Conclusion and Enactments: Toward a Politicized Counselling Praxis and Settler Ethics**

This dissertation comprises an introduction, a paper on methodology, three core papers, and the current conclusion. Throughout these papers, I have provided a conceptual cartography of the influences on counselling of globalized capitalism, settler colonialism, and biomedicalization. I have argued that living engagement, when grounded in a critical evaluation of positionality and an ethics of vulnerability and social justice, may pave a way forward for counsellors in their work with diverse young people. Building on the considerations for settler research ethics in the methodology paper and developed through the three core papers as decolonizing counselling praxis, this conclusion extends a concept of settler ethics throughout research, practice, and the social lives of majoritarian people. I therefore touch on some of the main points in the methodology and three core papers and focus on outstanding issues, implications beyond counselling, and next steps in my work. Most specifically, I explore the tensions and possibilities of developing a politicized praxis under Empire that is grounded in settler ethics.

The Janus-faced Empire of global capitalism and neocoloniality circumscribes much of who we are as subjects and attempts to delimit much of our possibilities for living. Subjective and community experiences of distress, mental illness, pain, and anxiety are influenced by the psy-discourses (Rose, 1990), the power of the bio-medical-industrial complex, and what Deleuze (1992) called control society. Responding to distress and thereby participating in the (re)production of subjectivity at a point of crisis has been a hallmark of counselling since its inception. In this dissertation, I have argued that the aims and approaches of doing counselling, especially with young people who are inheriting the advantages and afflictions of capitalist and colonial conquest, are pertinent. This is particularly true in an age in which capitalism and colonialism subsume much of life on the planet. Counselling has had radical and critical edges

that questioned the prevailing social order and its role in perpetuating social harms that come to be understood as individual mental illness. I have drawn on this literature and highlighted that what we call mental illness must be understood within a social context and as a product of particular social relations. I have identified how psychiatry and discourses of individualism and neurobiological abnormality collude with Big Pharma to mask oppression and thereby perpetuate suffering. I have suggested that interrupting the seamless functioning of the bio-medical-industrial complex through critically informed living encounter is an ethical imperative in counselling practice today. By exploring the radical possibilities of crisis, identity formation, and encounter, I believe we as counsellors might have new and radical venues to engage with young people in creating a sustainable post-settler future.

Counselling is often seen as an approach to relieving pain and suffering. Sometimes, we as counsellors might move too quickly to accept discourses on pain that code and attend to pain at a proximal level while obfuscating the contexts from which pain ensues. In a very real way, what comes to be seen as a failure to seamlessly acculturate to captio-colonialism may be, after all, a determination to not conform to the norms of a sick society or the punishment for not doing so. Pain, in this regard, is real and important—it gives us knowledge about what is wrong in the world and shows us how crises, social and individual, are inseparable. Pain can alert us to a problem. Crisis, similarly, can show us the breaks, fissures, tension points, and vulnerabilities in a subjectivity or society that is replete with contradiction. What I have attempted to elaborate in this dissertation is that, particularly at the level of subjectivity, mental health and identity crises provide majoritarian subjects with opportunities to transform ourselves. Placing pain and crisis that are seen as individual into a political context allows us to recode distress as an opening onto personal, communal, and social transformation. I have focused on the majoritarian subject

because I believe its transformation is the only possible exit route to total catastrophe on this planet. I believe counselling can be one small milieu where an interruption of the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity may take place.

This conclusion paper seeks to identify the threads that were outside the scope of the dissertation, tensions and problems that were left unresolved, and directions that seem to have a productive potential for further theoretical development. Building on my ethical commitments to vulnerability and critique, I attempt to articulate how I now see the central problems and potentials in developing a critical counselling praxis under Empire. Furthermore, I explore how a settler ethics can guide academic and counselling work, as well as broader engagements that settlers engage in with Indigenous people and on Indigenous territory. In the first section, *Counselling Praxis as Critically Informed Ethical Encounter*, I summarize main points from the dissertation, explore the possibilities of a minoritarian praxis, and begin to articulate some of the ethical tensions of politicized praxis. In the second section, *Settler Ethics*, I delve deeply into the complexities of doing research and counselling in Indigenous contexts as a settler person. I try to bring a nuanced analysis, drawing on Indigenous scholarship, of the possibilities, responsibilities, and pitfalls of settler praxis. In the final section, I lay out some of the limitations of this dissertation, my commitments going forward, and how I see the work of this dissertation being carried on.

### **Counselling Praxis as Critically Informed Ethical Encounter**

By developing a map of how contemporary Empire functions as an arrangement of settler colonialism (de Finney, 2014; A. Simpson, 2014; Watts, 2013) and globalized capitalism (Hardt & Negri, 2000), this dissertation has examined the forms of power and discourse that structure mainstream counselling and what critical counselling and counsellors might become as an

alternative. Experiences of what comes to be called anxiety and depression saturate diverse populations of young people. Opportunity and disenfranchisement, meaning and hopelessness, alienation and connection are dispersed asymmetrically. In the three core papers of this dissertation, I mapped the bio-medical-industrial complex of psychiatry and the pharmacology industry (Alexander, 2008; Paris, 2015; Whitaker, 2015), societies of control and digital technology (Deleuze, 1992), affective labour (Hardt & Negri, 2005), and coloniality (Richardson, 2015; Stewart & Marshall, 2017; Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010). Through the use of critical theories, I explored the structuring, signifying, and subjectifying regimes of “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 2004, p. 17) while foregrounding Indigenous and settler identities. I argued that counsellors have a role in politicizing young people’s experiences of distress and suffering, as well as experiences of health, meaning, relationship, and happiness. These engagements provide opportunities to reinforce or intervene in the reproduction of Empire, particularly through subjectifying practices such as counselling.

I have attempted to show that what we commonly understand as symptoms of mental illness can be read in a variety of power-saturated ways. Innumerable competing and intermingling discourses guide counsellors and young people in making meaning related to psychological, emotional, embodied, and spiritual pain (Foucault, 1963, 1980). As a dominant discourse, the bio-medical-industrial complex, firmly located within capito-colonialism, dispenses a predominantly individualized, psychiatric, and neurobiological rejoinder to the challenges young people experience in adapting to today’s world (Frances, 2013; Paris, 2015; Whitaker, 2015). Counselling, in contrast, is more diverse in its coding practices and approaches to young people’s suffering. I have explored discourses that code for neurobiological or cognitive deficits, attachment or early trauma, resistance to Empire’s rule, failures to adapt and

fit in, and resentment about the unfulfilled promises of capitalism, white supremacy, and heteronormativity. I have also attempted to show that what emerges in counselling with young people can also be read as an embodied resistance to entering and perpetuating an unjust and unfulfilling social life that exploits them. In this way, I have taken the coding practices of therapists as precise targets for analysis, proposing that our theories be guided by critical analyses of capitalism and colonialism, as well as by our ethical commitments.

Justine D'Arrigo-Patrick, Chris Hoff, Carmen Knudson-Martin, and Amy Tuttle (2017), in their study of the intersections of critical and postmodern counselling, identify a tension between what they call activism through countering and activism through collaborating. Activism through countering, they explain, is a critical counselling practice based in consciousness raising, social critique, and naming and exposing power. This countering activism in counselling privileges critical inquiry based in the knowledge of the counsellor and foregrounds their ethical responsibility in making visible and challenging the sociopolitical contexts of the client's concerns. Activism through collaborating, in contrast, is described by the authors as foregrounding the ethical responsibilities to relationship and attending to the client's own meanings of their experiences. Counsellors who focus on relationship, therefore, tend to privilege client lead; they do not take authority on critical issues and are cautious about defining origins or contexts of client's problems. The ethical tensions regarding the use of counsellors' values, politics, and critical insights in elucidation of therapeutic issues is even more salient when counselling is done with young people. I see the deployment of counsellor power in the service of addressing social issues through direct engagement as a central ethical dilemma for critical counsellors to grapple with.

While there is clearly an overlapping spectrum between countering and collaborative in practice, D'Arrigo-Patrick et al. (2017) did find that activist-oriented counsellors on the whole focused on contextual issues through counselling and aimed to challenge social injustice rather than accommodate people to it. Furthermore, activist counsellors in general aimed to be transparent about their power and the intentions behind their practice approaches. While some counsellors took more of an educative role, they attempted to make visible their position within the critical analysis and be transparent about why they thought their analysis was important in the particular situation. More collaborative counsellors, for their part, aimed at being transparent about how they take up power and attempts to stay near to client experience and values as a way to empower clients in the meaning-making process. Both tendencies underscore the importance of acknowledging the power of the role of counsellor and of transparency about the ways counsellors are willing, or not, to use that power.

Coding practices flow between counsellor and client regarding beliefs in a good life, what is valuable, what constitutes happiness, health, and success, and who we are as people and communities. It is insufficient, in my view, for critical counsellors to simply let clients take the lead in defining their worlds, mainly because they are already saturated in capito-colonial discourse and value systems. While respecting a person's own experiences, adaptations, and understandings and the contexts and discourses within which these emerge, critical counsellors have an opportunity to make power visible and to intervene in the reproduction of majoritarian subjectivity. While great strides are being made in social justice approaches to counselling (Audet & Paré, 2018; Chung & Bemak, 2014; Jones & Segal, 2018; Jones-Smith, 2012; Kahn & Monk, 2017; Reynolds, 2010a; Reynolds & Hammoud-Beckett, 2018; Winslade, 2015) there is still very little written on the possibility of intervening in colonialism and capitalism's

functioning through undoing the subjectivities of majoritarian counsellors and young people alike. There is still a great deal of analysis and ethical deliberation to be done when considering the application of a political agenda in counselling. As critical counsellors, it is up to us to develop a new discourse and relationality for counselling that might transparently elucidate our agendas and more closely align our work with other critical projects. Given that positioning ourselves as knowing better or using young people to further our own political agendas is problematic (Gharabaghi, 2018), it behooves us to find ways of relating to young people that help rethink the current notion that challenges in fitting seamlessly into capitalism and colonialism are a sign of mental illness.

In analyzing counselling goals and counsellor subjectivity, the importance of ethics has become clearer to me. I believe that one area for further development is to redefine the ethical commitments of counsellors, particularly in the areas of vulnerability, class, self-location, and coloniality. I have attempted to elaborate the concept of becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004) in this regard and to embody vulnerability and transparency in this dissertation as a reflection of my commitments in practice. I believe that accounting for our collusion with capitalism and colonialism is a necessary step in reconfiguring ourselves and our practice. Majoritarian counsellors have an opportunity to intervene in our own subjective reproduction and to be accountable to the ways in which we relate to our class privilege and colonial presence. We must keep watch for the many ways that counsellors, as people with power, can set ourselves up as ethically supporting our clients, all the while maintaining capitalism and colonialism in our lives and through our practice.

While counselling can, must, and at times does respond to injustice by caring for those most affected by oppression, counsellors may also be using their seemingly virtuous role of

helpers and healers to disregard how our profession as a whole reiterates Empire at nearly every turn. In my home field of child and youth care, for example, de Finney, Palacios, Muchina, and Chadwick (2018) discuss how practitioners enact romanticized notions of benevolent human service interventions with disregard to “the deep ethical fissures at play in our work” (p. 34). In this sense, critical counsellors must come to terms with the ways in which we manage our own anxiety, guilt, and shame about our class and colonial privilege via a discourse of helping. Ethical deliberation must develop a relentless analysis of capitalism and colonialism throughout its practice. Furthermore, I believe it is important that we come to recognize and be transparent about our own pains, affects, hopes, and failings as counsellors.

Without appropriating the pain of others (Tuck & Yang, 2012), we might connect more honestly and directly with young people through our own experiences of living in Empire today by critically analyzing how we are being asked to position ourselves in relation to them. Critical counselling within Empire must deal specifically with the therapist’s own bonds to the capito-colonial order and develop ways to participate in possible futures that are outside the paradigm of care as surveillance, service, work, and enclosure. By undoing or, at the very least, becoming transparent about our collusions, attachments, and failings, we might begin to lay bare the working of Empire and seek a new relationality. de Finney and her colleagues (2018), in this regard, call for a “collectively produced relationality” (p. 35) that accounts for the incommensurabilities of working against the very systems that institute our power and authority. They also suggest that recognizing that “our very presence and advocacy on Indigenous lands and in settler states might reiterate this violence as much as unsettle it” (p. 35). Working in this challenging and compromised space, being honest about it, and disavowing the invulnerability of

the white settler subject is crucial to overcoming our dependence on the privileges and power that our identities and positions endow.

While it can be argued that counselling is already fully subsumed within Empire with no hope of recuperation, I have attempted to show that, to the contrary, counselling may be a crucial space of ethical living encounter within an increasingly biomedicalized mental health care system. I have argued that in a context where pharmacology and digital information technologies saturate mental health work, counselling as direct and ethical engagement provides some resistance to helping relationships between adults and young people becoming fully subsumed under Empire. More contentiously, I have claimed that the challenges and crises of what is called mental illness might be a politicized site of intervention in the system's reproduction. Living encounter, crisis, and transformation as paradigmatic of a future counselling praxis must be guided by ethics and are furthermore not unidirectional processes. It is precisely an ethics of vulnerability, accountability, and care that provides opportunities for majoritarian counsellors and young people to reconfigure themselves. It is in our encounter with each other, as well as those more violently othered within Empire, that radical elements within ourselves, elements with some degree of variability, can become the starting point of a line of becoming and resubjectification.

Guided by ethics and critical analysis, I have proposed that undoing majoritarian subjectivity, or intervening in its reproduction, may be effectuated via politicized counselling praxis. The two avenues I have proposed in this dissertation are critical cartographic analysis and direct encounter. Both of these approaches require a thoroughgoing ethical analysis, and I have turned to concepts of identity and subjectivity to more fully elaborate these.

Critical cartography and the consciousness raising that came with it have helped me analyze my context, practice, identity, and values and better understand the ethics of my research and practice. Critical concepts of identity and subjectivity have provided me a more nuanced understanding that counselling and research ethics are location specific and need to be elaborated depending on positionality within Empire. Critique, in these ways, helped me locate points of resistance within Empire and potential avenues for resistance. Raising consciousness through an application of critical theories to one's milieu, identity, and practice is fraught with issues of power, discourse, and material pain. For too long, the burden of educating majoritarian people has fallen to the people most marginalized or oppressed within Empire. Minority people have had to endure denial, backlash, ignorance, and violence as they name power and how it functions. While it is important to acknowledge rightful knowledge holders and seek out voices that are consistently marginalized or silenced, it is imperative to find ways of listening that support and vitalize minoritized voices rather than deplete them.

Vikki Reynolds (2010a), reflecting critically on practices of conscientization (Friere, 1970), argues that consciousness raising that comes through engaging with marginalized people always benefits the dominant party at the expense of those most impacted by oppression. Men's awareness of patriarchy, for example, has nearly always come through the efforts of women, transgender, and gender nonconforming people who have spoken out and often were punished in various ways for doing so. White people, similarly, learn about their own racism and ongoing privilege through the work of racialized activists and educators, and settlers learn about colonization through the work of Indigenous peoples. While settlers can now bolster their careers by speaking about settler colonization and Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous people themselves are still marginalized for speaking truth to power (McCaffrey, 2010). Indigenous and racialized

people and those who do not conform to heteronormative gender and sex roles face punishment in the form of job loss, community expulsion, or threats of violence for speaking out too strongly against dominant institutions of control. White settlers, by contrast, earn accolades for their work on diversity issues, their cross-cultural knowledge, or even their radical politics. An ethics of vulnerability for majoritarian subjects therefore requires that we stand with those who face the most severe persecution for their views and actions, while also finding ways to leverage our power and privilege to amplify critical voices without standing in for them. It is vitally important that we take on the burden of undoing our own oppressive biases and challenging other majoritarian subjects who are inflicting harm.

The idea of direct engagement has helped push my critical analysis further and opens lines for more active and affirmative ethical actions (Braidotti, 2010b). Braidotti (2010a) writes that for an affirmative ethics,

the ethical good is equated with radical relationality aiming at affirmative empowerment, the ethical ideal is to increase one's ability to enter into mods of relation with multiple others. . . . This position is affirmative in the sense that it actively works towards the creation of alternatives by working actively through the negative instance by cultivating relations that are conducive to the transmutation of values. (p. 45)

My practice experience of counselling in mainstream, postsecondary, wilderness-based, and Indigenous contexts while completing this research has blended with the critical analyses I was conducting, and I have attempted to explore the radical possibilities of undoing ourselves as majoritarian subjects through ethical and critical living encounter. Rather than develop a formalized ethics and practice for critical counselling in this dissertation, I have suggested that undoing ourselves as majoritarian subjects is work that makes local embodiments of praxis

possible. I have therefore taken up the practice of outlining the ethics and practices of vulnerability that make possible radical subjectivizing processes—what Deleuze and Guattari (2004) call becomings. The becomings of majoritarian subjects, particularly through their engagement with those othered in Empire through colonial, capitalist, or psychiatric discourses, have been a key theoretical development in this dissertation. In the remaining pages, I hope to explicate some of the complexities of such engagements and what I see as the ethical problems and possibilities of a praxis founded on our own undoing as majoritarian subjects.

### **Intervening in Majoritarian Subjectivity**

In contrast to mainstream counselling, which generally focuses on reduction in difficulty and adaptation to the environment, the counselling praxis I have envisioned here is a politicized and ethical process of reciprocal elicitation, exploration, and amplification of elements that do not fit within the dominant order. Such an approach, however, must be guided by a rigorous analysis of the current order, as well as a deep concern for the potential harms of engaging with difference. Experiences with difference is often what brings people to counselling, due to the anxiety or maladaptation to context that nonconformity, engaging with the other, or challenging the status quo entails. In terms of relational engagement, for majoritarian subjects to undergo a process of change in relation to an other, the potential harms that this might bring to the other must be curtailed. This is where I see critical theories of identity useful in helping to understand positionality and vulnerability in terms of potential harm. I have attempted to show that while we must seek to overturn suffocating identity categories put in place by colonial and imperial history, they are also vitally important to mark out our starting points in this work, how we are all positioned differently within Empire, what vulnerabilities and risks we are open to in change

processes, the real material and discursive violence that occurs due to identity, and historic and contemporary rights claims.

By changing our views of people as complete objects with essential or encompassing identities, we can then think of any person as composed of elements and lines of force. Some of these elements and lines of force are concomitant with the dominant modes of the world and some are incapable of belonging to it. Those who are othered by the prevailing system are, almost by definition, composed of many such minor or disruptive elements. The question for politicized minoritarian counselling is, to what extent do we engage with these disruptive elements within ourselves and others, and what are the ethics of such engagements? Counsellors can use critical theories to understand how their own power is being captured and appropriated by Empire, as well as which elements of themselves still flow outside Empire's codes and axioms. Furthermore, through counselling and other forms of direct encounter, we can examine how our investments in the dominant order are disrupted when met by others who challenge the smooth functioning of capital and colonial codings. With a practice of vulnerability, we can seek lines of escape from Empire through the minor elements and forces in ourselves that are elicited through encounter. I believe and have experienced that it is possible that the distress majoritarian and minoritized subjects bring to therapy may be worked with in the transmuting of the subjectivity of counsellors and young people alike. While focusing on the empowerment of marginalized people, we cannot ignore the depowerment of those currently in power (Mitchell, Thomas, & Smith, 2018).

Disarming the impenetrability of the white settler subject (da Silva, 2007), however, whether counsellor or young person, is a complicated and dangerous process. First, there are levels of shame, resentment, and guilt that are covered over by an impassable façade. As this

façade is disrupted, reactions ranging from deep despair to violent resentment, scapegoating, backlash, and the reinstatement and amplification of power are possible. I have attempted to map how experiences of violent racism as well as anxiety, depression, addiction, and suicidality can all be read as reactions that the majoritarian subject experiences when their place within Empire, assumed to be secured, is unfulfilled. Second, as majoritarian subjects become more vulnerable, they are open to the broader suffering of other humans and the rest of the living world. While acknowledgement of the pain people feel due to poverty, oppression, alienation, racism, dispossession, and loss may lead to empathy, accountability, and solidarity, the majoritarian subject may also recenter their own affects and agency. For example, a focus on the actions of individual settlers attempting solidarity may recenter their agency and serve to sidestep collective responsibility and reinstate them as helpful subjects of moral courage. Conversely, too quick a focus on collective reconciliatory action, while important, risks moving the analysis of colonialism to the future without fully acknowledging or taking responsibility for the present or past. My proposal is that counselling is a potential site to engage with the affects of coloniality and begin to connect past, future, relationship, ethics, and action. It is also a site where settler people can work with each other and not harm or take up undue space in the projects of Indigenous people.

Sara Ahmed (2004, 2007) is helpful here in her cautions that to move quickly past whiteness is to defend against its confrontation and reassert white agency. The vulnerable majoritarian subject who is open to the pain of others all too often worries about how they themselves feel about the other's pain and thereby recenters themselves. Such a move is motivated by settler and racist affects rather than by issues of justice in their own right. Social justice is called for due to oppression, not because majoritarian people need to manage or settle

their own negative affects. These problems again call for critical and decolonial theory to guide our analyses and for ethical commitments from majoritarian subjects. Counsellors, if they take the time to do the ethical work of vulnerability, accountability and transformation, may act as mentors to a generation of young majoritarian people who are facing a critical period in human history that includes the ongoing resurgence of Indigenous peoples and other people and groups oppressed within Empire. Our work as counsellors might extend into working collaboratively with youth to respond ethically and politically to a new age of distress and demand.

Throughout the papers in this dissertation, I have argued for the power of critical analysis and direct encounter, particularly in the transformation of majoritarian subjectivity. There remains a risk at the heart of this project that it may be read as using the pain of others in the process of developing the majoritarian subject, albeit as slightly less colonized or enmeshed in capitalism. To the contrary, what I have tried to develop is a specific ethics for vulnerability, self-critique, and accountability in the transformation of the majoritarian subject at a moment of crisis and encounter. While the risks are high in the endeavour of undoing the majoritarian subject, the question is to find ways to loosen our own grips on the wealth, privilege, security, and control that are promised by a system that leaves so many on this planet in dire poverty and pain. This dissertation has unambiguously centered the majoritarian subject, its anxieties, its problems, and, I hope, its undoings. I have lived and worked for five years in a space of tension between my own undoing and the edification of my professional standing. As I continue to develop ideas and arguments that challenge the reproduction of white settler power, I simultaneously bolster my academic and professional career.

In my research and counselling work, I work with an ethics of vulnerability to both make my power visible and to challenge the structures that continually reinforce it. In this dissertation,

I took up vulnerability as a critical practice. Informed by Foucault's notions of subjectification, feminist theories of positionality, and Indigenous critiques of settler colonialism, I attempted to constantly make visible the workings of power in my own life. Becoming visible in this way, I believe, allowed me to contemplate and rework the coordinates of my subjectivity and my practices of ethics and relationship. Vulnerability, I believe, is a condition for something new to be produced. Taking agency out of an agentic or individualist model and being open to change are an essential step in seeking out the multiplicities that are seething within any calcified identity or rigid narrative (Winslade, 2009).

In creating a socio-subjective conceptual map of counselling today, I applied a critical analysis to my field of practice, attempting to open myself and other counsellors to our shadow and to possibilities for becoming something other than we are as counsellors. I have attempted to map a broad array of forces and axioms that structure and produce counselling and its subjects. While I have attempted to rescue counselling from an otherwise scathing appraisal, I have aimed to make transparent our field's functioning, particularly in relation to young people, majoritarian subjects, and Indigenous people. Most importantly, this dissertation was propelled by an ethics of vulnerability that I lived through my working relationships. This included doing counselling work with very diverse people in different contexts. Vulnerability is, for me, the quintessential component of our undoing as majoritarian subjects, and it is through relationships, particularly with those most separated from us by the codes and rules of Empire, that we can become other than what we are.

I believe that this more vulnerable space of subjectivity can be inhabited by counsellors in their work with majoritarian and minoritarian people and produce an ethics that is accountable to the problems of capitalism and colonialism as they continually code and appropriate our

practice. Through an accurate and honest mapping of these tensions, I believe that white settler counsellors and researchers can begin to work collaboratively toward their unmasking and unmaking. I also believe that ethics informed by critical theory, vulnerability, and relationship can extend beyond the counselling milieu and have implications for academic work and other areas where settlers engage with Indigenous people and lands. In the next section, I elaborate some of the key tensions, learnings, problems, and possibilities of such a settler ethics. Many of these issues emerged from my research and the counselling practice I was doing throughout my PhD studies, and I speak mainly, but not exclusively, to these contexts.

### **Settler Ethics**

The counselling work over the five years while I was completing my PhD studies and research was done in private practice, wilderness based, postsecondary, and First Nations contexts. Much of what follows in this section on settler ethics was developed through engagements with critical literatures and people, mostly in my educational and practice contexts. I draw on Indigenous, decolonization, allyship, and other critical literatures to extend my analyses from the area of counselling to research, activism, and politics. Furthermore, to subvert the dominance of white voices in critical theory and take up a decolonizing citational practice (Ahmed, 2013), I foreground Indigenous voices and the white and settler people who are currently engaging with their work. I recognize that much of my engagements with Indigenous knowledge in this dissertation does come through academic scholarship and published articles, leaving a gap in my research related to Indigenous peoples outside the academic structure.

Settler ethics is about the epistemologies and ontologies we draw on (St. Pierre, 2018), how we draw on them (Watts, 2013), and our citational practices (Ahmed, 2013). Ahmed explains that citational practices structure disciplines and reproduce power and discourse. Settler

researchers have a responsibility to engage with critical literatures outside of their mainstream and to be accountable for whose voices are engaged with in research and writing. Ahmed warns, however, that the term “critical” can become an ideal to which white male researchers cling. She writes:

When criticality becomes an ego ideal, it can participate in not seeing complicity. Perhaps criticality as an ego ideal offers a fantasy of being seeing. Critical whiteness might operate as a way of not seeing in the fantasy of being seeing: critical white subjects by seeing their whiteness, might *not* see themselves as participating in whiteness in the same way. (para. 17)

This challenge to see how we, as white settler subjects, attempt to see ourselves in a different way is echoed in Tuck and Yang’s (2012) analysis of “settler moves to innocence” (p. 9) in which they argue that settlers attempt to absolve themselves of the responsibilities of decolonization as land return and Indigenous sovereignty while appropriating the discourse of decolonization. Tuck and Yang see these moves as a series of actions that on the face seem to be grounded in morality, solidarity, helping, or allyship but which have the outcome of absolving settlers of their guilt, shame, and, most importantly, responsibility.

While this dissertation has attempted to foreground Indigenous, feminist, and other critical scholarships, it has also drawn heavily on white, and particularly on white male voices. As a decolonizing project, that is, one that returns stolen lands or improves the material living conditions of Indigenous or other marginalized peoples, it has, for the time being, failed. My hope is that the work that follows this project, done by myself or those influenced by it, moves us settler people, particularly counsellors on the front lines of service delivery, toward a more just and sustainable future. I have focused primarily on the majoritarian subject and its undoings and

transformations. Settler colonialism is specifically about theft, just as global capitalism is specifically about capture. What I have sought is a relational ethics for undoing the majoritarian settler subject that might loosen its grip on the land, knowledge, and bodies of those who have been on this land for millennia. What is required, I believe, is a settler ethics that is connected to context, responsible in relationship, and accountable to those from whom their learning comes. I have attempted to account for the harms done by counselling and its complicity in settler colonialism and globalized capitalism and promoted a critical counselling paradigm that could possibly steer some of counselling's mainstream away from the reproduction of Empire. To work towards this end, I have contested the dominant discourse of individualism and biomedicine in the mental health field, challenged social adaptation as a goal for counselling, and articulated a concept of settler ethics.

To develop a concept of settler ethics, I propose some commitments that settlers might take up. I do so, however, with a great humility that recognizes the impossibility of a truly ethical life within settler colonialism and globalized capitalism. As such, my elaboration of settler ethics is partial, complicated, compromised, and yet also aspirational. I seek to provoke, through my writing and counselling work, thought and action in other settler people. I follow hooks (2004) when she argues that it is imperative that men work to dismantle heteronormativity and patriarchy and that white people work on undoing race and racism. In a similar way, it is our work as settler people to challenge and dismantle settler colonialism. As a popular meme puts it, 'no one is asking us to apologize for our ancestors. We are being asked to dismantle the systems of oppression they built and that we maintain and benefit from.' Scott Morgensen (2014, 2015), following hooks' intersectional analysis, reminds us that in solidarity, focusing on one axis of power can obscure others. He calls on us to address how whiteness can disappear from the

discussion of settler colonialism and how assumptions can be made about the identities and values of allies. I have therefore followed hooks, Morgensen, and other intersectional feminists (Cheshire, 2013; Clark, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991) in attempting to account for interlocking and mutually supportive systems of power and oppression while also foregrounding settler colonialism and the white settler subject as primary sites of analysis.

In this dissertation, I have tried to show that within any category we inhabit as majoritarian people, there are nuances, exceptions, failures, and vulnerabilities. Settler ethics, therefore, begins with a radical questioning, not only of identity, but of the discourses and structures that make majoritarian identities possible and works at finding ways of using undo their stratifying and constricting force of capito-colonialism. I have also focused on politicized relationship and the disruptive force of the other in majoritarian life. My gambit in this work is to propose a counselling praxis that attends specifically to these contradictions, disruptions, and crises in majoritarian life and seeks lines of flight that escape their recapture within Empire codes and systems. Recognizing and being accountable to our multifaceted positions and relationships within Empire is an essential step, I argue, for counsellors in developing a critical praxis informed by a settler ethics. This dissertation has sought to put the affects, discourses, and experiences of majoritarian young people into a politicized social context. I have focused a great deal of attention on white settler subjectivity and the context of historical and ongoing settler colonialism.

Elaine Swan (2017) discusses the collective ignorance of whiteness and suggests that praxis entails questioning epistemologies that sanction such ignorance, that is, “how our practices of knowing, unknowing and not knowing relate to racism and colonialism, and are motivated, deliberate and self-serving” (pp. 555–556). She suggests that challenging ignorance

requires listening for distortions, omissions, and limitations in our knowledge. Understanding and undoing how our lives are entangled with racialized and colonized others, including how our epistemologies are incongruent in places, provides opportunities for such analysis. Challenging collective ignorance and attending critically to the affects attendant to consciousness raising will, it is hoped, challenge the fragility that underscores whiteness and its perpetuation (DiAngelo, 2011). Swan calls for a praxis of listening that attends to accounts and analyses of racism and colonialism by minoritized peoples and recognizes their credibility. Such listening takes commitment and vulnerability, because whiteness is structured to deny and avoid the pain and dissonance of challenge to its authority and inherent goodness (DiAngelo, 2011; Swan, 2017). Morgensen (2014) here names white settlers as such to emphasize how white supremacy acts to place settlers in positions of power vis-à-vis people of colour and to normalize whiteness or render it invisible within settler colonialism.

In a sense, whiteness is unescapable and omnipresent. At the same time, a portion of its power is derived by its implicit and ubiquitous nature as an assumed norm. Becoming visible (Skott-Myhre, 2006) as a white settler is a practice of making power and its functions transparent, making it available for analysis and contestation. While whiteness and its power is painfully visible to many racialized people, its functioning as a norm is an inherent and taken for granted part of capito-colonialism. It is often invisible in its more insidious structural forms and is often very invisible in its functioning to white people. Here, Alan Lawson (1995) argues that locating the settler subject is an ethical and political necessity in that it challenges a “self-serving forgetting of the entangled agency of one’s history as a subject with that of the displaced Native/colonized subject” (p. 20). In many ways whiteness and coloniality are ubiquitous; however, this ever-presence also makes them difficult to criticize, particularly for white settlers.

Not only do systems of power connect horizontally across axes of identity, they are conjugated over time. As Eve Tuck, an Indigenous Unangax scholar, and her colleague Wayne Yang (2012) argue, the violence of settler colonialism “is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation” (p. 5). Lorenzo Veracini (2008) here argues that settler disavowal of Indigenous histories is used to discredit Indigenous political rights and sovereignty and to flip temporality to position Indigenous peoples as entering settler space subsequent to the onset of colonization. In a later work, Veracini (2011) calls this disavowal of Indigenous presence and history a “non-encounter” that structures settler colonialism. As a structure, he adds, settler colonialism erases the distinction between colony and metropole and works toward self-fulfillment as a settled state. A decolonized account of time and history, however, is about the persistence of Indigenous life, land, and culture through time. It is also an account that calls colonialism the genocide it was, is, and continues to be. As settlers, it is up to us to question our neocolonial governments and challenge their claims on legitimacy, which are based on false accounts of temporal priority (Kouri, 2015). More importantly, it is about attending to Indigenous peoples’ own accounts of time and recognizing the legitimacy of the political systems that have endured attempts at colonial erasure.

Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2016a) here talks about the temporality of recognition, arguing that recognition of historical injustice, such as what former prime minister Steven Harper attempted in his June 2008 “apology,” leaves open the innocence or rightness of the past by making the truth of atrocity a revelation in the present. Harper, in this speech which many called a non-apology, called the residential school system a “mistake” without naming the genocide that transpired or any criminal or political intent. Far from redressing settler colonialism, such forms of recognition obfuscate historical harms and also obscure the ongoing dispossession and

violence of colonialism. Simpson (2017) criticizes the government's position as a *fait accompli* and argues that settler narratives enact "notions of a fixed past and settled present" (p. 18). She instead theorizes refusal as a longstanding form of Indigenous resistance and politics. Refusal, according to Simpson, "maintains and produces sociality through time" (2016b, p. 329) and is acutely aware of the conditions of production. As she writes, refusal

holds on to a truth, structures this truth as stance through time, as its own structure and comingling with the force of presumed and inevitable disappearance and operates as the revenge of consent—the consent to these conditions, to the interpretation that this was fair, and the ongoing sense that this is all over with. (2016b, p. 330)

Refusal is therefore an injunction into the narratives and politics of the past and present that aims to open a "sociality through time" that is not bound to the settler regime. Joanne Barker (2018) explains that "the future is *never* about the future" (p. 215, italics in original) but instead is about reclaiming the past and present. It is about Indigenous people reclaiming the lands upon which their histories are told, retold, and made meaningful. Barker criticizes the imperial and democratic utopic vision of a perfected future that can be achieved through eradicating the remaining terror and anarchy of the present. As an alternative vision, Barker holds out for a future woven with the "alterity of Indigenous reckonings of territorial and by (non)human relational interdependence now" (p. 215). Tuck and Yang (2016) go farther to explain that "justice is a colonial temporality, always desired and deferred, and delimited by the timeframes of modern colonizing states as well as the self-historicizing, self-perpetuating futurities of their nations" (p. 6).

How do we, as settlers, listen to these Indigenous voices, these refusals, these objections to our lives, attempts at recognition, and our very presence? As majoritarian people, not only are

our engagements with alternative forms of knowledge laden with ethical dilemmas around respectful engagement, appropriation, and issues of identity, but our very consciousness raising that makes oppression visible to us often comes at the expense of others. These problems are exceptionally fraught in Indigenous-settler relations as Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and symbols are increasingly fetishized and commodified. As settler people, we require new forms of listening, taking action, and relating to Indigenous peoples and cultures that bring about material change. Roderick Haig-Brown (2010), for example, contrasts deep learning with appropriation, arguing that the former takes years of immersive education in Indigenous contexts. Such deep learnings are in line with cultural protocols, done through lasting relationship, and connected to the places where the knowledge was generated and lives. Appropriation, by contrast, is mediated by power imbalances, takes without permission, is dislocated from context, and shows no recognition for context, intellectual or cultural property, or continuity. Throughout this dissertation, I have specifically argued for and attempted to enact a settler ethics that is not appropriative, imitative, or disconnected, but rather accountable and respectful. I have attempted to be honest and vulnerable in my failures and attempted to articulate a politicized praxis of working with the affects of failure, crisis, and engaging the unknown.

In terms of research and writing, I see settler ethics as being about how we attend to Indigenous and other marginalized voices. Kathy Snow (2018) explains that doing research in Indigenous contexts as a settler ally requires clear intention, motivation, processes, and roles. Snow also emphasizes the importance of being able to sit with discomfort yet continue to commit time, energy, and resources to sustain allyship in the face of resistance. While deep self-reflection is invaluable to personal transformation, it is the messy and complicated work of embodied allyship that produces webs of living relationships capable of resistance and change.

Primarily, settler ethics is an ethical, embodied, affective, relational, and localized process of relating and acting with Indigenous peoples, with other settlers, and with the conditions of active colonialism that sustain our current world order.

Settler ethics, for me, means taking my own location as a mixed-race white male settler as the starting point for an analysis of my own subjectivity, actions, and thoughts and attempting to undo the overlay of colonialism that continues to wedge contradictions between myself and the horizon of an ethical life. The learning from counselling contexts that has been folded into this dissertation includes hearing from clients about how colonialism and capitalism continue to cause harm in their lives. When I hear this, I examine how I am complicit in perpetuating the current world order through my work. I hear about racialized, gendered, and colonial experiences that perpetuate a system I benefit from. I hear about homelessness while my clients' fees pay off my mortgage. While those experiences bring guilt and shame as affects, they also bring heightened awareness and ethical incitement. In this way, engaging with others has been an opportunity to open myself to an ongoing process of change, or becoming. Again, the ethics of "using" or benefitting from such paid experiences is problematic, but also offers opportunities for change. I believe it is our responsibility as majoritarian settler counsellors and clients to work with one another to process and extend the becomings that are made possible in our counselling work. We need decolonizing, anti-capitalist, and queer, feminist, and trans theory to politically situate our affective and behavioural changes.

Settler ethics calls for me to be self-reflexive, scrutinizing how my positionality informs my research and how my affects and emotions (desire, guilt, denial, shame, hope, and love), interests, and investments are involved in knowledge generation and action. I try to educate other settlers and buffer some of the backlash that is predictable as we confront our own shame and

shadow. Settler ethics, therefore, includes discussing, accounting for, disrupting, analyzing, unsettling, and challenging settler identities. It includes working toward new ways that counsellors get together to explore and amplify how we are challenged to undo our heteronormative, racial, class, and colonial attachments and, through our work, open onto new practices of supervision, solidarity, and peer collaboration (Kouri & Smith, 2016; Reynolds, 2010a). It is our work as majoritarian people to find ways to connect our lines of becoming with the majoritarian elements in others and the becomings of groups and society at large.

Carrie Gaffney (2016) argues that allyship begins with identity as a means of locating power and standing with people or groups who are experiencing oppression. This “standing with,” however, requires commitments to complex, ongoing processes that resist institutional power, silence, and violence. It means holding one another accountable for ensuring material change for colonized peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012) and opening doors only to get out of the way so that Indigenous people might determine their own processes, responses, and paths of transformation. Settler ethics includes showing up, making connections between different forms of oppression, supporting resistance and resurgence, and working with other settler people on our own forms of witnessing, being present, taking action when appropriate, and representing our relationships. Indeed, as Karlee Fellner, Roger John, and Sylvie Cottell (2016) have noted, “a key difference in ethical professional practice between non-Indigenous and Indigenous counsellors is that the latter observe the same traditional ethics both inside and outside the office” (p. 138). Living a life outside our places of counselling and research that is congruent with our ethics is precisely a learning we might carry with us as settler counsellors.

Connecting outside our counselling and research spaces might also include connecting with young people in the places where they directly resist Empire. Many young people today

have begun to see the current regime as oppressive and a threat to themselves, their future, and life on the planet (Giroux, 2013; Mueller & Tippins, 2015). Young adults, in this discursive milieu, explore solidarity, allyship, and social justice as avenues for liberation. This shift often comes through personal experience, moral conscience, or education, and it raises questions about how the affects that accompany consciousness raising or disruption in the smooth reproduction of subjects of Empire are to be engaged with. There are calls from marginalized people and their allies to an ethical attunement to contemporary demands for economic, settler colonial, environmental, and racial justice—a justice that threatens majoritarian subjects’ promised place within the symbolic and material order. Morgensen (2015) highlights the humility required in responding to invitations to responsibility. Walking the minefield of appropriation, identification, assimilation, and curiosity, socially minded majoritarian young adults seek new forms of relationality and ethics without great guidance, often putting the burden of their education on those most oppressed. As majoritarian adults, particularly those of us in roles of white settler allies, we can take up roles in engaging majoritarian young people around their critiques of the current system, their resistance to it, and their aspirations for something other.

Settler ethics are grounded in principles and processes whereby settlers become accountable for their embodied recuperations within and reiterations of colonialism. After years of working in Indigenous academic and practice contexts, I have become aware of how the axioms of colonialism are so ingrained that they can perpetuate themselves even when settlers are seeking to be allies. One example is how settlers can advance their academic and practice careers by knowing and speaking about Indigenous issues. With the privileges of access to higher education and safer spaces for critical debates, white settlers quickly advance their academic knowledge of Indigenous issues and can reiterate the language of decolonization. With

the power and privilege of access to publishing in academic journals, settlers often have greater access to speaking about Indigenous issues than Indigenous people themselves. The reiteration of colonialism is nearly impossible to prevent, particularly in hyper-colonized spaces of privilege like research universities and professional practice settings. We need to be constantly mindful and name how colonialism and capitalism will appropriate even our efforts to contest them. Reynolds (2010b) here talks about imperfect allies, noting that there will always be mistakes when allies attempt to buffer the effects of power and be mindful of the space that those in power take up. It is up to allies to work with other people in power and prevent the continual usurpation and misuse of power and space, thereby making greater space for those who are oppressed to speak and seek justice. Practices of solidarity and building cultures of critique are two ways in which Reynolds inspires me to think about how counselling conversations can be more fully connected with justice movements.

Settler ethics has much to learn from allyship, activist, and solidarity literature and practice and involves a deep self-reflective, collective reflection and community action aspect of undoing settler comforts and privilege. Smith, Puckett, and Simon (2016) explain that allies have two main characteristics. First, they desire to support social justice and eliminate inequalities through promoting the rights of nondominant groups. Second, they offer support through meaningful relationships with those who welcome their support, and they show accountability to those people. Allyship is aspirational and a designation that is given rather than claimed. Smith and colleagues warn that settlers must avoid appropriation, taking leadership, interfering, seeking emotional support, or having expectations. By focusing on our own undoing and intervening in the reiteration of colonial subjectivity, we begin to stop interfering in the spaces and processes of Indigenous decolonization.

Leanne Simpson (2011), Nishnaabeg writer, academic, and musician, explains that ideas of social movements or political mobilization are inadequate in theorizing Indigenous resistance and resurgence because they are founded on Western epistemology and ignore Indigenous politics and culture. She explains that “at their core, Indigenous political movements contest the very foundation of the Canadian state in its current expression, while most theories of group politics and social movements take the state for granted” (p. 16). Simpson explains, in line with Audra Simpson’s refusal, that what is needed is not settler sanction, recognition, funding, or “a friendly colonial political climate” (p. 17). What is needed are Indigenous Elders, languages, lands, and vision. It is very clear from this statement that settlers need to develop our own practices and spaces *out of the way of* such a movement, to work at undoing our systems of capture and domination, and to move our people to a place of readiness for accountability and transformation. We need to critique reconciliation talk that absolves us of the difficult work of unmaking ourselves, our state, and our globalized markets. Simpson suggests that interrogations of violence be directed to the perpetrators rather than the victims of harm. As settlers we must take up this work and analyze how we have perpetuated, and continue to perpetuate, colonial violence through our institutions, policies, and practices. We must make the workings of our settler subjectivities, states, and institutions visible and take action to change the conditions of everyday life for Indigenous and racialized peoples. And we must call other majoritarian people into the practice of naming and transforming ourselves.

### **Acknowledgement and Ongoing Work**

The ethics and knowledge that compose this dissertation and my current ways of working developed primarily through my education in child and youth care and my relationships with Indigenous colleagues, particularly my supervisor, Dr. Sandrina de Finney. The coursework of

my PhD program and the scholarly literature on settler colonialism that I reviewed for this dissertation provided me with a map of the failings, pitfalls, and possible harms of settler research, yet very little hope for what might be done to avoid them or go beyond them. It was ongoing living relationships that I shared with faculty, other students, and the people I worked with in counselling that catalyzed my learning and personal transformation. It is those relationships that I hold myself most accountable to moving forward.

I had the privilege and honour of working with an Indigenous supervisor who shared insight, teachings, medicines, and gifts that very few settler people are invited into. I was shown trust, patience, and support. It has been an ongoing challenge for me to receive these offerings in a way that honours them appropriately. My work has been given uncountable hours of attention, attention that could have been given to Indigenous students and communities. My view of this profound commitment has been that undoing settler colonialism will require a variety of approaches, not the least of which is collaborative relationships between Indigenous people and settlers. Part of my learning has been to respect the space that Indigenous people need to decolonize (Coon, Land, Richardson, Kouri, & Smith, 2016) and another part has been to actively seek out and participate in relationships that defy the colonial mandates—relationships in which Indigenous knowledge is privileged and I take on the work of listening, studying, and extending our mutual understanding of the need to undo colonial power.

This dissertation was specifically an exploration of the ways that majoritarian counsellors might begin to disrupt the power structures and coloniality of our profession. It has been an attempt to formulate the responsibilities of counsellors and to develop the coordinates of a politicized praxis. I intend on publishing three to four academic papers from this dissertation that will be used in teaching and further scholarship. The settler ethics developed in the methodology

section and in this conclusion will be shared with colleagues for feedback and critique and then shared through workshops, online media, and open-source publications to maximize its availability. While the settler ethics developed here are a summary of many of my research and counselling findings and belong in the literature, they also have ongoing implications for a living ethics. Drawing on the Indigenous teachings shared by Fellner, John, and Cottell (2016) that the ethics of counselling go beyond work and infuse life broadly, I see the settler ethics I have laid out as needing to press deeply into who we, as settlers, are becoming as people. I am committed to enacting the ethics I have laid out in this dissertation, developing them further, and working with other settler people so the work of educating settlers does not continue to fall to Indigenous people. I believe that my gratitude and commitments have been and will continue to be borne out in my counselling, scholarly, and activist practices, and far exceed what can be accomplished in a dissertation. This dissertation was born of the efforts of many people, yet benefits me primarily.

To enact the ethics outlined in this project, it will need to continue as a lived embodiment. In practical terms, I am committed to working on coauthored writing and cofacilitated activities, workshops, and solidarity projects which more fully embody the ethics of gratitude, reciprocity, and honouring that are embedded in many Indigenous value systems and should be embedded in settler ethics in their own way. The scope of this project limited the amount of lived engagement that was folded into it. Working on the projects above would adhere to an ethics of sustained relationship that goes beyond the formal working, collegial, and supervisory relationships arranged by the university system. Such work would still be complicated by issues of appropriation and personal gain; however, a different approach, one

grounded in a fuller recognition of oral, relational, and emotional labour, would enact a settler ethics grounded in decolonization.

Moving into broader and more distal domains, the ethics I have described in this dissertation will be practiced and will evolve through my future counselling, academic, and activist work. My next steps would include supervising counselling students and gradually building a training facility through which ideas in critical and radical counselling can be tested and extended. This training centre would operate as a clinic in collaboration with academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and private practitioners. I intend to continue building my relationships with people in local Indigenous communities and serving several of them as a counsellor. While the scope of this dissertation did not create enough space to include the voices of my Indigenous teachers who are outside the academic publishing realm, I hope to have folded what I have learned from them into this dissertation in an ethical way. I am committed to continue my work in community and gratefully and humbly recognize James Charlie, an Elder of Penelakut First Nation, as a friend and mentor. I am also committed to continuing in my work with the Friends of Nemaiah Valley in our support of Xeni Gwet'in and Tsilhqot'in sovereignty, and to continuing my work of attending rallies, workshops, demonstrations, paddles, and marches throughout the Coast and Straits Salish communities in which I live.

I end this project with more questions than I started with, and as a person who started with perhaps too many answers, this may be a good thing. To be settled in who I was at the start of my work was to deny the violent facts of colonialism, to be impervious to affective relationships, and to be buttressed by entitlements and rights in our addictive consumption of resources and our never-ending usurpation of land. As settler people, to divest ourselves of this

legacy is precisely a work of responding to the actual violence inflicted against Indigenous people and the continued occupation of their lands. It is also a positive work of responding honestly, emotionally, and with humility to the human relationships that are still possible amid all this complexity and pain. I feel accountable to those who spent years teaching me, and I feel I have a responsibility to further their efforts by engaging a wider settler population in accountability and ethical relationship.

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