

The White of the Wampum:
Possibilities for Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships
in Canadian Settler Narratives (circa 2012) and Indigenous Storywork

by

Steven McLeod

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English Language and Literature

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

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Abstract

The Two Row Wampum is held up to inspire relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada that are rooted in respect and responsibility. However, Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations have been characterized by the deracination of Indigenous relational self-determination.

In this dissertation, I juxtapose settler colonial representations (circa 2012) with Indigenous stories of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. I offer Foucauldian discourse analyses of selected settler colonial representations to show how these representations displace and erase Indigenous relational self-determination. I also look beyond the constraints of settler discourse to readings of Indigenous narratives guided by storywork. Storywork is an Indigenous method of reading stories as pathways towards respectful relationships between all beings of creation. These pathways are grounded in what Vanessa Watts calls place-thought, Indigenous understandings of the relational knowledge embedded in the living network of relations that make up Indigenous traditional territories.

I focus on 2012 because of the intensity of settler discourse and Indigenous resistance during this year. In 2012, the Canadian government and the CBC produced commemorations of the War of 1812, the CBC's *8th Fire* documentary and website were featured on CBC.ca, and national media produced representations of Indigenous activism that emerged in 2012 under the banner of Idle No More. I show how these selected settler colonial representations legitimize liberal democratic forms of governance and advance the demands of the neoliberal capitalist resource economy. The problem is that these political and economic discourses often

undermine and efface Indigenous relational self-determination. I juxtapose settler representations of the War of 1812 with Odawa scholar Cecil King's historical account, *Balancing Two Worlds* (2013); national media representations of Indigenous activism with Lee Maracle's novel, *Sundogs* (1992); and *8th Fire's* representation of reconciliation with *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Itsee* (2010-2015), a documentary series produced by the Cree peoples of Quebec about their relations with settler governments.

Through this engagement, I aim to unsettle settler colonial productions of state sovereignty, liberal democratic institutions, and global market capitalism and to gesture towards possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships rooted in traditional understandings of the white of the Wampum: relationships based in respect and responsibility between self-determining peoples.

Acknowledgments

This project stretches across ten years of relationships that have inspired and sustained me (2009 – 2019). I would not have had the fortitude to continue this project without the love and support of my mom, dad, sisters, stepfather, Jean-Guy, and uncle Pat. Nor would I have continued in my studies were it not for my oldest friends, my brothers, who will not tolerate any doubts I have about myself. Of course, Ottawa would be empty and I would have no sense of home here without my love and partner, Gisell Castillo, my “besties”, Laura Birch and Carole-Anne Charlebois, and my “furbabies”, Chinook and Tia. Home is the love you share with your relations.

I have received so much support and guidance from people at Carleton University that it would be impossible to account for everyone. For their mentorship early in my studies, I thank Professors Sukeshi Kamra and Armand Ruffo. I thank the students of the Ojigkwanong Centre for both making me feel like part of the community and for teaching me so much. To Troy Bernard, my supervisor at IMS, thank you for the support.

Finally, I am indebted to Professors Brenda Vellino, Miranda Brady, Jody Mason, Jennifer Henderson, and Armand Ruffo for the time, intelligence, and energies they gave to me and this project. I would never have been able to construct and hone the analyses I present here without their hearts and minds. Brenda all but carried me and this project when I could no longer continue. She restored in me the hope that I could complete it. For her kindness and commitment, I am so thankful and humbled.

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Introduction

Nation-to-nation relationships, treaty relationships, were often formed historically in contexts that are quite different than they are now. [...] Now we've been completely consumed by the partner that we were supposed to be travelling the river with, who ideally wouldn't have veered into our path but now has polluted the entire river and is destroying the river banks. And under such conditions, I don't think we can recognize that partner as legitimate; there's no moral equivalency between the colonized and the colonizer; there's no legitimacy to the state's claim to these territories; there's no legitimacy to the capitalist mode of production [...] So it's no more parallel paths, no more equality if you want liberals up in arms. *Decolonization means sinking that fucking ship.*

- Glen Coulthard, "Panel Discussion: Red Skin, White Masks. Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition."

The eye you see is not
an eye because you see it;
it is an eye because it sees you. (Coleman 143)

- Antonio Machado in Coleman, "Imposing subCitizenship: Canadian White Civility and the Two Row Wampum of the Six Nations."

In this dissertation, I juxtapose national settler colonial representations and Indigenous stories of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. I do so to critique and to gesture beyond current relations, which I argue are produced and constrained by discourses of liberal democratic institutions, state sovereignty, and global market capitalism. I offer Foucauldian discourse analyses of settler colonial representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations to show how these representations displace and erase Indigenous peoples, along with place-based relational self-determination and practices. Based on my limited understanding as a non-

Indigenous person¹, each chapter also gestures beyond the constraints of the above discourses to offer readings of Indigenous stories guided by storywork, an Indigenous method of reading stories as pathways towards nurturing respectful relationships between all beings of creation. Thus, the aim of this project is to examine textual representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Canada in order to first unsettle settler colonialism, and then to envision possibilities for how more responsible, respectful relations might emerge between Indigenous and settler Canadians.

During the 2014 launch of his book, *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, Dene political theorist Glen Coulthard alluded to the Two Row Wampum of the Haudenosaunee when he asserted that “decolonization means sinking that fucking ship.” Historically, the Two Row Wampum refers to the 1613 treaty between Haudenosaunee and the Dutch. However, as Tom Keefer, General Manager of *The Two Row Times*, a Haudenosaunee publication for the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory writes, not only was the Two Row Wampum or the *Guswentha* “consistent with the outlooks of many other Indigenous peoples seeking to accommodate themselves to the sudden arrival of Europeans on Turtle Island,” it has also come to “function as a framework for decolonization right across Turtle Island” (Keefer). Through his allusion to the Two Row Wampum, Coulthard’s words represent a powerful critique of the historical and ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples’ place-based, relational self-determination by settler colonialism. Haudenosaunee Political Scientist Taiaiake Alfred² tells us that the Two Row Wampum represents “two vessels, each possessing its own integrity, traveling the river of time together” in a “respectful (co-equal) friendship and alliance” (*Peace, Power, and Righteousness* 76). In Coulthard's statement above, the “white” of

the wampum in Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships historically meant respect and responsibility. However, it has increasingly been defined by erasure and dispossession according to terms dictated by the needs of the settler state and capitalist economies.

Cree education scholars, Stan Wilson (2001) and Shawn Wilson (2009) shed light on the affront to Indigenous relations, lands, and waters to which Coulthard refers. In short, the Indigenous self is often indivisible from relationships with family, community, nation, ancestors, future generations, and the land (Wilson, *Research* 80). Similarly, as Jeff Corntassel and Cheryl Bryce argue in their article, "Practicing Sustainable Self-Determination," the "politics of recognition" and "rights discourse" have "certain limitations in relation to Indigenous struggles for self-determination" because they compartmentalize "Indigenous self-determination by separating out questions of governance and community well-being from homelands and relationships to the natural world" (152). The struggle to protect and nourish Indigenous relational self-determination, well-being, and governance "entails [the] unconditional freedom to live one's relational, place-based existence, and practice healthy relationships" (152). In centering place-based relational self-determination, this dissertation contributes not only to emerging scholarship on the discursive deracination and dispossession of Indigenous identity, governance, and activism, but also attends to calls from Indigenous leaders to respect Indigenous land-based relationality.

This project builds on scholarship that deploys Indigenous understandings of respect and responsibility in the critique and re-envisioning of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. In his essay, "Imposing subCitizenship: Canadian White Civility and the Two Row Wampum of the Six Nations," Daniel Coleman argues that state-defined Indigenous-non-Indigenous

relations tend towards the “cognition and incorporation” of Indigenous peoples “into a single legal regime” (179). Coleman uses the poem cited at the beginning of this introduction, written by Antonio Machado, to help explain how discourse on Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations produces a common-sense understanding that there is only one eye, a settler eye, “that sees – that recognizes” (xxxv). This is the antithesis of respect. Respect is rooted in an awareness that, as one looks at the other, the other is looking back from a possibly different but equally valuable perspective. Stó:lō educator Jo-Ann Archibald reminds us that “respect is the foundation for all relationships: between individuals, with future and past generations, with the Earth, with animals, with our Creator ... and with ourselves”; however, “to understand [respect] and apply it to our lives is an ongoing process” since we are all different and come from different communities (Archibald 23). Like Coleman, Coulthard champions Indigenous forms of relationality, which he defines according to “grounded normativity,” “modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure [Indigenous communities’] ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time” (Coulthard, *Red Skin* 13). In contrast to settler discourse, Indigenous relationality is rooted in land-based knowledge and practices of living respectfully and responsibly alongside human and non-human beings. Coleman calls for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships rooted in traditional interpretations of the white of the Two Row Wampum, which entail respect, “differential esteem,” and practices of honouring and being responsible for each other (“Imposing,” 179).

Informed by the work of Indigenous scholars on Indigenous relationality, each chapter of this dissertation provides a discourse analysis of a national settler colonial representation of

Canadian Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. Each chapter also juxtaposes this with a storywork-inspired reading of an Indigenous representation offering insights into Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations. This is to offer both a critique of relations as they are and to shed light on the possibilities of generating more respectful relationships moving forward. In other words, I analyze how settler colonial texts contribute to settler colonial discourse that produces unsustainable relationships of oppression between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. I then apply a relational, story-based methodology to another set of Indigenous texts that illuminates the possibilities for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations to emerge based on respect for Indigenous forms of place-based relationality.

I admit Coulthard might reject this project since its aim is not only to critique Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations, as they are produced within selected Canadian national narratives (circa 2012), but also to discuss how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships might emerge. However, Coulthard's comments do not outright reject the possibility of respectful relationships. He states that the non-Indigenous ship has "consumed" Indigenous peoples, has "veered into [their] path," and has "polluted the entire river and is destroying the river banks" ("Panel Discussion"). Yes, the non-Indigenous ship has trespassed on Indigenous relational self-determination and, driven by the demands of the capitalist economy, has consumed and polluted Indigenous lands and communities. I agree that there can be "no parallel paths" with a non-Indigenous ship, driven by the Crown's "claim to [Indigenous] territories" or an unrestrained "capitalist mode of production," which transforms Indigenous peoples and lands into resources and commodities ("Panel Discussion"). Notwithstanding his critique, however, Coulthard's representation of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples

still invokes the wampum as a point of reference. This project thus does not run counter to Coulthard's critique of unilateral exercises of state sovereignty and unrestrained capitalism. Rather, it contributes to his critique of settler colonial capitalism while also gesturing towards the possibilities inspired by the Two Row Wampum.

I want to suggest that while Indigenous stories are not always for non-Indigenous peoples, they do have something to teach non-Indigenous peoples like myself: they can offer storied pathways towards what respectful relationships could look like. One of the principal reasons why I have pursued this project is to better understand Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. Non-Indigenous readers might find perspectives on relationships unfamiliar to them in the following pages. For Indigenous readers, while the discussions in this chapter on relationality might be more familiar, I hope that how I bring to bear said discussions on my selected texts will prove relevant and, perhaps, yield novel perspectives on representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations.

In this project, I examine selected national representations that, I argue, are part of a discursive structure in Canada, one produced and maintained through the application of coercive force as well as the circulation of "ideas and institutions, knowledge and power" (Loomba 32, 51).³ In juxtaposition with selected national representations, I offer readings of selected thematically-related Indigenous stories that provide insight into Indigenous understandings and forms of relationality. With a focus on depictions of Tecumseh, the Shawnee War Chief, and his style of leadership, chapter 1 examines how the Conservative Government's and the CBC's commemorations of the war of 1812 in 2012 contributed to the production of knowledge that the sovereignty of the settler state is an unquestionable fact in

representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. I contrast state narratives of Indigenous involvement in the War of 1812 with Odawa historian Cecil King's narrative, *Between Two Worlds* (2013), which offers contemporary perspectives on the conflict. In chapter 2, I draw on essays by Indigenous activists, academics, and allies in *The Winter We Danced* (2014) to examine how discourses of state sovereignty in national media contained Indigenous activism in their representations of the Oka resistance, as well as the emergence of the Idle No More movement in 2012. I counter national representations of Indigenous activism with a reading of Lee Maracle's *Sundogs* (1992), an "origin story" about Indigenous resistance and relational self-determination during the summer of Elijah Harper and Oka. In chapter 3, I offer a critique of the CBC documentary *8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada, and the Way Forward* (January to February 2012) and its capitalist discourse on current and future economic possibilities of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. I contrast this with the Cree peoples of Quebec's documentary series, *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee* (2010-2015), on their resistance to hydroelectric dam development in their territories. Taken together, I show how selected official, settler colonial narratives from 2012 legitimize the imposition of liberal democratic forms of governance over Indigenous relational self-determination and advance the demands of the neoliberal capitalist resource economy over Indigenous place-based relationships, knowledge, and practices.

In contrast, three Indigenous stories in historical narrative, novel, and documentary forms demonstrate how, in the period around 2012, selected settler accounts of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships are irreconcilable with Indigenous practices of relationality and decentred governance systems, as well as kinship with traditional territories. The Indigenous

stories elaborate relations that do not presume capitalist or liberal democratic logics, but present place-based Indigenous conceptions of respectful coexistence between not only human beings but all forms of life. I hope to leverage my privilege as a settler scholar to increase understandings, particularly amongst non-Indigenous readers, of how Indigenous theories and stories suggest more respectful alternatives to current settler colonial conceptions and practices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships.

I centre my focus in this project on the period around the year 2012 because the Conservative Government was more overtly hostile than recent governments towards Indigenous claims and, catalyzed by this hostility, Indigenous peoples organized the largest grassroots resistance movement since the Oka Crisis in the early 1990s: Idle No More, a nationwide, grassroots movement in defense and in celebration of Indigenous resilience, resistance, and resurgence. I focus on three sets of official settler colonial representations about Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships that were in national circulation that year. While my selected Indigenous stories were not all produced in 2012, I argue they offer important, relevant, and enduring points of contrast to juxtapose with these settler colonial representations. In 2012, the federal government initiated and commissioned various commemorations, including a CBC documentary, of the War of 1812. These representations of 1812 normalized centralized, liberal democratic forms of governance at the expense of Indigenous, place-based governance systems. In 2012, the CBC also aired its four-part documentary, *8th Fire*, which includes many perspectives on the possible terms for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. However, the documentary ultimately privileges neoliberal conceptions of economic prosperity over Indigenous place-based relationships. The year 2012

also witnessed the emergence of Idle No More. While many perspectives have been shared about the movement, both from within and without Indigenous communities, settler media representations discursively displaced and contained understandings of Indigenous activism to a narrative that maintains settler state authority over Indigenous peoples and lands. I show how this displacement and containment was akin to settler media representations of the Oka Crisis of 1990. At stake in these sites of tension between settler colonial dominance and Indigenous relationality is whether settler colonial truth regimes can still set the terms of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations. Also at stake is the question of whether non-Indigenous peoples can learn, despite settler colonial discourse, how relationships might emerge on different terms, terms grounded in Indigenous understandings of respect and responsibility.

It is my hope that this dissertation will contribute to efforts to center Indigenous thought, including theories of place-based resurgence, in analyses of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. I aim not only to unsettle settler colonial knowledge of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships by highlighting place-based and community-specific perspectives on current relationships but, moreover, to bring to bear relational, Indigenous ideas of respect to knowledge and practices of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations.

In the following five sections of this introduction, I discuss the primary theories and parameters of my project. I preview discourse analyses of selected national settler colonial narrative representations in juxtaposition with storywork-inspired readings of Indigenous representations. I critique the former instances of settler colonial discourse that displace Indigenous place-based relational self-determination by privileging liberal democratic institutions, settler state sovereignty, and exploitative forms of global market capitalism. Thus,

in the first section of this introduction, “Settler Colonial Discourse Critique,” I explain my framework of Indigenous-informed critical discourse analyses of selected settler representations that draw on Foucauldian theories of discourse as power/knowledge, as well as Hayden White’s concept of “the cultural function of narrativizing discourse” (White 8).

I explain my use of Indigenous place-thought in conjunction with the resurgence of Indigenous stories and practices in more detail in sections two and three. For my storywork-inspired readings of Indigenous stories, I turn to Stó:lō storytelling epistemologies elaborated by Jo-Ann Archibald in *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (2008). Archibald’s notion of storywork guides my analysis of selected Indigenous stories on the production of relations based on respect for Indigenous relationality, a concept linked with Anishnaabe-Haudenosaunee scholar Vanessa Watts’ term, “place-thought.” Place-thought conceives of the land as a living network of diverse relationships that models and inspires Indigenous relationality (21). Indigenous place-thought, as expressed through Indigenous stories and practices, is key to my understanding and application of storywork. I want to be clear from the outset, however, that while this project is inspired by Archibald’s discussion of storywork, it does not offer an example of storywork in the full, holistic sense that Archibald conveys in her study. I hope, however, that it offers analyses of Indigenous stories that shed light on how Indigenous place-thought might offer alternative ways of envisioning more respectful and responsible relations between Indigenous and settler Canada.

In section four of this introduction, I delineate the temporal focus of this project for the period circa 2012. My selected settler colonial narratives were circulated during and around 2012. Like 1990, when the Oka Crisis took place, 2012 was a distinctly dynamic year in the

production of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was in the middle of its 5-year mandate and was disclosing state violations of Indigenous children and families, public outcries were gaining visibility in national media against the living conditions on underfunded reserves, Idle No More demonstrations were increasing in size in shopping malls and in front of legislative buildings, and Theresa Spence's hunger strike was attracting international attention to Victoria Island, on unceded Algonquin territory in Ottawa. In short, the Canadian settler nation-state was enduring challenges, the scope of which has not been seen in Canada since the Oka Crisis, to its legitimacy and ability to offer peace, order, and good government to Indigenous peoples. Concurrently, as Historian Ian McKay and Journalist Jamie Swift note in *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (2012), the Harper government worked to impose particularly pronounced institutions of "hierarchy and authoritarianism" in Canada (24). Discursive responses to these challenges from activists included commemorations of the War of 1812 that render state sovereignty a universal political construct; the CBC's *8th Fire*, a four-part documentary that confines the possibilities of reconciliation to neoliberal logics; and national news media representations that contain non-Indigenous understandings of Indigenous activism to notions of the liberal public sphere. In section five, I offer an overview of this project's chapters. Each chapter juxtaposes selected settler representations with a story produced by an Indigenous person or an Indigenous community that offers insight into Indigenous understandings and forms of place-based relationality. Although selected Indigenous texts were not all written in 2012, they offer powerful contrasts to settler narratives of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Canada from 2012.

Settler Colonial Discourse Critique

Joyce Green's article, "Self-determination, citizenship, and federalism: Indigenous and Canadian Palimpsest" (2003), and J.R. Miller in *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* inform my understanding of the last two centuries of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations as largely "characterised by relationships of dominance and subordination" (Green 6). Miller suggests that Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships have changed over time (4). The first phase of relationships in the 17th century was characterized by trade. During the 18th and 19th centuries, "diplomatic association[s]" emerged, exemplified by "treaties of alliance," between Indigenous and European nations (4). In the aftermath of the War of 1812, when peace was established between settler nation-states, the Canadian government began to negotiate treaties with Indigenous peoples to secure land for "increasingly numerous European colonists" (4). Green writes that "shifts over time in the relative strengths of Indigenous and [non-Indigenous] peoples" have exacerbated the dispossession of Indigenous lands and relational self-determination (4). Patrick Wolfe reminds us that settler colonialism is not an event. It is a structure of knowledge and practices that perpetuate the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their land and relational autonomy (Wolfe 388). In Canada, this structure and system of dispossession developed after 1812 through treaty-making processes. The Canadian Crown suspended the making of treaties with Indigenous peoples between the 1920s and the 1970s; when it resumed, it ushered in a new era of Indigenous judicial and public relations expertise. Miller highlights "two events in the early 1970s that symbolize the complexity of recent treaty-making": the James Bay Agreement and the Calder Case (251). The implementation of both treaties spanned years, involved

enormous tracts of land, and was highly visible on the world stage. While these treaties do mark the success of Indigenous struggle for legal recognition of their inherent rights, settler colonialism continues to emerge and evolve as an ongoing, complex, and discursive process that “strives for the dissolution of native societies” in order to produce a “new colonial society on the expropriated land base” (Wolfe 388).

Jennifer Henderson’s *Settler Feminism and Race Making in Canada* (2003) and Coleman’s *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (2006) reveal how narrative representations help produce settler colonialism’s dominance in Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Canada. Henderson examines “reappearing figures, thematic motifs, performative modes of signification” in 19th-century Canadian narratives that maintain “a liberal political order [written over top of] a terrain that [is] already thick with alternative, Indigenous logics” (Henderson 12, 18). Coleman, like Henderson, offers a study of Canadian narratives that produce and privilege forms of masculine “English Canadian whiteness” as an exclusive and “specific form of civility modelled upon the gentlemanly code of Britishness” (Coleman 10). Grounded in theorizations informed by feminist and critical race theory, Coleman sheds light on how certain literary figures are put to work in the production of the “privileged, normative status of British whiteness in English Canada” (6). Both Henderson and Coleman show how analysis can reveal the discursive functions of settler colonial narratives. However, my project differs in its focus on how Indigenous relationality is impacted by settler colonialism. How, for instance, does settler colonialism challenge Indigenous knowledge and practices related to the interconnectivity between human and non-human beings? My project offers critiques of settler

colonialism, but also ventures into understandings of how Indigenous relationality might suggest more respectful and responsible Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations.

Margery Fee's *Literary Land Claims* (2015) examines how selected narratives, produced between 1832 and 1970, resist and reimagine settler colonial understandings of relationships between Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous peoples, and the land in Canada. Fee's analysis contests settler colonial claims to Indigenous lands and "attempt[s] to represent respectful ways to work through the disconnection between white settler logics and Indigenous worldviews" (16). Like Fee's text, this study is interested in the discursive and storied generation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships; however, our projects differ with regard to their focus and historical parameters. Fee offers insights into "the ways that the relationship to land was represented in *various periods*" (Fee 13; emphasis added). My project provides a critical and necessary focus on settler narrative representations of the terms of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships produced during and around the pivotal year of 2012.

In *First Person Plural: Aboriginal Storytelling and the Ethics of Collaborative Authorship* (2011), Sophie McCall examines settler and Indigenous production of stories with a focus on the collaborative production and mediation of Indigenous voices and stories. In my study, I likewise examine the intricate interplay of agency and voice in representations produced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The CBC's *8th Fire* was produced, after all, with Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous government agents. McCall's study and mine also share a relatively narrow historical scope. McCall focusses on the 1990s whereas I zero in on one year: 2012. As she explains in her introduction, the 1990s were pivotal in "reconceptualizing how we think about voice and representation in Aboriginal cultural politics" (4). In choosing 2012, I too focus on a timeframe

marked by an intensification of tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, along with representations of the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. However, rather than complicating the category of the author through instances of collaboration and mediation, as McCall's study does, I juxtapose representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships to show how selected national narratives and Indigenous stories produce Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships in sometimes intractably different ways. I focus on the distance between settler colonialism and Indigenous relationality, between dominance and respect, and between exploitation and responsibility.

A key premise of my dissertation is that settler colonial narratives and Indigenous stories are both forms of knowledge production that inform and are informed by relationships between people, the land, and other beings. Vanessa Watts tells us that Indigenous stories emerge from and give expression to place-thought, the land as a living network of relationships (Watts 22). Place-thought is like discourse in that it produces and is produced by material practices. There are, however, important differences between the forms of relationships and practices that place-thought and discourse produce. In this dissertation, I understand Indigenous stories as a means not only of restoring understandings of place-thought but of producing practices of relationality rooted in respect for place-thought. Indigenous stories are a means of resisting settler colonial discourse and, I argue, of envisioning alternative, respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. On the other hand, I work with a critical orientation to settler colonial discourse as a form of knowledge that dispossesses Indigenous peoples of their ability to practice relationships according to place-based knowledge. Settler colonialism is a discursive formation that produces centralized settler

governance structures, capitalist economic logic, and social dynamics over top of Indigenous relationality. Critical discourse analyst Ruth Wodak writes that “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned—it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and *relationships between people and groups of people*” (187; emphasis added). In this study, I show how selected settler narratives operate discursively by constructing knowledge of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships in ways that constrain and erase Indigenous relationality.

Foucault’s description of the relationship of discourse to “the world” is key to my understanding of and approach to the differences between settler colonial discourse and Indigenous place-thought. Patrick Wolfe writes in “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” that “[t]erritoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element” (388). Settler colonial discourse seeks to displace and erase Indigenous place-based relationality to establish itself as the single legitimate knowledge system. However, as Foucault writes, “the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no pre-discursive providence which disposes the world in our favour” (“The Order of Discourse” 67). According to Foucauldian discourse analysis, discourse is not rooted in relationships in the land; the land is not a subject but an object of discourse. Discursive formations are not rooted in place-thought. They are instead rooted in networked structures of, and relationships between, governing statements, subject positions, objects, and social and institutional practices (38). Discourse and place-thought convey two epistemologies and imply different methodologies. In this project, I consider settler colonialism as a discourse with an objectifying “reference to the ground, the foundation of things” that informs the lens through which land is perceived and utilized

(Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* 45). In other words, discourse stands between the knower and the object (i.e. the land, animals, people), shaping the object to be known. Unlike place-thought, settler colonialism seeks to *settle* the multiplicity of place-based forms of relationality, to reconcile and subsume them within its universalizing and institutionalizing knowledge systems and practices.

The methodology that I use in my analysis of national narratives draws on Teun A. van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, and Michael Meyer's work by providing close readings of the "detailed structures, strategies and functions of text and talk," including narrative, narrative forms, genres, characterizations, and temporalities, as well as the articulation of "agents, time, tense, [and] modality" deployed in settler state representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships (Wodak 97). With regards to my study's narrative focus, I also draw on Hayden White's "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality" (1980). White writes that discourse "feigns to make the world speak itself" in the form of narrative in order to produce and sustain a particular "social system" (7, 25). White's central concern is that "the modern historiographical establishment" attributes value to historical accounts of events that portray a plot and narrative "structure that [appears to be] imminent in the events all along" (23). However, he asks, "[d]oes the world really present itself to perception in the form of well-made stories, with central subjects, proper beginnings, middles, and ends, and a coherence that permits us to see 'the end' in the beginning?" (25). His answer is no. Therefore, whence comes and what is the nature of this desire for "coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure" (25)? One answer that White suggests is that narrativity "is intimately related to, if not the function of, social systems" (18). White defines social systems as "systems of human relationships

governed” by institutions of authority (17). White’s theorization of the narrative dimension of discourse gives me a language to examine how selected settler narrative representations of the past, present, and future of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships produce settler colonial institutions in Canada at the expense of local, place-based Indigenous practices of relationality.

Resurgence, Place-Thought, Grounded Normativity

My application of Indigenous relationality’s understanding of endurance, resistance, survivance, and resurgence to my discourse analysis of settler colonialism draws on Gerald Vizenor’s *Manifest Manners: Narrative on Postindian Survivance* (1999) and Haudenosaunee author Taiaiake Alfred’s *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (1999). Vizenor writes that “survivance stories” reject the overdetermination of Indigenous representations by themes of “dominance, detractions, obrutions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry” (1). According to Indigenous literary theorists Jace Weaver, Craig C. Womack, and Robert Warrior, “survivance” combines survival with endurance and resistance (89). Alfred’s text was and is a call to action for Indigenous peoples, communities, and nations to partake in a “resurgence” of Indigenous knowledge, practices of relationality, and modes of governance. He discusses how the Two Row Wampum, rooted in Haudenosaunee diplomatic traditions, defines the terms for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships based on mutual respect for relational self-determination.

Nishnaabeg intellectual and storyteller Leanne Simpson’s *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation and Resurgence and a New Emergence* (2011) and Yellowknives Dene scholar Coulthard’s *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of*

Recognition (2014) offer a next-generation evolution of Alfred's call for a "resurgence" of Indigenous perspectives and traditions in the face of settler colonialism. As part of her own nation-specific articulation of resurgence, Simpson asserts the importance of the Nishnaabemowin word, *biskaabiiyang*. "Indigenous languages carry rich meanings," writes Simpson, and learning through language is one way to deepen understandings of "decolonization, assimilation, resistance, and resurgence from within Nishnaabeg perspectives" (50). *Biskaabiiyang*, she writes, does not simply mean "a return to the past, but rather re-creating the cultural and political flourishing of the past" (51). Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Elder Gdigaa Migizi, she tells us, explains *Biskaabiiyang* "in terms of a 'new emergence'" (51). My study is aligned with Simpson's analysis of how Indigenous resurgence contests state sovereignty and market-driven economies and consequently re-generates place-based knowledge and lifeways. Simpson informs how I understand what respectful relationships look like in Anishnaabe territories. Coulthard's intervention mobilizes Karl Marx's discussion of primitive accumulation and Frantz Fanon's critique of colonial recognition to show how settler colonialism persists in its dispossession of Indigenous land and life, even as it ostensibly recognizes Indigenous cultural difference and rights. As a companion to Alfred's and Simpson's writings on resurgence, Coulthard's study enriches this project's analysis of settler colonial processes, and how resurgence aims to re-establish place-thought. Coulthard defines this as Indigenous "grounded normativity," or norms of behaviour based on relationships of reciprocity, respect, and responsibility, as taught by the land (*Red Skin* 13).

In her chapter, "Telling Stories: Idle No More, Indigenous Resurgence and Political Theory" (2015), Nahua scholar Kelly Aguirre further develops the growing body of theory and

practices of resurgence. Like Coulthard, she asserts that seeking recognition and the affirmation of rights to sustain place-based Indigenous relationality within the contexts of non-Indigenous, settler colonial systems and institutions has done little to change them. She characterizes resurgence as a “reorientation in ways of knowing [and] living more fully again from within Indigenous knowledge systems” and a re-centering of place-based relationality (185). Alfred writes that this shift in focus is necessary because “[i]nstitutions and ideas that are the creation of the colonial relationship are not capable of ensuring” the ongoing “survival” of Indigenous peoples (Alfred, *Wasase* 24). This has been “amply proven,” he continues, by the “absolute failure of institutional and legalistic strategies” to protect Indigenous rights and lands (24). Resurgence, Simpson agrees, is about no longer looking to the settler state to protect and restore Indigenous lands and lifeways. Resurgence is about critically re-creating “Indigenous contexts (knowledge, interpretations, values, ethics, processes) for our political cultures” (17). Coulthard suggests that the “emergent theory and practice of Indigenous resurgence” marks a dynamic and self-reflexive re-centering of Indigenous, place-based knowledge and practices in the face of settler colonialism (153, 156). He writes that resurgent theories and practices are not only centered on reclaiming the “land in the material sense, but also deeply *informed* by what the land as *a system of reciprocal relations and obligations*” can teach Indigenous peoples “about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in non-dominating and non-exploitative terms” (13; emphasis in original). This project thus understands resurgence as a fundamental shift towards place-thought, relational knowledge, and practices in the face of settler colonial power/knowledge.

As I will explain in more detail, my close readings of Indigenous stories strive to be community- and place-specific in order to be mindful that any conclusions drawn from Indigenous stories are emergent, and to offer analyses with an eye to elaborating how Indigenous stories generate relationships with not only the land but with all human and non-human beings based on a sense of responsibility and respect. Indigenous stories can provide pathways for better understanding and ways to practice relationships for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples grounded in the observance of non-interference with regards to Indigenous peoples, knowledge, and lands.

Vanessa Watt's term "place-thought" is key to my understanding of the place-specific quality of Indigenous thought and practice. For Watts, place-thought is a concept rooted in Haudenosaunee creation stories about Sky Woman, the first woman who, after falling from Skyworld, lands on the back of the turtle and "becomes territory itself" (23). I bring together place-thought, an epistemology, with storywork, a methodology. Place-thought resists settler colonial discourse, restores Indigenous relationality, and produces the possibilities of alternative relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Unlike Foucauldian understandings of discourse, place-thought conceives of the land as "alive and thinking" and as the source of human and non-human thought and agency (Watts 21). Coulthard articulates a similar understanding of Indigenous knowledge and practices when he suggests that "Indigenous decolonial thought" emerges from a "place-based foundation" or "grounded normativity" (*Red Skin* 13). The latter, he explains, refers to "modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure [Indigenous communities'] ethical engagements with the world and our relationships

with human and nonhuman others over time” (13). Like Watt’s place-thought, Coulthard’s grounded normativity conveys an understanding that Indigenous relational knowledge and practice emerges from the experience of being-in-relation with the land. As opposed to notions of discourse, place-thought conceives of land not as an object, whose significance is decided by a structure of texts and institutions, but as a source of relational knowledge and practices of living alongside a multitude of human and non-human beings in accordance with traditions of respect and reciprocity. Watts’s story-based theoretical discussion and the growing body of Indigenous theories and practices of resurgence (Weaver 1997, Alfred 1999, Ermine 2007, Maracle 2007, Wilson 2008, Davis 2010, Barker 2010, Coleman 2011, Simpson 2011) challenge the hegemony of Euro-Western conceptions of land-as-object⁴ and provide this dissertation with a language to posit an alternative to settler colonial power/knowledge and institutional practices of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships.

Storywork

In *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (2008), Jo-Ann Archibald tells us that Indigenous stories “remind us about the good power of interconnections within family, community, nation, culture, and land” (9). They give voice to place-thought, non-universalizable and non-oppressive knowledge systems that are rooted in community-specific, place-based caring and respectful forms of relationality. Indigenous stories generate holistic as well as land- and community-specific knowledge and practices of respect and responsibility often explained in Indigenous contexts through the image of the circle. Archibald writes that the holistic circle represents one’s respect and “responsibility toward the generations of

ancestors, the generations of today, and the generations yet to come” as well as “the animal/human kingdoms, the elements of nature/land, and the Spirit World” (11). No being in the circle is more important or valuable than the other. As mentioned above, Archibald reminds us that “respect is the foundation for all relationships” and “to understand [respect] and apply it to our lives is an ongoing process” since all beings are different and emerge from different milieus (23). No being should seek to control the other, and all are responsible for the care of all beings in the circle. Indigenous storytelling is one way that communities learn to practice respect and responsibility towards all beings in our circles. I examine selected Indigenous stories to suggest pathways towards Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships rooted in such conceptions of respect and responsibility.

Archibald’s concept of storywork describes place-based, ongoing processes of both listening to and reading stories in order to understand and to generate respectful relationships between not only human communities, but also the dense networks of relationships that make up and sustain life on the land. Storywork typically involves more than an intellectual analysis of Indigenous stories like this project; it involves one’s spiritual, physical, and emotional capacities and one’s familial, cultural, and place-specific contexts (73). It is a form of ongoing, place-based learning that often takes place under the guidance of elders. In fact, Archibald makes it very clear in her book that her storywork is rooted in relationality, which includes relationships with elders. Archibald worked for 4 years with elders in order to develop her understanding of the “core of stories” (25). “Learning how a story fits within a people’s belief system,” she explains, “requires that one live with or interact with the people for a long time” (26). The Indigenous stories that I discuss in this project—King’s history of the Odawa, Maracle’s novel, and *The*

Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee documentary—are all suggestive of the holistic relational worldviews of their respective peoples: the Odawa, the Salish, and the Cree. The storytelling traditions from which they emerge are ongoing, place-based, relational fields of storywork. In this dissertation, I do not offer examples of the holistic storywork methodology that Archibald undertakes, but I do my best to respectfully undertake an analysis of how Indigenous stories restore, strengthen, and maintain Indigenous relationality.

Storywork offers a methodology for studying relationships between representations and material practices. The object of storywork is to develop understandings of how stories elaborate place-based relationships between human and nonhuman subjects of the land. My study combines certain elements of discourse analysis with storywork. Wodak and Meyer suggest that one examines how verbal, textual, and visual information is used to convey meaning (Wodak 31). They suggest looking at how agency is assigned, how temporality informs actions, and how forms and genres are mobilized to elaborate relationships between knowledge systems and material relations. Although limited by my position as a non-Indigenous scholar, I perform close readings of Indigenous stories according to four insights, which I derive from Archibald's elaboration of storywork.

Building on the work of Tewa Indigenous education Professor Gregory Cayete of the Santa Clara Pueblo, Archibald writes that stories are analogous to “pathways” in that they represent “paths” along which people may journey according to place-based Indigenous “cultural, philosophical framework[s]” (12). This study juxtaposes settler representations, which articulate discourse about Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships, with Indigenous stories as

expressions of local, Indigenous relationality. Based on my understanding of Archibald's theory of storywork, the following insights guide my examination of Indigenous stories:

1. Indigenous stories are specific to community and place.
2. Indigenous stories are rooted in place rather than "linear time" (McLeod, *Cree Narrative*, 17)
3. Indigenous stories are emergent.
4. Indigenous stories restore and maintain understandings and practices of respect and responsibility.

The first and second guidelines are drawn from Indigenous assertions that Indigenous stories are fundamentally rooted in place. Leslie Marmon Silko, Pueblo Laguna poet and novelist, affirms that "stories cannot be separated from geographical locations, from actual places in the land" (cited in Archibald 73). The land, as a living network of relationships, has agency, as place-thought. Stories emerge from and belong to a place, and so my readings and conclusions endeavour to be place-specific. The second insight emerges from my reading of Indigenous scholars who address the issue of temporality as well as form and genre in Indigenous stories. Cree scholar Shawn Wilson states in *Research is Ceremony* that "Indigenous peoples place greater importance on space (or the place and the environment that we occupy) than we do upon time" (Wilson 88). Cree poet and scholar Neal McLeod similarly states that Indigenous relationships with place are centered "along the lines of a relationship to space and location rather than linear time" (McLeod, *Cree Narrative* 17). And so, while selected stories convey events that may have occurred in the distant past, their relationship with place, and thus their

resistance to settler colonialism, offers perennial texts to juxtapose against settler colonial narratives.

The third and fourth insights stem from Archibald's discussion of storywork's respect for both stories and their audiences. Stories have their own "power" and must be allowed to "breathe" (Archibald 112). Archibald cites Simon Ortiz of the Acoma Pueblo, who "strongly connected to stories heard in his childhood but did not recognize their communal power until he was older" (25). Indigenous storytelling is emergent and "honors and respects the individual and the group," including their ability to draw significance from stories (122). The conclusions I draw from my close readings are thus context-specific and provisional. Furthermore, Archibald's insights help me understand how claiming to know a story's significance for all is to assume a position of mastery, a position incongruent with Indigenous understandings of respect for the knowledge and experience of stories, of place-thought, and of other beings. Knowledge derived from place-thought through stories is thus emergent and not totalizing. The fourth and most important guideline to me is that Indigenous stories elaborate respect for the ultimate unknowability of place-thought. In contrast to discourse, which seeks to settle the dynamic multiplicity of local knowledges and practices and to subsume them within its universalizing logics, this project is guided by principles of storywork to shed light on how selected Indigenous stories might restore of relationships with the land and all human and non-human beings based on a sense of respect, not dominance.

The aim of each chapter's close reading of an Indigenous story through the lens of Indigenous theories of relationality and resurgence is to gesture beyond the forced imposition of settler colonial logics, which view the land and the beings on the land as resources and

commodities. Indigenous storytelling is a form of knowledge creation and transmission that generates and maintains place-based Indigenous knowledge and community-centered practices of relationality. Indigenous stories vary greatly: some are personal, some are historical, and some belong to specific nations. Some stories are sacred, to be told only by specific knowledge keepers and elders (Archibald 82-83). In this dissertation, I juxtapose settler colonial narrative representations and Indigenous stories of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships to critique and to gesture beyond discourses of liberal democratic institutions, state sovereignty, and global market capitalism, and towards relationships of respect and responsibility on Indigenous terms.

Circa 2012: Why a Single-Year Study?

David Mazella's discussion of the single-year study, with a focus on Hume's use of 1688 as an organizing principle in his historiography, helps me to theorize my study's single-year focus on settler colonial discourse's challenges to place-based Indigenous relationality in Canada in 2012. Mazella states that "marking some document or event by year does not merely locate it horizontally on a chronological timeline, but positions it relative to other dates, texts, and events, so their spatial clustering or dispersion can be recognized more readily" (155). Indeed, diachronic studies often depict events or the production of certain documents linearly, signaling not only their place in time but their relationship to other events that occurred in proximity to the object of study. Studies can also, of course, be "durational and punctual at the same time" by examining temporal and spatial relationships between texts and events (154). The focus of my project is on national settler representations of relationships between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that were produced and circulated near and during 2012, a distinctly dynamic year in Canadian Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations.

My study differentiates 2012 from other dates since 1990 by the intensity of clustered events and Indigenous resistance in this time period. While the Canadian government and the CBC were commemorating the War of 1812 and the CBC's *8th Fire* documentary and website were featured on CBC.ca, Idle No More was achieving international visibility through online and televised media. Grassroots activists round danced in shopping malls and in front of legislative buildings, and articulated their demands and concerns on various social media platforms. The movement marked a watershed in the size and scope of contemporary Indigenous political action, as well as eliciting expressions of solidarity from non-Indigenous allies on land/water protection and the quality of life on reservations.

The surge in interest in Indigenous perspectives can, in part, be attributed to several important developments in Canadian public discourse on the treatment of Indigenous peoples (circa 2012). In response to Chief Theresa Spence's 2011 declaration of a state of emergency for Attawapiskat First Nation, widespread public outrage was expressed throughout national and social media. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which had been established on June 1, 2008 with a 5-year mandate, was in the late stages of gathering statements from survivors of residential schools when Idle No More was peaking in public attention.⁵ The Commission published its Interim Report and Historical Publication on February 24th, 2012, as well as holding public and private hearings throughout the country. The Commission's report, as well as the horrors endured at state-mandated residential schools, were being featured in print and on online news media (Mesner). While the TRC and Chief Spence's call for help for Attawapiskat

helped to create the conditions for the powerful emergence of Idle No More, the catalyst for the Idle No More movement was Bill C-45.

In 2012, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Majority Conservative government passed Bill C-45, a sweeping set of controversial and unilateral reforms to the Navigable Waters Act. It removed federal protection over 99% of lakes and rivers and made alterations to the 1986 Indian Act, without the free, prior and informed consent of all affected First Nations, a right now recognized by the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The bill made significant changes to the Indian Act, allowing First Nations bands to lease reserve land if a majority of those *attending* a meeting voted to do so. Previously, the majority of *eligible voters* had to vote in favour of such a motion. This change is thus viewed as simplifying the leasing and potential loss of reserve land. The bill also instituted major changes to the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* by reducing the number of lakes and rivers that required federal environmental impact assessments if they were to be used for industrial development. The number of lakes and rivers formerly protected by the act was reduced from 32,000 lakes to 97, and from 2.25 million rivers to 62; this meant that 99% of Canada's waterways, the majority of which are in Indigenous traditional territories, lost federal protection (Bill C-45).

The affront of this omnibus bill to the protection of the land, waters, and to Indigenous rights was substantial, as was the nation-wide, grassroots political movement that it sparked. Bill C-45 was a part of the Harper government's imposition, as historian Ian McKay and journalist Jamie Swift write, of institutions of increased "hierarchy and authoritarianism" in Canada (24). Indigenous communities across Canada saw Bill C-45 as a particularly egregious affront to Indigenous relational self-determination, which includes relationships with traditional

territories. While Indigenous resistance to settler colonization has never been idle, Indigenous activism had not achieved such national visibility since the 1990s as it did during the winter of 2012. Under the banner of Idle No More, Indigenous activists and allies demanded a recall of the changes to the Navigable Waters Act and the Indian Act, culturally appropriate resources for health, housing, and education of Indigenous peoples, and an end to the unilateralism of the settler state dominating Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations. Idle No More took the form of demonstrations, round dances, and protest walks across Canada. While peaceful, Idle No More echoed the national attention gained by the 1990s Standoff at Kanesatake, or the Oka Crisis resistance actions that continue to resonate across Indigenous communities in Canada.

My focus on settler state narratives from 2012 is not to suggest that they emerged in isolation. Key events in time and on Indigenous homelands since Canada's inception in the 19th century continue to inform the limits and possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. Heightened conflict in Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations emerged out of 400 years of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in North America. In the 17th century, relations were characterized by trade. In the 18th and 19th centuries, "diplomatic associations," such as "treaties of alliance," were formed as European powers fought each other for access to the land and its resources (Miller 4). The Royal Proclamation of 1763 marked a recognition of Indigenous claims to land in the treaty-making process (within terms granted by the state); however, once European colonists began to increase in numbers, treaties were increasingly used to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands (95). Less than 10 years after the British North American Act (1867), the Government of Canada passed the Indian Act (1876), which unilaterally sought to homogenize relationships between the Canadian state and over 600 diverse First Nations and

to legislate relationships between Indigenous peoples on reserve. The Act defines how governance is practiced on reserve, how those with Indian Status can access healthcare and education, and who may claim legal Indian status.⁶ The Act is perhaps most maligned for mandating residential schools. In the 1880s, the government established residential schools to ostensibly assimilate Indigenous children into mainstream Canadian society. Children were taken to schools “far from their home communities, part of a strategy to alienate them from their families and familiar surroundings” (Roberts 119). John Roberts, in *First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples: Exploring their Past, Present, and Future*, recounts how residential schools became mandatory for Indigenous children in 1920, which set the wheels in motion for what has become the most discussed state-mandated violation of Indigenous-peoples by the settler state (119).

The 1990s and early 2000s were witnesses to some of the most visible redress and resistance movements by Indigenous peoples in Canada. The Oka Crisis, a 70-day standoff between the Mohawk of Kanasatake and provincial and federal agents in 1990, as well as the relentless campaigning of Indigenous communities to challenge the current state of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations, eventually resulted in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was established in August of 1991 by Order in Council. It was given a 5-year mandate and 65 million dollars to “investigate and propose solutions to the challenges affecting the relationship between Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Métis), the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole” (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada). Following RCAP’s final report in 1996, the Canadian government responded with *Canada’s Indigenous Action Plan*. The Action Plan called for a

public inquiry into residential schooling (Henderson and Wakeham, “Colonial Reckoning” 10). While largely ignored, RCAP is lauded for its representation of the grievances of Indigenous peoples as well as the paths it recommends for more respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was launched and “intended to be a process that would guide Canadians through the difficult discovery of the facts behind the residential school system” (Moran). The TRC was meant to lay the foundation for lasting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. It shed light on the horrifying treatment of Indigenous children at residential schools, as well as the inter-generational trauma that many survivors and their families still endure. The TRC was given a budget of \$60 million and a five-year mandate to host public hearings and to compile a record of peoples’ stories of their experiences in residential schools.⁷ Unfortunately, neither the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples nor the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have produced a groundswell of non-Indigenous support for substantial changes to Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations; Indigenous communities must still struggle to defend their familial and territorial relations against destructive and assimilationist forms of settler colonialism.

The editorial team of the Kini-nda-niimi Collective writes that Idle No More in 2012 “went around national media, emerging in online and independent publications as articles, essays, and interviews” (25). Because of the TRC hearings and public outcries against reserve living conditions, Idle No More thus had a sizeable and relatively attentive audience with whom they could redefine and reassert Indigenous perspectives and relational self-determination. As

the Kini-nda-niimi Collective writes, Idle No More set to “re-storying Canada” and engaging the “oft slumbering Canadian public as never before” (93).

This work to re-story Canada took place while settler colonial narratives about Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations were also being produced and circulated. The Oka Crisis (1990), RCAP (1996), and the 2015 release of the TRC Final Report are all important moments that inform the context of my selected representations from 2012. However, 2012 was a distinctly dynamic year in the production of the possible terms upon which Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships could emerge. In 2012, the Conservative Government commissioned commemorative representations of the War of 1812 that render state sovereignty a universal political construct. The CBC’s *8th Fire*, a four-part documentary, was released and seemed to constrain the possibilities of reconciliation to neoliberal logics. Finally, in 2012, national news media representations worked to displace and contain Indigenous activism during Idle No More, within non-Indigenous understandings of the liberal public sphere.

In contrast to my selected settler texts, the date of production and the initial circulation of my selected Indigenous stories are outside of this project’s temporal frame. National settler colonial narrative representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships circulated widely in 2012 over territories already rich with Indigenous stories of relationality. My focus on a single year allows me to hone in on and examine how settler colonial discourse works to establish a regime of truth, which reaches into the past and projects into the future, to claim the universality and legitimacy of the settler colonial nation-state and neoliberal logics at the expense of place-based knowledge and practices. Unlike discourse, Indigenous storytelling and place-thought are less time-bound than they are bound to place. They pre-exist and resist

settler colonial power/knowledge, which evolves through time to legitimize its power over the past, present, and future of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. The rationale for my selection of Indigenous stories that I juxtapose with settler colonial narratives is thus thematic and place-based. With this project, I want to better understand, critique, and gesture beyond relationships as they are currently structured. I do so by juxtaposing national settler colonial narrative representations and Indigenous stories of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. Indigenous place-thought, conveyed through Indigenous stories, not only offers points of contrast from which to critique settler colonial accounts of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships but also helps us envision more accountable, respectful relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canada.

Chapter Previews

Each chapter of my dissertation focuses on and examines a site of struggle between settler colonial discourse and Indigenous place-thought. Both settler colonial narrative representations and localized Indigenous stories inform the terms of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships in Canada. While each chapter focuses on a different theme in settler representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships, my aim is to provide a deeper understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of settler colonial discourse in tension with Indigenous relationality.

Chapter 1 is entitled “Unsettling the Tragedy of Tecumseh: State-Sponsored Commemorations of the War of 1812 and Stories of the British-Indigenous Alliance.” Focused on depictions of Tecumseh and his style of leadership, this chapter juxtaposes settler narratives

of the War of 1812 with storywork from the Odawa, as collected and shared by Cecil King in *Balancing Two Worlds*. King's text provides insight into the contrast between settler colonial representations of the war of 1812 and Indigenous versions of this period rooted in place-thought of the Great Lakes region Anishnaabe peoples.

This chapter intervenes in how 2012 settler representations of 1812 seek to maintain settler colonialism in Canada, in part, by contrasting these with an earlier settler representation: Charles Mair's *Tecumseh: A Drama* (1886). While recent accounts seek to portray Indigenous autonomy as dissolved in the 19th century, Mair's play bears traces of Indigenous leadership and legacies of resistance that survived the 19th century. Mair's version unexpectedly disrupts the legitimacy of contemporary settler colonial assertions of 19th-century losses of Indigenous political autonomy. *Tecumseh: A Drama* was written during the second Métis resistance in the 1880s, a time, like 2012, in which the legitimacy of Canada's claims of sovereignty were being contested by Indigenous peoples. Building on critiques of Mair's play by Daniel Coleman, Terry Goldie, and Heather Davis-Fisch, this chapter argues that, when read alongside contemporary, Indigenous resurgence theories and practices, the play elaborates on how Tecumseh's confederacy was a multi-generational, de-centralized manifestation of Anishnaabe leadership and resistance. I argue that although Tecumseh dies, Indigenous political autonomy does not; Indigenous leadership will and has emerged again as it is a form of governance rooted in relationships generated by the land. This study applies a reading of Mair's play to destabilize the 2012 commemorations of 1812, which offer a celebration of the birth of the Canadian body politic over Indigenous lands, life, and governance.

In early 2012, prior to Idle No More, the Conservative government launched a series of projects in commemoration of the War of 1812. It hosted a commemorative website entitled 1812.ca, which still exists in a modified form under the Liberal government, and sponsored the production of the CBC documentary *The War of 1812: Been There, Won That* (Oct. 4, 2012). In this chapter, I am concerned with how official settler representations of 1812 centralize Indigenous political autonomy in the doomed figure of Tecumseh. Not only does this obscure Indigenous ideas and practices of leadership, rooted in place-based relationalities, but it suggests that Indigenous political autonomy was extinguished over 200 years ago. Such representations generate settler colonial discourse of Canadian settler state control over Indigenous land and life that is irrevocably established.

As a further counterbalance to the Conservative government's representation of the history of Indigenous-non-Indigenous political relationships, this chapter offers a reading of Odawa historian and storyteller Cecil King's *Balancing Two Worlds* (2013). King offers insight into Odawa chief Jean-Baptiste Assigniack's life as he negotiated between his commitment to traditional Odawa lifeways and settler colonialism. King's text provides insights into Odawa relational self-determination during the 19th century, as well as how Odawa people continue to privilege non-hierarchical relationships with the land. In particular, King's account of the War of 1812 challenges notions of Indigenous disappearance from their homelands, which render invisible the violence of settler state sovereignty over Indigenous relationalities. Rooted in Odawa storytelling, King offers a representation of the past and present terms of possible Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships rooted in relational respect.

As this chapter features stories rooted in the Great Lakes region, its conception of respect draws on King's as well as Simpson's elaboration of the Anishnaabe terms for respect. King discusses how Odawa storytelling emphasizes "interdependency" and offers lessons on how to regard all elements of creation as "parents, siblings and kin" (King xx). The land, and the beings inhabiting it, are the embodiment of knowledge that coexistence depends upon interdependency, benevolence, and respect. Simpson discusses the term *Debwewin* in *Dancing on our Turtle's Back*. Although the word *debwewin* is often translated as "truth," Nishnaabeg Elder Jim Dumont suggests that the word can be translated as "the sound of my heart," its significance being that each person's heart speaks its own truth (59). Respect, rooted in an understanding of *debwewin*, suggests regard for another's truth as well as a practice of not imposing one's truth onto another. This respect for personal truth is, Simpson writes, "embedded intrinsically into our thought ways and theories" and "always broadly interpreted within the nest of the collective" (59). King's text echoes this understanding when he states that "meaning existed for [Odawa] people in the interrelationships of things, in the way in which things happened together. We saw that only together things had meaning and became whole" (King xx). Thus, this chapter argues that the imposition of state sovereignty and market logics over Indigenous relationships would, in Anishnaabe terms, be anathema to respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships on Indigenous terms. Respectful relations, on Anishnaabe terms, would entail the avoidance of imposition, oppression, or hierarchy at all, while seeking to balance the needs of all, including the land and its non-human dwellers.

Chapter two is entitled "Re-Placing Storied Resistance and Resurgence: Lee Maracle's *Sundogs* (1992), Oka, Idle No More, and the Politics of Representing Indigenous Activism." It

focuses on how Maracle's *Sundogs* sheds light on the containment strategies settler colonialism deploys against Indigenous relationality and resistance. *Sundogs* reveals how national settler colonial representations worked to contain and discredit Indigenous activism in the 1990s. I argue that Maracle's novel continues to be relevant to conversations about representations of the last three decades of Indigenous resistance, including the 2012 emergence of the Idle No More Movement. The primary texts that I read and draw upon in this chapter are Stó:lō writer Lee Maracle's 1992 novel, *Sundogs*; and *The Winter We Danced*, a collection of formally diverse texts, including blog posts, newspaper articles, essays, and poems, from 2012 about Idle No More. In discussing these representations from the early 1990s to 2012, I stress the degree to which the conceptual displacement of Indigenous relationality from the land supports the literal displacement of Indigenous peoples from their lands.

My analysis of Maracle's novel has led me to understand how counterpublic sphere theory limits liberal understandings of Indigenous relational, land-based self-determination and risks perpetuating settler colonial knowledge and institutions. This is one way that relationality and resistance is contained. Richard Butsch posits that publics as audiences are distinct from "crowds" and "masses" (Butsch 1). The crowd is antithetical to reason and is prone to disorder. Publics, on the other hand, engage in rational debate and are composed of separate individuals. They are diffuse, require communication technologies such as digital and print texts, and produce public opinion. Liberal discourse characterized such audiences as ideal citizens (12). The crowd is a term that has been associated with the working class, racialized peoples, and women (15). Settler news media has fluctuated between portraying Indigenous peoples as a crowd and as something like a public. In this study, I explore how even the seemingly more

positive representation of Indigenous peoples as a “counterpublic,” a critical form of public wherein members of a subordinated group form and articulate shared needs and desires, risks perpetuating settler colonial conceptions of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships.⁸

Settler state recognition at times frames Indigenous activism as manifestations of a counterpublic. Settler power/knowledge represents Indigenous storied, land-based practices to non-Indigenous publics as part of a narrative that universalizes spatially abstract notions of the public sphere. If an Indigenous counterpublic appears to be “given space” and seems to have been heard by the state, settler publics will imagine that Indigenous-non-Indigenous political antagonism has been reconciled. In this way, the sovereign power of the settler state is made to appear legitimate. Critical as they are for some, I show how notions of counterpublics misrepresent what are in fact more holistically relational practices of community. At stake in such representations is non-Indigenous support for Indigenous aspirations; support will not be generated if Indigenous activism is framed through a counterpublic lens since notions of the public sphere fail to recognize the challenges that Indigenous activism articulates to state institutions.

In the second half of this chapter, I take seriously Maracle’s suggestion that her novel, *Sundogs*, is akin to an origin story about Indigenous activism in Canada. If read as an origin story, *Sundogs* reveals itself not only to be rich with knowledge about Indigenous relationalities for *Indigenous* readers, but it is also perhaps capable of offering teachings to *non-Indigenous* readers about how to better understand and practice respectful relationships with Indigenous communities. The novel is very much about the cultural distinctiveness of Indigenous

knowledge and practices of relationality and resistance that, I argue, exceed the conceptual bounds of critical theorizations of publics and counterpublics.

My discussion of *Sundogs* makes a case for the necessity of Indigenous critiques of settler colonialism, as well as for the possibilities of alternative relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. At stake in this discussion is how Indigenous activism can be misrecognized and conceptually dis-placed as a form of counterpublic that seeks to reform but not revolutionize the current settler colonial status quo. Maracle's text not only elaborates land-based Indigenous relationalities that extend from place to individuals, families, and greater communities, but also provides an opportunity for non-Indigenous peoples to better understand how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships may be based on coexistence and respect.

This chapter's understanding of respectful relations is informed by Maracle's discussion, in "Oratory on Oratory," about Salish understandings of the good life. She writes that the point of Salish storytelling is to provide "a path of continuous growth and transformation [...] that will enable us to engage all life in the type of spirit-to-spirit relationship that leads all parties to the good life" ("Oratory" 60). The good life is rooted in a "recognition of the perfect right to be for all beings" (60). Like the Two Row Wampum, this study's principle understanding of respect, Maracle's notion of good life suggests how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships can move in the direction of being mutually-respectful and mutually sustaining, not only for humans but for all elements of creation.

Chapter 3, "*8th Fire, The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee, and the Possibilities of Reconciliation,*" focuses on how settler ideas and representations of reconciliation are tied up

with the economic possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. The first part of my chapter focuses on the CBC's documentary, *8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada, and the Way Forward* (2012) and its neoliberal representation of the possibilities of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. CBC's *8th Fire* is hosted by Anishnaabe hip-hop artist, CBC personality, and rising politician Wab Kinew and features video clips of diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists, artists, and academics offering their perspectives on the possibilities of reconciliation. The documentary explicitly addresses non-Indigenous audiences and offers them a form of reconciliation that compels them to give up stereotypes about Indigenous peoples and to support Indigenous peoples' aspirations to pursue neoliberal forms of economic prosperity. This is not to pass judgment on Indigenous peoples and communities that develop industry and commercial enterprises on traditional territories; however, the framing of reconciliation that the CBC offers through *8th Fire* privileges entrepreneurial individualism and resource development *at the expense* of Indigenous practices of relationality. Reconciliation is marketed to dominant audiences by the documentary's main narrative as a pathway to neoliberal prosperity and thus risks circulating an idea of reconciliation that constrains its possibilities to the most instrumentalized form.

While the documentary content seems designed to constrain ideas of reconciliation to neoliberal priorities, this chapter also shows how *8th Fire* contains seeds of a counternarrative. In its interviews with members of the Cree Nation of Quebec, particularly on the documentary's extended website, *8th Fire* contests neoliberal priorities by sharing stories of relationality and resistance to resource extraction. Matthew Mukash, former Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Cree in Quebec, and his son, hip-hop artist and community organizer Pakesso Mukash,

offer compelling personal stories of the survivance of kinship relations with each other and the land in contrast to the rest of the documentary's celebration of the commodification of Indigenous land and life as pathways to prosperity and reconciliation. Matthew and Pakesso Mukash articulate strong connections to place and forms of holistic relationality generated by place-thought. Their connections fundamentally challenge the neoliberal *qua* settler colonial idealization of individual entrepreneurialism and extractivist logics of land development.

In the second part of this chapter, I juxtapose the broadcast content of *8th Fire* with the Grand Council of the Cree in Quebec's four-part documentary series, entitled *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee*. I have selected *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee (The EEI)* over other documentaries because, like *8th Fire*, its principal theme is how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships can be imagined in the context of economic development. Unlike *8th Fire*, the principal themes of *The EEI* are not focused on individual prosperity and resource development; *The EEI* prioritizes the survival, endurance, and resistance of Indigenous relationality in the face of such hallmarks of neoliberalism.

Gerald Vizenor first used the term "survivance," a term Indigenous academics have taken to express how survival, endurance, and resistance come together in Indigenous narratives, in his 1999 book, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. Like the words that make up survivance, Indigenous narratives that elaborate on the ongoing vitality of Indigenous lives and lifeways bespeak the *endurance* and *resistance* of Indigenous knowledge, practices, and peoples in the face of settler colonialism. *The EEI* is an example of such resistance; it tells a story of an Indigenous community galvanized in the face of colonial aggression and adversity. At times, *8th Fire* represents resource extraction and individual

entrepreneurialism as the most viable means of both pursuing prosperity and of reconciling with Indigenous peoples. In contrast, *The EEI* relates how Quebec and its Crown Corporation, Hydro Quebec, forced resource development on the Cree. Vizenor's term survivance gives me a language with which to examine the Cree's story of how they found a way of surviving and benefitting from the development, although this outcome remains contentious. The Cree's priority was to defend place-based Cree knowledge and practices of relationality that extend from the community to non-human beings on the land against successive waves of unilateral decisions to develop Cree territories by settler governments.

While not without its contradictions, *The EEI* poses serious challenges to the underlying capitalist logics of *8th Fire* in its articulation of respect for Indigenous peoples' enduring sense of collective identity that is fundamentally rooted in place. While the primary goal of the documentary series seems to be to persuade its audience of the legitimacy of the Grand Council of the Cree as a champion of the Cree people, *The EEI* shares a story of survivance, centered on relationships between Indigenous peoples, communities, and traditional territories. This chapter contends that the documentary asserts that future relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples need to be based on non-Indigenous governments, and on corporate interests that respect Indigenous political autonomy and relationships with traditional territories.

As with the previous two chapters, in my discussion of the Eeyouch Cree of Quebec and the form of respect that their story articulates I draw on place-based and community-specific understandings of respect. Cree scholar Willy Ermine proposes a space in which productive dialogue can take place between "the Indigenous and Western thought worlds" (193). Ermine

argues that “a discourse on ethics” must include serious consideration of the boundaries that individuals and communities establish and maintain for themselves (195). Like Maracle and Simpson in their discussions of Coast Salish and Nishnaabeg understandings of respect, Ermine frames personal autonomy and uniqueness within the larger Indigenous community: boundaries are generated by “family,” “clan systems,” “cultural imperatives,” “knowledge systems” and “treaties” (195). Informed by Ermine’s discussion, this chapter sheds light on how the Eeyouch Cree articulate an alternative to *8th Fire*’s possibilities of reconciliation and a new Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship, one focused not on the accumulation of wealth through individual entrepreneurship and resource extraction, but instead one rooted in respect for Indigenous place-based and community relationships.

Settler colonial narrative representations and localized, Indigenous stories inform what Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships can look like in Canada. Each chapter analyses how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships are produced by settler colonial discourse circa 2012 and selected Indigenous stories. In writing my three chapters, I have developed a deeper understanding of how, in the supposed era of reconciliation, settler colonial discourse continues to deracinate, dissolve, and disappear Indigenous knowledge and practices of relationality in the service of settler state sovereignty and global market capitalism. I hope that my chapters increase Indigenous and non-Indigenous understandings of how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations do not have to be oppressive, dishonest, and coloured by a rapacious desire for resources and wealth. Instead, they can be practices of responsibility and respect not only for Indigenous peoples but for the lands, waterways, and all beings of creation that makeup and sustain the dense network of relations we call Canada.

Chapter 1: Unsettling the Tragedy of Tecumseh:

Past and Present Representations of the War of 1812 and the Possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships

In 2012, the Conservative Government of Canada launched a series of initiatives aimed at commemorating the War of 1812. In this chapter, I interrogate how the government's commemorative website, 1812.gc.ca, and the CBC's documentary, *Been There, Won That*, support the Canadian settler state's assertion of sovereignty over Indigenous relational self-determination. I examine their representations of the War of 1812 by juxtaposing them with Odawa scholar Cecil King's very different historical account of 1812 in *Balancing Two Worlds: Jean-Baptiste Assiginack and the Odawa Nation, 1768-1866* (2013). At the centre of these discussions is my unconventional reading of Charles Mair's *Tecumseh: A Drama* (1886).⁹ This reading illustrates how Mair's play unexpectedly bears traces of Indigenous traditions of leadership and legacies of resistance that contest national narratives from 2012, despite its production of tragic stereotypes and closures. I conclude this chapter with a storywork-inspired reading of King's *Balancing Two Worlds*. King's text provides a storywork analysis of narratives of the War of 1812 from the perspective of the Odawa and the Anishnaabe more generally; it thus offers a representation of the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships based in Anishnaabe place-based practices of respect and responsibility. King's text supports my claim that the struggle to protect Indigenous relational self-determination survived Tecumseh's death.

I contend that state commemorations in 2012 produce the belief that the violence of colonial land displacement took place in the United States and was thus not the responsibility

of Canadians. Moreover, these representations situate assertions of Indigenous relational self-determination in the past by tying their fate to Tecumseh, the Shawnee war chief who died during the War of 1812. These representations of the War of 1812 not only circulate knowledge about past relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples but also limit the possibilities of relationships by suggesting that the dispossession of Indigenous nations and the “sovereignty of the Crown” are settled realities.

State commemorations of the War of 1812 can be read as part of the Conservative government’s discursive manoeuvres to enhance the centralization of the Canadian settler colonial state in 2012. In *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (2012), Historian Ian McKay and journalist Jamie Swift examine how the Conservative government articulated a view of Canadian history in which “soldiers forged the Canada we know and love” (7). The state’s website and the CBC’s documentary from 2012 are components of this discursive shift, the institution of a “new regime of truth” (9).¹⁰ In contrast to the 2005 Canadian citizenship manuals that featured no images of soldiers, the Harper government version, *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship* (2009), features accounts of “military events and figures” on 20 of its 30 pages (15). As citizenship “guides are among the most widely circulated statements about Canada’s past and present,” this suggests a concerted attempt on the part of state institutions to shift Canadian national discourse to one in which “Canada, past and present, is centrally about war” (15). The aim of this discursive shift, argue McKay and Swift, is the promotion of “institutions that [reflect] hierarchy and authoritarianism, values that the Conservative leadership held dear” (24). Between 2006 and 2015, the period that the Conservative party held minority and majority governments, the

state's institutions and discourses enhanced the centralization and hierarchical structuring of the state. Part of this discursive shift included leveraging the bicentennial anniversary of the War of 1812, particularly accounts of Tecumseh's rise as a "noble savage" and his inevitable demise, to further entrench centralized settler colonial power over Indigenous land and lives.

National narrative representations of Tecumseh and the War of 1812 in 2012 contribute to conceptions of Indigenous peoples as a dying race and positions 1812 as the matrix of a nascent Canadian nation. Tecumseh was a Shawnee War Chief who, in 1805, became a leading voice in Indigenous resistance to American expansion in the Ohio Valley. Unsuccessful in their attempts to negotiate mutually acceptable terms between his confederacy and representatives of the United States, Tecumseh and his allies sought assistance from the British and forged an alliance with General Isaac Brock, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, against the U.S. Tecumseh and the Indigenous confederacy, in pursuing their goal of establishing protected Indigenous territories, thus supported the British in the War of 1812.

Historian Daniel Francis in *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*, writes that "[t]he Noble Savage [...] is a venerable image, first used by the English dramatist John Dryden in his 1670 play, *The Conquest of Granada*, to refer to the innate goodness of man in a perceived 'state of nature'" (143). Charles Mair's 1886 play, *Tecumseh: A Drama*, does deploy the trope of the noble savage in his characterization of Tecumseh. As in Dryden's works, Francis notes that Mair's noble savage is "untainted by the greed of gain," "virtuous," and "free of guile," but can also be "frightful and bloodthirsty" (144). "As long as Natives remained valuable allies in the wars the colonial powers waged against each other," he continues, "the image of the Indian remained reasonably positive" (144). Terry Goldie refers to

representations of Tecumseh, and Indigenous peoples more generally during this era, as “Indian heroic tragedy” (173). The “Indian heroic tragedy” depicts Indigenous peoples as noble, savage, and tragically dying out. Selected contemporary national narratives about 1812 and Mair’s 19th-century drama reinforce versions of what I refer to in this project as the tragedy of Tecumseh. In this chapter, I focus on how selected 2012 narratives reinforce the legitimacy of the Canadian settler state by rendering it blameless in the usurpation of Indigenous land and political autonomy and consequently disqualifying contemporary assertions of Indigenous relational self-determination. Surprisingly, despite its use of stereotypes, revisiting Mair’s play also depicts aspects of Indigenous traditions of leadership and legacies of resistance that contest representations of 1812 by the state in 2012.

Upon its publication, Mohawk poet and performance artist Pauline Johnson praised *Tecumseh: A Drama* as a verse drama that “‘enriched Canadian Indian literature’ more than any other writer” (Johnson 120). The play, she writes, depicts “the Shawnee leader who helped to ensure that Canada would remain a separate polity in North America” (117). Indeed, Mair writes in the preface to the play that he endeavoured to represent “dramatically the time and scenes in which the great Indian so nobly played his part, at first independently, and in his own country, and afterward in alliance and leadership with General Brock in the War of 1812” (Mair 3). Unfortunately, Tecumseh’s “part” appears to have been to defend the colonies that would become Canada and then die so that settlers could occupy the land. One may read Mair’s play as a portrayal of Tecumseh as a tragic hero whose hamartia is his steadfast resolve to protect Indigenous peoples and territories from American colonization. The catastrophe that appears to befall him is the loss, seemingly suffered by all Indigenous peoples, of land and leadership. Like

the plots of classical tragedies, this “tragedy of Tecumseh” generates affect through conveying a sense of the inevitability of its protagonist’s doom. Contemporary settler state representations of 1812 reinforced this view to support settler colonial institutions and erase the ongoing survival and resistance of Indigenous relational self-determination. I suggest, however, that Mair’s play can be read differently to convey traces of ongoing, decentralized forms of Indigenous governance, and Indigenous peoples’ struggle to defend their relational self-determination in the face of settler colonialism.

My reading of Mair’s play in this chapter takes as its starting point that the struggle for Indigenous relational self-determination survives Tecumseh and persists in Canada today. Drawing on Anishnaabe scholars King and Simpson, I argue that in focusing one’s critique of the play solely on its complicity in settler colonial discourse risks overlooking the play’s nuanced representation of Indigenous leadership and resistance as place-based, relational, and rooted in Indigenous understandings of respect and responsibility. This 19th-century play does not, in the end, support the settler colonial narrative about 1812 promoted in 2012 without contradictions. Despite its production of tragic stereotypes and closures, Mair’s play carries traces of Indigenous practices of leadership and legacies of resistance that trouble national narratives of 1812 in 2012, which normalize the state’s assertion of sovereignty over Indigenous relational self-determination. In making this argument, I show how the archive of Indigenous resistance and knowledge systems might be extended to include even Mair’s controversial, if canonical, 19th-century play.

The Historical and Political Context of 1812

Representations of the War of 1812 depict an era of intensified disorder and upheaval for Indigenous peoples across North America. According to King, at the end of the French and Indian War (1754-1763) the British asserted that their defeat of the French meant they had also defeated the Anishnaabe peoples of the Great Lakes and so could dispose of their lands as they wished (75). In response, the Ottawa chief Pontiac, alongside chiefs of the Senecas, Chippewas, and Delawares, formed an alliance against the British and forced them to negotiate terms that would protect Indigenous peoples and their ways of life (Laxer 8). The Royal Proclamation of 1763, issued by George III, recognized a vast tract of land for First Nations from the Appalachians to the Mississippi and from the Great Lakes to Florida. As many of the American colonies saw the west as their destined space of occupation, the Proclamation sowed seeds of discontent amongst many Americans (8).

Although the Royal Proclamation recognized Indigenous claims to lands, it did not protect Indigenous peoples from American expansion. Twenty years after the Proclamation, The Treaty of Paris (1783) marked the end of the American War of Independence and a temporary end to hostilities between the British and its former American colonies. It also marked the British surrender of lands from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. The document stated that “the U.S. government regarded the lands of the native people in the Ohio country as theirs, won in war and legitimized in a treaty” (Laxer 21). In response to the dictates of the Treaty of Paris, Mohawk leader Joseph Brant and Shawnee war chief Blue Jacket “participated in the formation of an alliance of northwestern tribes – Iroquois, Hurons, Delawares, Shawnees, Ottawas, Ojibwas, Potawatomis, Miamis, and Wabash river tribes” (22).

They agreed that “any cession of land to the US should be made in the most public manner, and by the united voice of the confederacy; holding all partial treaties as void and of no effect” (23). As in the aftermath of the French and Indian War, Indigenous peoples mobilized to defend themselves against the usurpation of Indigenous political autonomy and decision-making power over their lands.

Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships in the U.S. continued to be tumultuous up to the outbreak of the War of 1812. Carl Benn, in “Aboriginal Peoples and Their Multiple Wars of 1812,” writes that “[t]he Indigenous population affected by the War of 1812 lived across enormous expanses of territory, ranging from the west side of the Mississippi River to the Atlantic coast in the United States, and from the northerly reaches of the Great Lakes watershed in Upper and Lower Canada to the Spanish colonies of East and West Florida” (132). Indeed, Indigenous peoples living in territories claimed as Upper and Lower Canada were also affected by the War; however, Benn notes that there seemed to be “less pressure to alienate land” as, at that time, “the First Nations and British Crown had a stronger history of preserving some sort of *modus vivendi* than was the case south of the Euro-Anglo border” (134; emphasis in original). Many Indigenous peoples whose lands were in the claimed territory of the U.S. struggled under a “restricted reservation existence” (132).

As hostilities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the U.S. raged on, the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) broke out in Europe. To support its navy, Britain began seizing American ships, men, and resources. This infuriated the newly independent U.S., prompting the country’s leaders to declare war against Britain and attempt to capture Britain’s Canadian colonies. In 1805, Tecumseh had taken up Blue Jacket’s role as voice and leader of Indigenous

resistance in the Ohio Valley in the face of American expansion. Benn writes that “Tecumseh, and his prophet half-brother, Tenskwatawa, began to form a broad aboriginal confederacy [establishing] Prophetstown at the Tippecanoe and Wabash rivers as a political and spiritual center for their movement” (134). Tecumseh felt that the U.S. was negotiating treaties in bad faith by signing agreements with nations made vulnerable by disease and poverty. Tecumseh and his associated chiefs met with William Henry Harrison at a council in Vincennes in August of 1810 and insisted that the U.S. nullify treaties that had been negotiated unfairly or the confederacy would ally themselves with the British (Laxer 78). Rejected by Harrison, Tecumseh asked for assistance from the British and forged an alliance with General Isaac Brock, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, against the U.S.

The preface to *Tecumseh: A Drama* relates how Tecumseh and Brock captured Fort Detroit, a key position from which the Americans could launch their invasion of Canada. He states that “the bold stroke of Brock and Tecumseh at Detroit electrified the people” (Mair 5). James Laxer writes that the commitment that Brock and Tecumseh made with each other required no “lengthy protocols and precise terms [...] The two men simply sized each other up and resolved to entrust their respective fates to one another” (Laxer 147). Indeed, Mair’s play dramatizes their meeting and the forming of their alliance in similar terms. After decrying the treatment of Indigenous peoples at the hands of the Americans, Tecumseh enjoined Brock to combine forces. Mair’s play dramatizes how Brock responds by stating that “No treaty for a peace, if we prevail, / Will bear a seal that doth not guard your rights” (88). Although it appears Brock suggests that British sovereignty will guarantee Indigenous rights, thus making such rights subject to the will of the Crown, King and Laxer both represent Brock as someone who

understood and was sympathetic to the struggles of Indigenous peoples (Laxer 195, King 124). Regardless, the alliance between the British and the Indigenous confederacy would not last, however. The key players in this relationship were killed in armed conflicts over the next two years. After their famous defeat of Hull and takeover of Fort Detroit, Brock and then Tecumseh died in battle against the Americans in 1813. Laxer writes that with Brock's death, "Tecumseh would no longer have a British partner who saw the war the way he did, with native objectives built into the strategy" (195).

Brock was succeeded by Proctor, a much more defensively minded leader who did not prioritize the needs of the confederacy. When it became apparent to Tecumseh that Proctor was ordering a retreat from invading American forces, he and his allies "brought with them a great wampum belt that had the figure of a heart woven into its centre" and publicly expressed how their alliance with the British had been broken (203). In the final months of the war, Tecumseh received a fatal wound while trying to defend against the American advance. The signing of the Treaty of Ghent in Belgium officially ended hostilities and although Article 9 of the treaty demanded that the "rights, possessions, [and] privileges" of Indigenous peoples be restored to the state they were in in 1811, the treaty did not protect the confederacy or other Indigenous peoples from American colonization (297). Despite Tecumseh's death and the toothless Treaty of Ghent, and despite state commemorations from 2012, Mair's play and King's Odawa history show how the struggle to protect and nourish Indigenous land-based relationality survived the 19th century and continues today.

Settling the State

As noted, in 2012 the Conservative government of Canada commissioned representations of 1812 that seemed designed to reconcile Indigenous peoples with settler state sovereignty. The government launched the 1812.gc.ca website, which states that “the Government of Canada is striving to increase Canadians’ knowledge of the War of 1812, an event that was key to ensuring our country’s existence and shaping our identity as Canadians” (Government of Canada). The events surrounding the war shape Canadian national identity; however, our understanding of the events is mediated through representations by settler colonial institutions that have a stake in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous place-based relationality. I contend that representations of the 19th-century conflict circulated on the Conservative Government’s website and the CBC’s documentary, *Been There, Won That*, work to legitimize current relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples wherein the settler state and institutions maintain power over Indigenous nations.

The Conservative government’s commemorative website of the War of 1812 obscures the ongoing struggle for Indigenous nationhood by offering visitors an overly simplified and anachronistic narrative of the conflict. The state narrative of the conflict reduces the struggle to the actions of strategically representative “heroes” by displaying portraits of contemporary model actors under a banner announcing, “Major Figures of the War of 1812: The Fight for Canada.” Individual models in costume represent Isaac Brock, Tecumseh, Charles de Salaberry, and Laura Secord (Government of Canada). British North America existed as a set of colonies, including Upper and Lower Canada at the time of the War of 1812; however, Canada did not exist as an autonomous political entity until 1867. Furthermore, Tecumseh and the Confederacy

joined the British not in a “fight for Canada.” Rather, they were fighting to defend their existence as diverse and autonomous peoples in complex systems of alliance with European nations.

If one scrolls down the state’s initial 1812 commemorative webpage, below the fore-mentioned portraits of “Canada’s heroes,” one may read the following in the “Prime Minister’s Message”:

June 2012 will mark 200 years since the declaration of the War of 1812 - a war that saw Aboriginal peoples, local and volunteer militias, and English and French-speaking regiments fight together to save Canada from American invasion. (Government of Canada)

This representation of 1812 states that Indigenous peoples fought in the War of 1812 to save Canada as opposed to fighting to protect their own lands and lives. There is no mention of the traditions of resistance to settler colonialism to which Tecumseh, the confederacy, and contemporary resistance belong. This would disrupt the representation of Indigenous peoples as wilful martyrs for the establishment of the Canadian state.

The narrative attributed to Stephen Harper further down the web page imagines the War of 1812 as a founding moment of Canadian national identity. It supports Crown sovereignty overtop of Indigenous relational self-determination. Then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper does not utterly erase Indigenous peoples but subsumes them within Canadian multiculturalism. Elements of Indigenous cultures can continue to exist if they do not challenge state sovereignty or disrupt the neoliberal capitalist economy, as I discuss in chapter 3. The Prime Minister further states:

The War helped establish our path toward becoming an independent and free country, united under the Crown with a respect for linguistic and ethnic diversity. The heroic efforts of Canadians then helped define who we are today, what side of the border we live on, and which flag we salute. (Government of Canada)

The Canada envisioned here is the liberal multicultural country celebrated by Canadian nationalist discourse. Canada's multiculturalism policy does indeed legislate support for "cultural groups to participate in and contribute to Canadian society and Canadian unity;" however, notes Eva Mackey in *House of Difference*, "neither official linguistic nor political pluralism (other than for the French and the English) was part of the policy" (Mackey 66). Official multiculturalism calls for the "respect for linguistic and ethnic diversity," as the former Prime Minister states on 1812.gc.ca. However, it also positions Indigenous nationhood "under the crown" as subject to Crown sovereignty (Government of Canada). Harper's message about the War of 1812 summarizes the core narrative that 2012 state commemorations of 1812 seem designed to tell: that the settler colonial structure of Canada is settled and innocent. That is, the Canadian state is not contested by Indigenous activists and their allies and is not guilty of dispossessing Indigenous peoples. Canada is represented as being brought about with the help of English, French-speaking, and Indigenous peoples, through a fateful conflict with the U.S.

Harper's reference to "which flag we salute" is a powerful example of how the state's 2012 commemorations work to produce a settler colonial narrative about the War of 1812. It warrants a comparison with Roland Barthes' critique of French imperial discourse in his 1957 book, *Mythologies*. Barthes comments on the cover image of the magazine *Paris Match* that

depicts a young Algerian boy who salutes the French flag. Barthes writes that the image signifies to him,

that France is a great empire, that all her sons, without any color discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors. (225)

The congruity between the *Paris Match* cover image and Harper's statement concerning Indigenous peoples' involvement in the War of 1812 is poignant. Tecumseh and his associated nations, although traditionally rooted in the land today found in the United States, are claimed by the Prime Minister's message as "Canadians," along with other residents of the then-British colonies of Upper and Lower Canada. Like France, which is imagined as having the loyalty of all her "sons, without any color discrimination," Canada is depicted as respectful of its linguistically and ethnically diverse subjects. Regardless of displacement, occupation, and oppression, suffered by both the young Algerian boy and Indigenous peoples, despite ongoing resistance, both are imagined as dutifully saluting the flag of their oppressors (225). The Government of Canada is an authority over the production of truth in Canada and, in its statements on the War of 1812, renders the structure of settler colonialism over Indigenous peoples as innocent, natural, and universally beneficial. Any ongoing resistance by Indigenous peoples is thus unfounded.

The Prime Minister's account of how the War of 1812 was resolved goes on to suggest that subsequent treaties made with Indigenous peoples were unproblematic stages in the

establishment of the settler state. Regarding the official end of the conflict between the British and the Americans, the Prime Minister states that,

The signing of the Treaty of Ghent and *other treaties* that followed confirmed the border between Canada and the United States—now the world's longest, undefended border and an example of nations coexisting peacefully side by side with mutual respect and friendship. (Government of Canada; emphasis added)

For those knowledgeable about Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations, the Prime Minister's message about "other treaties" seems to allude to Indigenous-non-Indigenous treaties, whose marginal protections have not been respected. J.R. Miller writes in *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* (2009) that the "Royal Proclamation that was issued in London on 7 October 1763" established terms upon which treaties could be made "concerning First Nations and their lands" (67). For years the Royal Proclamation standardized treaty-making with Indigenous nations. Miller reports, however, that in the years following 1812, when the population of Upper and Lower Canada began to climb and relations between British North America and the U.S. improved, "military dependence on Indigenous nations" became "less and less necessary" (102). Treaties struck between Indigenous nations and the Crown between 1815 and 1827 "secured access for non-Natives to almost all of the remaining arable land in southern Ontario" (95). These political and demographic changes in the post-1812 era contributed to the perspective that Indigenous peoples were and are "obstacles to settler ambitions for economic development" (102).

Indigenous perspectives on treaty-making in Canada suggest that the Prime Minister's view of treaties is not only disingenuous but also appropriates Haudenosaunee diplomatic

terms and concepts. Taiaiake Alfred tells us in *Peace, Power, Righteousness* (1999) that the Two Row Wampum represents the intention to have a “lasting peace” with non-Indigenous peoples based on “coexistence,” “respect,” “autonomy,” and the “distinctive nature of each partner” (76). “The metaphor for the relationship,” “two vessels, each possessing its own integrity, traveling the river of time together was conveyed on a wampum belt of two parallel purple lines (representing power) on a background of white beads (representing peace)” (76). Integral to this relationship is “respectful (co-equal) friendship and alliance” (76). Note the similarity in language between Alfred’s description of the Kaswentha, a treaty that continues to inspire Indigenous interpretations of how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations should be structured, and the former Prime Minister’s vague description of treaty-making, including the Treaty of Ghent with the U.S. The Prime Minister’s message not only erases past and present contentions regarding relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada but appropriates terms used by Indigenous peoples in discussions of treaty-making. It not only positions the Canadian settler state as firmly established on Indigenous lands but also implies that the state has, to a degree, become indigenized and thus has just claims to Indigenous lands.

In the same way that the Harper government speaks of the War of 1812, the French imperial myth drew upon actual events and peoples to produce a sense of legitimacy and permanence for the settler colonial state. In the context of Imperial France, Barthes continues to explain that the signifier of the Algerian boy must be emptied in order to “free the picture, and prepare it to receive its signified [...] The [original] meaning loses its value but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment” (227). Similarly, in telling the story

of the War of 1812 as an event that ostensibly produced the settler-Canadian nation, historical events and contemporary details, such as the persistence of Indigenous struggles to protect relational self-determination, are put into parentheses “but keep their life” and “provide nourishment” for the myth. In producing the story of the War of 1812 as a foundational event in nationalist settler colonial discourse, the state draws upon the lives of individuals and living nations. Of course, this is not a new process, but is part of ongoing colonization that seeks to displace Indigenous peoples and reconcile them as elements of the settler colonial Canadian nation-state through coercion and hegemonic discourse.

The work of Canadian settler colonial narratives such as those produced and circulated by the federal government’s 1812 website, and the CBC documentary, *Been There, Won That*, obfuscate the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands and life. They do so by reproducing and recirculating a tragic narrative in which the disruption of Indigenous practices of nationhood began with U.S. aggression and ended with Tecumseh’s death. Such narratives produce versions of the War of 1812 that suggest it was resolved by the rightful establishment of the Canadian settler-state.

Behind Wry Grins: *Been There, Won That* and the containment of Indigenous nationhood

CBC’s *Been There, Won That* is hosted by Peter Keleghan of the *Red Green Show*, and written, directed, and produced by Susan Teskey. It was commissioned by the Conservative government in 2012 and aired on CBC television on October 4, 2012. Early on, Keleghan assures audiences that the account of the War of 1812 it offers is both inclusive of Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives and is creatively independent of the state’s agenda. At the outset of

the documentary, Keleghan jokes that the reason that the CBC made the documentary was that the federal government asked it to. After making the statement, Keleghan anxiously looks off-screen at someone who seems to be trying to censor his “candid” statement. He quickly mutters, “Oh, I wasn’t supposed to say that?” (CBC / Radio-Canada, *The War of 1812*). He then sheepishly looks back into the camera lens with a mischievous grin. This contrived dialogue between Keleghan and an imagined director creates the illusion of distance between the CBC documentary and what might be the state’s strategic representation of the War of 1812. Indeed, interviews with historians of the war such as James Laxer and Shawnee legal scholar Robert Miller, Professor of Law at Arizona State University, lend credence and legitimacy to the documentary as an accurate representation of historical events.

The documentary introduces Tecumseh not as the leader of an international, transcontinental alliance of autonomous Indigenous nations but as General Isaac Brock’s “trump card” against the Americans at Fort Detroit. Keleghan does mention that Brock and Tecumseh formed an alliance against the Americans but emphasizes their personal relationship. In fact, only two-thirds of the way into the film does Keleghan begin to explore the extent of the confederacy and its challenge to American and British imperialism. With satirical solemnity, Keleghan recites one of Tecumseh’s speeches wherein he articulates some of the beliefs of the Indigenous confederacy. While Keleghan recites Tecumseh’s words, images of forests and plains appear on the screen. This moment in the documentary could depict how Tecumseh and his brother’s words traveled by way of oral networks, from the Great Lakes to Florida. John Sugden’s “Early Pan-Indianism; Tecumseh's Tour of the Indian Country, 1811-1812” offers an account of Tecumseh’s visits to deliver speeches to Indigenous nations from the Ohio valley to

Florida (298). The scene, however, is more akin to all too common depictions of Indigenous peoples as noble savages: it reduces the international and complex diplomatic struggle of Indigenous nations in the face of colonization to a romanticized, disembodied voice over of images of unpeopled woodlands. Furthermore, Kelleghan's ironic tone suggests that the Indigenous defense of land, life, and relationality is comedic, quixotic, and anachronistic.

Following Kelleghan's recitation, Miller and Joseph Boyden describe how Tecumseh "died fighting for his vision for a great confederacy and a native homeland" (CBC / Radio-Canada, *The War of 1812*). Indeed, accounts by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous historians agree that Tecumseh and his brother employed powerful rhetoric of shared concern for the protection of the various lifeways of Indigenous peoples across North America to gain as much support for their confederacy as possible. What the documentary does not share with its audience is the fact that the confederacy's project is an extension of an enduring legacy of resistance to colonization, a tradition of movements led in part by Odawa war chief Pontiac, Mohawk political leader Joseph Brant, and Shawnee war chief Blue Jacket. Rather, the documentary's near erasure and misrepresentation of Indigenous resistance reinforces the view that Indigenous resistance somehow died with Tecumseh.

At the one-hour mark in the documentary, Kelleghan states that Tecumseh "dies and with him, the dream of an independent nation for First Peoples" (CBC / Radio-Canada, *The War of 1812*). His heroic death perpetuates the "Indian heroic tragedy," according to which Indigenous peoples were and are fated to die (Goldie 173). Robert Miller corroborates Kelleghan's statement in the documentary, stating that Tecumseh not only "represented resistance" but "was the unity," as though he alone embodied the unity of Indigenous peoples.

If the unity of Indigenous resistance rested solely with Tecumseh, it would indeed be fragile and temporally bound. This obscures how Indigenous resistance manifests in a variety of ways, such as language revitalization and land claims. Moments after Keleghan's statement, the documentary shows an image of Joseph Boyden, who reiterates that had Tecumseh lived, First Nations peoples would have their own country instead of reserves. Boyden's statement reaffirms the idea that the fate of Indigenous rights and claims to traditional territories were somehow tied to the fate of a Shawnee chief who spoke on behalf of nations joined in a confederacy and who died at the hands of Americans. British, and more recently Canadian peoples are thus relieved of any wrong-doing in Indigenous peoples' loss of land and autonomy. Moreover, if we are to take the rest of the CBC's documentary at its word, Indigenous peoples did not die in the War of 1812 for their ways of life and their sense of kinship with traditional lands. Rather, they died so that Canada, a settler state, might come into existence some 54 years later in 1867.

The Ambivalence of Mair's Play

This chapter offers a reading of *Tecumseh: A Drama* guided by Indigenous theories and practices of leadership. I hope to offer new insights into Mair's text that challenge 2012 commemorations that settle Tecumseh's role as a supporting actor in the birth of Canada. Daniel Coleman sheds some light on the discursive work that Mair's *Tecumseh: A Drama* seems to perform. He discusses Mair's depiction of Indigenous peoples as dying and yet simultaneously holders of values and ways of being that Mair felt should define Canadians. Coleman suggests in *White Civility*, his analysis of the literary elements of settler discourse in

Canada, that the settler is plagued by a sense of being “caught between two First Worlds, two origins of authority and authenticity” (16). The settler subject derives his sense of cultural authority from the imperium, Britain, while occupying the lands of Indigenous peoples. The problem facing the settler is how to “construct, by a double process of speedy indigenization and accelerated self-civilization, his priority and superiority to [Indigenous peoples and non-European] latecomers” (16). Mair’s *Tecumseh* contributes to the production of Canadian settler identity by being something of an exemplar of selected British values of civility as well as connection to the land. I agree with Coleman’s analysis; however, this chapter will show that Mair’s *Tecumseh*, when read through Indigenous practices of leadership, suggests Indigenous futurity and disrupts settler colonial discourse about 1812.

Like Coleman, Katie Grubisic, in “‘Savage nations roam o’er native wilds’: Charles Mair and the Ecological Indian” (2005), offers an analysis of Mair’s works. She describes his works as a “nuanced dialogue of taming” (60). In Grubisic’s view, Mair’s Indigenous peoples are to be admired for their relationships with the land. In his texts, they provide non-Indigenous Canadians with an exemplar of how to cultivate a sense of belonging to the natural environment (63). Mair’s work allows the “other a voice, and one whose interpellation of wilderness is a collision but also a recognition, an appreciation (to some degree) and an attempt at reconciliation” (60). Instead of utterly erasing Indigenous peoples, Grubisic suggests Mair’s play is an attempt to reconcile, qua assimilate, Indigenous knowledge and practices into an emergent European-Canadian polity, subsuming selected qualities into the settler imaginary. Like Coleman, Grubisic provides an astute critique of Mair based on settler colonial theory, but her analysis does not shed light on how Indigenous peoples and practices in Mair’s play survive

1812. Indigenous scholarship on Indigenous leadership allows for new readings of Mair's play, ones that show how Indigenous resistance and leadership were not extinguished in the 19th century but continue in contemporary times.

While Mair wrote *Tecumseh*, the Métis were engaged in armed resistance against the Canadian state's takeover of their territories. Mair was a zealous agent of 19th-century Canadian settler nationalism. He articulated an especially ardent hatred towards Louis Riel, leader of the Métis resistance of the 1880s. In fact, Mair publicly called Riel a "villain" and a murderer (Davis-Fisch 131, Coleman 60) as Mair became a leading voice for Canadian national expansion. He was a founding member of the Canada First group, a conservative nationalist political movement dedicated to the "promotion of westward expansion" (Braz 40). He also established the *Prince Albert Times*, and the *Saskatchewan Review*, both of which promoted settlement of Métis and First Nations land by protestant settlers. In 1869, while working for the Minister of Public Works as a paymaster for the company commissioned by the government to construct a road from Ontario to the Red River Settlement, Mair was imprisoned by Louis Riel, leader of the Métis provisional government, for insubordination but then escaped (41). Literary scholar Albert Braz and other critics of Mair's works comment on Mair's ambivalence towards Indigenous peoples, which is reflected in *Tecumseh: A Drama* (1886). The play expresses Mair's mixed feelings about Indigenous peoples, as well as represents the belief that the Canadian nation-state should emulate Indigenous nobility and kinship with the land but be British in culture, race, and creed (Coleman 63).

In *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures*, Terry Goldie questions the characterization of *Tecumseh* as an Indigenous

sovereign. Mair's play depicts how, in a heated exchange with General Harrison, leader of American forces in the American North West, Tecumseh addresses the loss of lands to the Americans:

Restore the forests you have robbed us of—
 Our stolen homes and vales of plenteous corn!
 Give back the boundaries, which are our lives,
 Ere the axe rise! Aught else is reasonless. (Mair 44)

In speaking eloquently of the needs of Indigenous peoples, Tecumseh is characterized as a statesman with noble bearing, yet his axe also represents a threat. In short, he exemplifies the stereotype of the noble savage. Terry Goldie writes that the "attraction of the heroic tragedy was linked to monarchist sympathies" (34). Tecumseh's concern for his people, Shakespearian manner of speaking, and overall bearing characterize him as "clearly superior to the common Indians whom [he leads], even down to [his] language" (32). Goldie notes that "long before the phrase was applied in Canada to left-leaning Progressive Conservatives, these dramatic versions of Indian heroes would have been perfect candidates for the label of 'Red Tory'" (34).

Tecumseh has both an "aristocratic bearing" as well as an "overwhelming concern for" his peoples. These qualities are indeed representative of red Toryism as well as "Canadian nationalist and imperialist ideals" that Mair professed (34). Mair's play also portrays Tecumseh as capable of shifting from red tory to "red devil" (Davis-Fisch 136). Portraying him thus, Mair's play does in certain instances characterize Tecumseh as something of an Indigenous sovereign, a tragic representative of a noble and savage people.

Indigenous Governance Traditions

Recent Indigenous scholarship on Indigenous governance invites a more nuanced examination of Mair's characterization of Tecumseh, particularly his style of leadership. Yes, the play contributes to the production of the stereotype of the noble savage along with the myth of the vanishing race. However, Mair's play also depicts the nuanced aspects of Indigenous political traditions. In "A Rhetoric of Contact: Tecumseh and the Native American Confederacy," Robert Yagelski writes that while Tecumseh's rhetorical performances have been used in stereotypical representations of Indigenous peoples, we would be remiss if we overlook how they also exemplify Indigenous traditions of political oratory. Speeches given by individuals like Tecumseh illustrate the "important role of public discourse in the social and political lives of" Indigenous peoples (67). Indeed, writes Simpson, although many "band councils and contemporary Indigenous organizations" have adopted western "styles of leadership," they do not necessarily represent traditional forms of leadership (Simpson, *Dancing* 119). For her, Indigenous leaders influence, inspire, and encourage. They do not command or dictate. Indigenous leadership is exemplified in Elders who embody "gentleness, kindness, respect, humility, and have grounded, authentic sources of power that come from working within the emergent forces of nature [...] rather than from authoritarian power" (119). While Mair may characterize Tecumseh as a Shakespearian tragic hero by assigning to him speeches befitting the role, contemporary scholarship by Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics allows us to read Tecumseh otherwise: he moves his followers with inspiration and encouragement. These traditions, insofar as they emphasize respect for the autonomy of individuals and nations,

suggest that marking the loss of an important leader, such as Tecumseh, would not mean the end of Indigenous leadership itself.

Indigenous leadership, according to Simpson's Nishnaabe understanding, is "diffused, shared, [...] arising out of need (120). "This ensured," she continues, "the egalitarian social organization to a greater degree than the hierarchy that emerges when certain clans or certain individuals are placed in permanent positions of leadership [...]" (121). Speaking on a panel entitled, "The Doctrine of Christian Discovery and its Impact on U.S.-Original Nations Relations," Lenape/Shawnee legal scholar and founder/co-director of the Indigenous Law Institute, Steven Newcomb states that Western forms of sovereignty entail "unjust systems of domination," an ideology that continues to inform how settler nation-states exert power over Indigenous peoples and traditional territories. Tecumseh's power was contingent upon his ability to persuade, not coerce, individuals from various nations into lending their strength to the defense of Indigenous relational self-determination.

Leaders such as Tecumseh "had no legal claim to power other than the consensus of their followers" (Yagelski 73). This is not to underplay how important or powerful a leader Tecumseh was; however, it does suggest that Indigenous practices of nationhood were not and are not dependent on the fate of any one individual, but rather on enduring political practices of orality and consensus-building. The scene in Mair's play in which Tecumseh confronts General Harrison in Vincennes substantiates and clarifies my claim. By 1810, the year in which this meeting took place, "Tecumseh was an experienced and well-known orator" (71). Many Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples knew him as an "expert speechmaker" who "knew how to argue successfully within the context of his own culture as well as in negotiations with

whites" (71). When Tecumseh first comes to speak with Harrison in Mair's play, he displays his adeptness at persuasion. Approaching Harrison's camp, Tecumseh insists on having their meeting in a field: "Houses are built for whites — the red man's house, / Leaf-roofed, and walled with living oak, is there — / Pointing to the grove. Let our white brother meet us in it!" (Mair 42). Moments later, Tecumseh asserts that "my father is the sun; the earth my mother" (44). With a performative flourish, Tecumseh asserts Indigenous belonging with the land and other elements of creation. While romantic and an example of the trope of the noble savage, the scene represents Tecumseh's noted mastery of rhetoric and spectacle, key elements of persuasion in Indigenous diplomatic practice.

In his depicted meeting with Harrison at Vincennes in Mair's play, Tecumseh does not compromise the power of individual and national self-determination, crucial aspects of Indigenous leadership according to Simpson. Harrison, upset that Tecumseh has shown up to discuss terms with him with such a large group of people asks, "How comes it, then, that he descends on us / with this o'erbearing and untimely strength?" (43). Tecumseh responds,

You called upon Tecumseh and / he came! / You sent your messenger, asked us to bring
 / Our wide complaint to you – and it is here: / (Pointing to his followers.) / Why is our
 brother angry at our force, / Since every man but represents a wrong? (43).

The scene represents how Tecumseh did draw on the persuasive power of spectacle and rhetoric, but it also shows how he practiced a form of leadership based on respect for the autonomy of Indigenous individuals and nations.

Mair represents Tecumseh's Indigenous style of leadership elsewhere in the play as well. Following Tecumseh and Harrison's meeting, the latter worries about the former's efforts

to form a confederacy with other nations: “Now, here is news, / Fresh from the South, of bold Tecumseh’s work: / The Creeks and Seminoles have conjoined, / Which means a general union of the tribes” (54). In the years prior to the outbreak of the War of 1812, Tecumseh visited the lands of other Indigenous nations to increase the confederacy’s numbers. Mair’s play opens with Tecumseh and his brother, who speak of their work in uniting various Indigenous peoples. While the scene establishes the conflict between Indigenous nations and the U.S., I suggest that it also establishes that the power Tecumseh and his brother wield is rooted in their rhetorical abilities to unite self-determining nations. Tecumseh states that “[t]he distant nations will unite with us / To spurn the fraudulent treaties of Fort Wayne. / From Talapoosa [sic] to the Harricanaw / I have aroused them from their lethargy” (13). His brother, Tenskwatawa, or the Prophet, states that he has, through oral networks, circulated a call to Indigenous peoples to return to tradition and to unite against American expansion: “by swift messengers, [he has] Proclaimed to all the nations far and near, / I am the Open-Door, and have the power / To lead them back to life” (13). In his history of the Odawa nation during the time of the War of 1812, Cecil King comments on the circulation of the Prophet and Tecumseh’s message, stating that their messengers “came to us in the traditional way and we listened” (King 68). King recounts the multiple stanzas of the Prophet’s message¹¹ that called upon First Nations peoples to return to traditional practices and to limit their dealings with Europeans. As Mair’s depiction and King’s historiography attests, the message Tecumseh and his brother propagated emphasizes tradition and persuades, without coercion, individuals and nations to join Tecumseh’s confederacy in order to defend traditional lifeways. Thus, the confederacy itself was built on a respect for the

autonomy of peoples and nations, troubling the settler colonial myth that Tecumseh's death could mark the end of Indigenous relational leadership and self-determination altogether.

Tecumseh was a renowned speaker who practiced oratory designed to persuade both Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous audiences. Indeed, some of what he is remembered as saying could give one reason to believe that he wielded sovereign power over Indigenous peoples. John Sugden's "Early Pan-Indianism; Tecumseh's Tour of the Indian Country, 1811-1812" is a study of Tecumseh's travels to visit with and to deliver speeches to Indigenous nations from the Ohio valley to Florida. Sugden writes that over a six-month period, Tecumseh traveled to the "country of the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, Osages, the western Shawnees and Delawares, Iowas, Sacs and Foxes, Sioux, Kickapoo and Potawatomi" (298). His speeches called for a return to tradition and for individual nations to form a confederacy to stave off American expansion.

At times in Mair's play, Tecumseh characterizes the confederacy as a political entity with centralized decision-making power. It is more likely, however, that this was a rhetorical strategy; presenting a unified front to the Americans could be a more effective show of resistance. In one scene, Tecumseh explains to Harrison that the confederacy drew inspiration from the American federal structure:

Just as our brother's Seventeen Council Fires

Unite for self-protection, so do we.

How can you blame us, since your own example

Is but our model and fair precedent?

The Long-Knife's craft has kept our tribes apart,

[...]

But this is past. Our nations now are one and

Ready to rise in their embanded strength. (44)

Tecumseh asserts that his confederacy takes some of its organizational cues from how the “Seventeen Council Fires,” or American states, who are united under the federal government. Jerry D. Stubben, in “The Indigenous Influence Theory of American Democracy,” sheds light on the debate between historians around the degree to which American state-builders found inspiration for their governance design in the Haudenosaunee confederacy. Insisting upon the narrative that white Europeans inspired Indigenous peoples to organize themselves into a confederacy is not only inaccurate but lends itself to the notion that white Europeans were more advanced than their Indigenous North American counterparts. However, by describing it thus, Tecumseh asserts that the Americans were the ones who put Tecumseh and his colleagues in a position where they had to strategically unify themselves. and that Indigenous nations combined their strength to resist the Americans. As Yagelski writes, however, Tecumseh employed “an argument that would make sense to his white listeners” (73). Perhaps he wanted them to think of his confederacy not as a divisible collective of nations but as a substantial, united force (73). Despite this ambiguity, I argue that one should not conclude that each nation’s self-determination was surrendered to the authority of Tecumseh in any permanent way as this would be anathema to ongoing Indigenous practices and principles of leadership.

Yagelski writes that Tecumseh, the historical figure, was building on the momentum of an increasingly popular idea of Indigeneity. Tecumseh’s position, repeated throughout the play,

is that “all lands [...] are common to his race; / Not to be sold but by consent of all” (41).

Tecumseh did appeal to what Yagelskia calls a notion of “polygenesis,” which was growing in popularity in the 18th century as relationships between Europeans and Indigenous people were becoming increasingly tense. Polygenesis was the belief that Indigenous peoples were of a common origin and that North America belonged, collectively, to an Indigenous race (72). Glenn Tucker, a biographer of Tecumseh’s, argues, however, that “most of [Tecumseh’s] followers remained a tribal people,” answerable to themselves and to their independent nations (Tucker 156). Yagelski agrees and writes that Indigenous unity would have made sense to Harrison and though it may have made sense to some Indigenous audiences it would not have appealed to many Indigenous peoples. Thus, while at times Tecumseh may have employed the rhetoric of Indigenous unity to non-Indigenous audiences, as other moments in Mair’s representation suggest, the makeup of the confederacy was more likely in keeping with traditional respect for individual and national autonomy.

There are clear instances in Mair’s play where other chiefs of individual nations assert their ongoing autonomy. During the heated exchange at Vincennes, the Miami Chief refutes Harrison’s claim that his nation surrendered their lands to the U.S.:

And I renounce them also.

They were signed

By sottish braves at the Long-Knife's tavern chiefs,

Who sell their honour like a pack of fur,

Make favour with the pale-face for his fee,

And caper with the hatchet for his sport.

I am a chief by right of blood, and fling
 Your false and flimsy treaties in your face.
 I am my nation's head, and own but one
 As greater than myself, and he is here! (34)

The Miami Chief maintains his title as a leader of his people when he states that he is “chief by right of blood” and “is his nation’s head.” He accepts Tecumseh’s leadership since he is “greater than” himself, but this does not signify a permanent transference of power. According to Yagelski, “governance among Native American people was a matter of consensus among small bands or tribes” (72). Alfred writes that “a crucial feature of the Indigenous concept of governance is its respect for individual autonomy,” a notion that “precludes the notion of ‘sovereignty’” as “a permanent transference of power or authority from the individual to an abstraction of the individual members of the nation” (49). Simpson similarly writes how “authoritarian power” is anathema to Nishnaabe, Indigenous governance (119). In these scenes of Mair’s *Tecumseh*, leaders from multiple nations converges on Tecumseh without proclaiming him a sovereign. With his death, leadership could and did pass on to others and did not result in the dissolution of the struggle to defend Indigenous relational self-determination.

In a particularly poignant moment in Mair’s play, the American General Harrison laments that the U.S. did not practice a form of governance that honoured individual self-determination. In Scene II, Act II, prior to his direct confrontation with Tecumseh, Harrison regrets that he and Tecumseh are enemies:

My charge this chief might be my trusty friend.
 Yet I am but my nation's servitor;

Gold is the king who overrides the right. (41)

Harrison expresses a desire to have Tecumseh as an ally and as a friend but Harrison is duty-bound to act as his “nation’s servitor” (41). Mair’s choice of the word “servitor” suggests a very different form of leadership is practiced by the U.S. As noted, the Miami Chief states that he “own[s]” that there is one “greater” than himself (41). Harrison does not appear to be in a position, within the American governance structure, to own his action. His capacity to act autonomously is curtailed by the wishes of his nation. The Miami Chief, on the other hand, “owns” his decision to follow Tecumseh’s leadership. They practice a form of governance and leadership that not only allows but honours individual and national relational self-determination.

Mair’s representation of Harrison in this scene not only contrasts with Indigenous respect for self-determination but also sheds light on a powerful motivation behind settler colonialism itself: wealth and resource development. Alfred states that the goal of many Indigenous nations and activists is to defend in contemporary times

A set of values that challenge the destructive and homogenizing force of Western liberalism and free-market capitalism; that honour the autonomy of individual conscience, non-coercive authority, and the deep interconnection between human beings and the other elements of creation. (Alfred, *Peace, Power* 60)

Mair depicts Harrison as a reluctant agent of colonialism and the desire for wealth. He is thus positioned as the antithesis of contemporary ideals of Indigenous governance and leadership: “the autonomy of individual conscience” and “non-coercive authority.” Similarly, Simpson suggests that individual truth is accorded respect within Nishnaabe forms of governance.

Nishnaabe leadership looks like persuasion and inspiration (119). Harrison is coerced and coercive. He laments being an agent of colonialism, an agent of the type of centralized, hierarchical leadership that state representations in 2012 work to normalize.

Mair's characterization of Tecumseh would seem to be an example of the heroic Indian tragedy; however, Mair's Tecumseh can also be read according to ongoing practices of Indigenous leadership. State representations seem to position Tecumseh as an Indigenous sovereign whose death marks the dissolution of not only the Confederacy but also the struggle to defend Indigenous relational self-determination. These tragic representations of Indigenous peoples are mobilized to substantiate a discourse that legitimizes the Canadian nation and state control over Indigenous lands. However, Mair's play exemplifies how Tecumseh operated according to traditions of Indigenous governance in that he deploys his rhetorical skills to persuade both U.S. agents and self-determining Indigenous peoples. Tecumseh is represented in Mair's play less like a sovereign and more like Alfred's pow-wow drummer, one who calls upon "individuals to pool their self-power in the interests of the collective good" (49).

Taiiaike Alfred writes that leadership, in the Kanien'kéha context, is not based on the sovereign control of many lives and lands by one individual but on the "interplay of three kinds of power: individual power, persuasive power, and the power of tradition" (Alfred 50). In explaining leadership in Indigenous contexts, Alfred uses the following analogy:

I like to think of Indigenous leadership in terms of the relationship between the drummers, singers, and dancers at a pow-wow. The drummers and singers give voice to the heartbeat of the earth, and the dancers move to the sound, giving life to their personal visions and to those of their people. The drum prompts and paces. Drummers,

singers, and dancers act together to manifest tradition through the songs. All three groups are essential and related, the role of each group being to respect and represent the spirit of the creation in its own way, according to its own special abilities. (*Peace, Power* 115)

Like the drummers and singers at a pow-wow who inspire individuals to express their “personal visions” according to “their people,” leadership within Indigenous traditions is based in one’s ability to deploy oratory and tradition in the motivation and persuasion of others, while respecting their individual autonomies (115). Reading the play alongside Indigenous historiography and theories of Indigenous governance allows a reader to find traces of Indigenous leadership and legacies of resistance that survive Tecumseh into the 20th and 21st centuries.

A Vanishing Race?

In classical tragedy, the hero’s hamartia precipitates his fate. In the case of the state’s commemorations and much of Mair’s play, Tecumseh’s doom seems linked to his struggle to defend Indigenous peoples’ political autonomy and their relationships with the land. When, in the CBC documentary, Kelleghan begins to talk about Tecumseh and his confederacy, images of pristine woodlands and marshes appear atop Kelleghan’s voice reciting Tecumseh’s insistence that the land is the inheritance of all Indigenous peoples but the property of no one. As noted, the documentary portrays Tecumseh and the struggle to protect Indigenous peoples and their relationships with their lands as anachronistic, atavistic, and quixotic, yet Mair’s play suggests Tecumseh was a political strategist, not a sovereign, and that the confederacy was part of a

legacy of Indigenous resistance to colonization that belies the supposed tragic fate of the vanishing race.

Founder of Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal writes that some tragedies oppose an “anachronistic individual ethos” against a “contemporary social ethos” (Boal cited in Drakakis 139). Indeed, there are moments in Mair’s play that position Tecumseh as a quixotic hero, who tries in vain to embody and honour a code of ethics that, while admirable, has become obsolete. One such moment occurs when Harrison and Tecumseh discuss the treaties of Fort Wayne. Harrison exclaims that Tecumseh’s notion that “all lands are common to his race” is “absurd” and that such a “proposition would prevent all purchase and all progress” (41). Moments later, Harrison’s First Officer remarks that Tecumseh and his entourage have “the mien of pensive people born in ancient woods” (41). The Americans regard Tecumseh and his fellow Indigenous peoples as quixotic, a romantic obstacle to inevitable and necessary progress as defined by American colonial desire for lands and resources. Similarly, contemporary state representations of 1812 seem to imagine Tecumseh and his colleagues as, quite literally, out of time; however, at other moments, Mair’s play suggests that Indigenous resistance has a past and, as scholarship on Indigenous resistance substantiates, a future beyond a set of qualities subsumed within Canadian national identity.

Grubisic agrees that there is more to Mair’s representation of Indigenous peoples than depictions of a vanishing race. They are often “eloquent and psychologically complex; whose environmental stewardship is presented as an example to the colonizing Europeans” (Grubisic 61). Mair was an outspoken champion of Canadian nationalism. If he portrayed Indigenous peoples in a positive light, it was likely to highlight qualities that he felt could enrich the nascent

Canadian national identity. Grubisic asserts that Mair's *Tecumseh* is an affirmation of Canadian identity as formed by what Mair perceived to be the inherent qualities of the British as well as those of the Indigenous people (63). Tecumseh and his colleagues, in Mair's representation, are thus presented not as mere foils to American capitalist progress but as key elements in the discursive production of Canadian national identity.

While I agree with Grubisic that elements of Mair's play contribute to the production of Canadian nationalist discourse, Mair's *Tecumseh* articulates ongoing demands for Indigenous control of their lands. These instances undermine the tragic notion that Indigenous peoples are inevitably vanishing: "extinction" in Mair's play is "not a necessity [or fate] but something that could be avoided" (Davis-Fisch 135). In his discussion with the British General Isaac Brock over the terms of their much-celebrated alliance against the Americans, Tecumseh decries the injustice Indigenous peoples have endured by being forced from their lands and insists that the land that his confederacy holds "be confirmed by sacred treaty" between the Indigenous nations making up the confederacy and the British Crown (Mair 87). Brock responds by assuring Tecumseh that "no treaty for a peace, if we prevail, / Will bear a seal that doth not guard your rights" (87). Brock and Tecumseh entered into an alliance centered on rights and lands for Indigenous peoples, rights for which Indigenous peoples continue to fight.

In the very first scene of Mair's play, Tecumseh defines his confederacy as inheritors of Pontiac and the self-determining Indigenous peoples who rallied behind him 50 years before. After discussing how Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa circulated their call for Indigenous peoples to return to Indigenous practices and to form a united front against the encroaching Americans, Tecumseh remains alone on the stage and laments:

The pale hounds who uproot our ancient graves
 Come whining for our lands, with fawning tongues.
 And schemes and subterfuge and subtleties.
 O for a Pontiac to drive them back
 And whoop them to their shuddering villages!
 O for an age of valour like to his,
 When freedom clothed herself with solitude.
 And one in heart the scattered nations stood,
 And one in hand. It comes! And mine shall be,
 The lofty task to teach them to be free
 To knit the nations, bind them into one,
 And end the task great Pontiac begun! (Mair 19)

Tecumseh laments the coming of Europeans as “whining” hounds who crave the land he describes relationally, as the resting place for his ancestors. He recalls Pontiac’s integral role in a movement that resisted Britain’s attempt to assert control over the traditional territories of the Anishnaabe Nations around the Great Lakes between 1754 and 1763 (Miller 67, King 75). Pontiac, like Tecumseh, “knit” a number of Indigenous nations together in order to protect their lands. As noted, once Tecumseh, the historical figure, learned that General Proctor was going to order a retreat, he and his allies “brought with them a great wampum belt with the figure of a heart woven into its centre” and planned to cut it in half to express how their alliance with the British was at risk of being severed (Laxer 203). Wampum belts signify living agreements between self-determining nations. They honour parallel autonomy and interdependence.

Pontiac, as Tecumseh's words suggest, negotiated between inter-national unity and self-determination as he knit the nations together to defend shared interests. In gesturing to this legacy of resistance, Mair's play anticipates future resistance and assertions of Indigenous relational self-determination that, as Alfred tells us, continue to use the wampum belt to represent enduring treaties and Indigenous diplomatic traditions (*Peace, Power* 76).

Tecumseh's final words seem to fit the expectations of a tragic ending for his people during the War of 1812. Indeed, his final words appear to link his imminent death with his peoples' fall into death and disorder:

The hour is come! These weary hands and feet
 Draw to the grave. Oh, I have loved my life,
 Not for my own, but for my people's cause.
 Who now will knit them? Who will lead them on?
 Lost! Lost! Lost! The pale destroyer triumphs!
 I see my people fly – I hear their shrieks –
 And none to shield or save! My axe! My Axe
 Ha! It is here! No, no – the power is past.
 Oh, Mighty Spirit, shelter – save – my people! (126)

Goldie reads this final scene as a moment where Tecumseh appears to lament that his death will precipitate the imminent doom of Indigenous peoples. After all, he sees his "people fly" with "none to shield or save" them (126). His only recourse, it appears, is to appeal to the "Mighty Spirit" to "shelter – save" his people (126). As noted, Goldie writes that Mair's *Tecumseh* "dramaturgically and affectively" relies "upon the death of the doomed Indigenous

male hero” in order to create space for the settler nation-state to establish itself (173). Indeed, the tragedy of Tecumseh permits Canadian settler discourse to both eliminate the presence of Indigenous peoples as political entities and to displace blame for their dispossession from their land onto the United States.

In contrast, I suggest reading Tecumseh’s final lines as anticipating the next generation of Indigenous leaders. The symbol of Indigenous resistance invoked by Tecumseh in his final words is one that representatives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous nations exchanged during the era in which the War of 1812 took place: the axe. At the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in New York lies a tomahawk that Tecumseh may have carried with him during his final battle in 1813. General Proctor gifted Tecumseh a Pipe Tomahawk in 1812. Developed in the early 18th century, Pipe Tomahawks “combined both pipe and war hatchet in one single unit – symbols of both peace and war” (Taylor 31). In their study of the history of contemporary Indigenous Warrior Societies in Canada, Alfred and Lana Lowe write that the word “warrior” in Mohawk, *rotiskenhrakete*, means “carrying the burden of peace” (Alfred and Lowe 5). Although *rotiskenhrakete* is a Mohawk word and thus belongs in the context of the Mohawk nations’ knowledge and practices, it sheds light on Tecumseh’s references to his tomahawk as an assertion of Indigenous resistance. At Vincennes, Tecumseh asserts terms upon which Indigenous nations and Americans can establish peaceful relations:

Redeem your sacred pledges, and no more
 Our leaden birds will sing amongst your corn;
 But love will shine on you, and startled peace
 Will come again, and build by every hearth.

Refuse and we shall strike you to the ground! (Mair 48)

Here, Tecumseh promises that “leaden birds,” or bullets, will no longer “sing amongst the corn” and peace, which has been “startled,” might be re-established between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Earlier, he warns Harrison to take seriously the demands he brings forth on behalf of the confederacy “ere the axe rise” (44). According to Alfred and Lowe, warrior societies still identify themselves as carriers of the burden of establishing or maintaining peace (Alfred and Lowe 5). The axe, as a tool used for both constructive and destructive ends, was a symbol of peace and war. It symbolized the burden that warriors carry. As with the exchange of wampum belts, here and in his last words, Tecumseh specifically alludes to Indigenous traditions of resistance as well as international diplomacy.

Alfred explains that Indigenous leadership builds on the power of the individual, the power of persuasion, and the power of tradition. While Tecumseh’s personal power as a Shawnee War Chief and leading voice of a confederacy of autonomous nations dies, practices of persuasion and the vast and varied reservoir of Indigenous national traditions remain. In his final moments, Tecumseh takes up his axe, crying out “my axe! My Axe / Ha! It is here!” and then exclaims that, “[n]o, no – the power is past” (126). One may read his exclamations as a lamentation that the power of his axe has passed, along with his life. Indeed, without him, his axe becomes an inert tool. However, the power the axe wields, as a symbol of war and peace, is not “past”; rather, it has *passed on* and remains a symbol for future warriors to take up as they carry the burden of establishing peaceful relationships between self-determining nations.

Cecil King’s account of the Odawa Nation during the time of the War of 1812 tells us how Indigenous peoples continued to protect their lands and peoples from being claimed by

colonizing forces well after Tecumseh's death. Some Odawa peoples conceded to the Americans, as American forces claimed victories over some of their lands south of the Great Lakes (King 146). These Odawa agreed to terms with the U.S. that would allow them a chance to survive under American control. Such agreements, however, "created a split within the Odawa Nation" (King 146). Despite the loss of some land and of many Indigenous warriors and leaders, including Tecumseh, the Northern Odawa still had land unoccupied by the Americans and thus had "reason to fight" (King 146). "We were still protecting our land," writes King (146).

In the decades that followed, Odawa peoples continued to act on behalf of individual and communal relationships with their traditional territories. In the late 1850s, Crown representatives sought to extend British sovereignty over Manitoulin Island; however, many Anishnabek rejected the government's offers. King shares how an Odawa elder stated that "[t]he whites should not come and take our land from us: they ought to have stayed on the other side of the saltwater to work the land there" (252). Another community member, an "old warrior," stated that he considered the land as his "body" and thus did not want one of his "legs or arms" taken from him (252). Ultimately, while other Anishnabek communities signed a treaty with representatives of the Crown, the continued efforts of many Odawa to protect their autonomy as well as their relationships with each other and the land substantiates how practices of Indigenous nationhood and resistance survived Tecumseh's death.¹²

There are instances in Mair's play that do displace responsibility for Indigenous dispossession onto the United States. Indeed, one of the final scenes of Mair's play depicts British General François Baby, who pleads with the American General Harrison to protect Aboriginal peoples in the territory that the Americans have come to occupy: "I entreat you, sir,"

he states, “To make use of your authority / And shield them if you can” (126). Harrison responds that “[r]ight feeling tends this way,” however, “’t is a course / Not to be smoothly steered” (127). Mair seems to displace “explicit questions about treaty negotiations across the American border” by having Harrison validate Baby’s concerns about the fate of Aboriginal peoples, particularly “the cost of [aboriginal] settlements” (Davis-Fisch 143). What seems clear is that the “course” to be “steered” is one that is south of the American-British colonial border and not the responsibility of future Canadians.

Mair’s play can appear to reconcile Indigenous qualities with the ascendant Canadian settler colonial nation through the non-Indigenous settler character Lefroy, the Byronic poet who is “enamoured of Indian life” (11). Cree scholar Dallas Hunt, in his critique of George Miller’s film *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), examines the trope of the white saviour in settler narratives. Hunt describes how “in these stories, white settlers leave the chaotic and restrictive confines of the city and flee to the idyllic and enlightening expanses of the rural or natural world” (Hunt). Indeed, Lefroy’s first lines express how he would rather live amongst “wild men, wild beasts and birds, / Than in the sordid town” (Mair 21). Lefroy is the archetypal white settler who, feeling alienated in the city, seeks out a life amongst Indigenous peoples. Hunt writes that in totem transfer narratives, the white settler makes contact with Indigenous peoples who gift him a totem, “ranging from a ceremonial token, to a weapon, to livestock such as a horse” (Hunt). In these narratives, totems function as “metonyms for the land and Indigenous claims to it” (Hunt). If we are to apply Hunt’s rubric to Mair’s play, the totem transferred to Lefroy seems to be Lena, Tecumseh’s niece, who wins her uncle’s permission to marry Lefroy. As is typical of these narratives, following the totem transfer, the Indigenous

character(s) die (Hunt). With Brock, British General and Lefroy's childhood friend, Tecumseh, and Lena dead, Lefroy survives and comes to define the Canadian nation as a blend of Tecumseh's nobility and connectedness to the land and the settler colonial political order represented by Brock (Grubisic 67, Davis-Fisch 144). One might read Indigenous struggle as being resolved in the figure of Lefroy, who, according to the totem transfer narrative, reconciles certain notions of Indigeneity with settler colonial "futurity in the landscape" (Hunt).

Such tragic narratives and the closure they bring can become "codified as myth and [...] used to propagate nationalist narratives of settlement and naturalize Indigenous disappearance" or, as with totem transfers, assimilation into Canadian national identity (Hunt). As noted above, the Conservative Government of Canada's commemorative website frames the 1812 conflict between Britain, the U.S., and self-determining Indigenous nations as "an event that was key to ensuring our country's existence and shaping our identity as Canadians" (Government of Canada). Boyden asserts in *Been There, Won That* that "First Nations Peoples fought for this country and died for this country" (CBC / Radio-Canada, *The War of 1812*). Perhaps a character like Lefroy does not appear in either of these representations of the War of 1812 because he does not have to; the Canadian national narrative, one which has absorbed the Indigenous sense of belonging to the landscape, is made to appear settled, a *fait accompli*, as the Canadian state emerges from 1812 the product of a reconciliation of Indigeneity and British political orders. The loss of Indigenous relational autonomy is depicted as something to be mourned, while also a key aspect of the Canadian national narrative.

Mair's play does in the above instances displace ongoing responsibility for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations onto the United States and provide an opening for Canadian

nationalist closure to 1812 through Lefroy. However, I argue that Mair's play also unsettles these neat conclusions. Heather Davis-Fisch proposes that we read past and present discursive settler colonial land claims through a "politics of mourning" (151). In the final scene of Mair's play, after hearing of the Shawnee leader's defeat, General Harrison sends out troops in search of Tecumseh's remains; however, they "cannot be found" on account of being "borne away and buried / By faithful friends who would not name the place / If they were tortured" (Mair 127).¹³ Davis-Fisch sees in Tecumseh's missing remains the "failure to witness and thus incorporate an event" and this,

produces not a tragic but traumatic relationship with the past, complicating the operations of mourning so crucial to the literary land claim, since traumatic knowledge suggests an ongoing affective engagement, rather than a closed relationship, with the past. (149)

Readers of the play have witnessed Tecumseh's death and yet, like those left on stage at the end of the play, they are denied closure. Tecumseh's missing body produces an absence. It haunts the narrative with a traumatic, melancholic quality that reminds readers of the unfinished business of Indigenous struggle. Mair's play and the Indigenous warriors in this scene resist closure and produce, according to Davis-Fisch, an irreconcilable tension in settler colonial consciousness. One way of working through that tension, she suggests, is to engage in a politics of mourning, which she defines as a "creative process mediating a hopeful or hopeless relationship between loss and history," a process of taking up historical losses and engaging with them "from a perspective of what remains" (151).

My concern is that Davis-Fisch's proposed politics of mourning risks being complicit in the settling of Indigenous relationality and settler futurity. Her perspective on "what remains" bolsters settler discourse on Indigenous peoples through "operations of mourning" that seem instrumental in portraying the end of Indigenous relational self-determination as a foregone conclusion. It allows settler colonialism to continue, if mournfully. I agree with Davis-Fisch that *Tecumseh: A Drama* provides openings for a critique of contemporary state commemorations. However, a politics of mourning does not interrupt the discursive erasure of Indigenous nationhood and the normalization of settler colonial claims over Indigenous land and life. I argue that what remains following the War of 1812 are place-based Indigenous traditions of leadership and legacies of resistance that continue to resist the dispossession of Indigenous relational self-determination.

What Remains of Indigenous Relational Self-Determination

Tecumseh's death was a historically important event, but the dispossession of Indigenous nations is an ongoing, structural relationship produced and sustained by settler colonial discourse (Wolfe 388). Settler colonial representations of 1812 obscure how colonization is an emergent process that continues to inform relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. In their article, "Unsettling Settler Colonialism," Corey Snelgrove, Jeff Corntassel, and Rita Dhamoon worry about representations of "settler colonialism as transhistorical and inevitable" (17). Settler colonialism names ongoing and institutionally entrenched relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that, in the Canadian context, exist in the everyday practices of state actors, institutions, and

everyday Canadians. Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel tell us that colonization is also sustained through the insufficient engagement with “Indigenous peoples’ own articulations of Indigenous-settler relations, their governance, legal, and diplomatic orders, and the transformative visions entailed within Indigenous political thought” (17). Unsettling the Tragedy of Tecumseh requires meaningful engagement with living Indigenous scholarship and practices. What remains of Tecumseh is the ongoing struggle of Indigenous peoples and communities in the face of emergent settler colonial structures.

Indigenous scholarship on Indigenous political traditions reveals how Mair’s representation of Tecumseh leaves open future Indigenous resistance. As noted, in the scene at Vincennes the Miami Chief asserts that he “is his nation’s head” but that he elects to follow the leadership of Tecumseh because he is convinced of Tecumseh’s greatness. Extending the Miami Chief’s metaphor, Tecumseh is the “head” of the confederacy, but he is not its “body”; rather, the “body” of the confederacy is composed of self-determining individuals and nations. The inability of the play to bury Tecumseh’s body symbolizes its inability to bury Indigenous leadership and self-determination. Tecumseh’s “faithful friends” carry away and bury his body in a location that they refuse to disclose, despite threats of torture from Harrison and his troops (Mair 127). While these actions suggest ongoing resistance, it is worth noting that the British are also not privy to Tecumseh’s final resting place. Members of the Confederacy’s enduring resistance metonymically represents the enduring struggle to protect Indigenous relationality.

An Indigenous Account of the War of 1812

I conclude this chapter's discussion by turning to Odawa scholar Cecil King's *Balancing Two Worlds: Jean-Baptiste Assiginack and the Odawa Nation, 1768-1866* (2013). King's collection of Odawa stories derives from an archive made up of both oral and printed accounts. His extensive reference section cites ten oral storytellers, who are followed by various print-based academic studies. Many (although not all) of the Odawa and the Anishnabek more generally supported the British and Tecumseh's confederacy in their fight against the Americans (King 110). Many continued to fight following Tecumseh's death and the British surrender of some of their territories. Increasingly, Indigenous academics such as King have succeeded in asserting different terms upon which relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and the land in Canada might emerge. Their contributions provide opportunities for richer ways of reading settler colonial texts such as Mair's play, offering settler scholars, such as myself, insights into Indigenous governance systems and relationships cultivated within place-based contexts. King's text substantiates my claim that the struggle to protect Indigenous relational self-determination survived Tecumseh's death and his legacy can still inspire Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships based on Indigenous understandings of respect and responsibility.

Indigenous scholarship on traditional knowledge and practices provides for alternative readings of Mair's play but, ultimately, there are limits to tragedy: classical tragedies follow a particularly linear temporality, one that has a beginning, a middle, and a tragic end. A focus on the tragedy of Tecumseh risks perpetuating the settler myth that Tecumseh's death marks the end of Indigenous relational self-determination.

Cecil King's history of the Odawa offers Odawa perspectives on the War of 1812, ones that challenge the settler colonial tragedy of Tecumseh. Not only does King complicate the settler narrative by suggesting that the Odawak continued to defend their rights after Tecumseh died, but King's text makes novel readings of key instances within Mair's play possible, such as Tecumseh's famed alliance with Brock and his storied death. Whereas 2012 narratives of the tragedy of Tecumseh rely on linear, tragic conceptions of history, King's Odawa stories present enduring lessons about Indigenous place-based relationality and the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations beyond settler colonialism.

John Sugden, a historian of the War of 1812 and colleague of Cecil King, frames King's history of the Odawa as a contribution to settler colonial commemorations of Indigenous peoples' role in the defense of Canada:

This book arrives at an opportune moment [...] As the bicentennial of the War of 1812 reminds us of those critical years in which the very existence of Canada was threatened, we are realizing as never before the important role First Nations peoples played in the defense of a vulnerable border. (King)

Sugden presents King's text as a story about how Indigenous people played an "important role" in the defense of British colonies. Sugden describes King's rigorously researched account as having the "charm and interest of the authentic [Indigenous] voice" (King). Subtly denying coevality and supporting binary divisions between tradition and modernity, which relegate Indigenous knowledge and practices to the past, Sugden portrays King as an individual that "sits between the old and the new worlds" (xi). According to this paratext, King's study offers no contemporary, living Indigenous knowledge and practice. Instead, King offers us, a presumably

non-Indigenous audience, an explanation of “the world of his forefathers” (xi). We are Harrison’s troops admiring the quixotic Indigenous peoples sitting in a grove. Sugden writes that in reading King, “we can almost hear the tones of long-ago tribal elders recounting the history of their communities and smell the wood smoke of their fires” (xi). The expectation Sugden’s preface generates in the minds of readers is that King will treat them with stories of quaint peoples from long ago, noble savages. This is not at all what King’s carefully researched text offers. The Odawa stories present enduring lessons about Indigenous place-based relationality and the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations outside of settler colonialism.

King’s *Balancing Two Worlds* relates how the Odawa, amongst other Indigenous nations, continued defending their place-based autonomies in Canada after Tecumseh’s death. While he does concede in his text that “the dream of an *Indian confederacy* died with Tecumseh,” King describes how members of the Odawa Nation continued to defend their rights and responsibilities as self-determining peoples within their traditional territories (145; emphasis added). As discussed, while some Odawa conceded that the Americans won certain territories south of the Great Lakes, some northern Odawa still held land unoccupied by the Americans and thus had “reason to fight” (King 146). The continued efforts of the Odawa to protect their relational autonomy exemplify how practices of Indigenous self-determination and resistance survived Tecumseh’s death.

The more radical challenge that King’s history poses to settler representations of the War of 1812 is its articulation of place-based relationality. “Creation,” according to Odawa knowledge, “came about through the union of the Maker and the Physical World” (xx). The land

is not an object that people can trade or surrender in a treaty. Rather, it is the literal basis of Odawa place-thought. Vanessa Watts tells us that the “land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts” (Watts 21). Indeed, as King writes, Odawa peoples gain their “knowledge by living on the land; the knowledge came from Kizhe Manito” (xx). That knowledge reveals how various orders of life coexist together. “Out of this union” between the Physical World and the Creator, continues King, came “the natural children, the Plants, nurtured by the Physical World, and Earth, the Mother,” the “animal kind,” and finally “came Humankind” (xx). Humankind, writes King, is the “most dependent and least necessary of all the orders” of life on the land because we rely “upon the benevolence of those with whom we coexisted” (xx). Aware of “this interdependency, our people looked on the other orders as our parents, siblings and kin” (xx). Thus, the land and the various beings who inhabit it convey the knowledge that coexistence depends upon interdependency, benevolence, and respect for other beings. Here, King offers readers a glimpse of the spirit and substance of Odawa relationality: it is not dependent on the leadership of one individual or on institutions of government over others. Leadership emerges from coexistence and those interdependent, benevolent, and respectful relationships with other beings. Unlike settler colonial representations of the War of 1812, which tell us that the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from relational self-determination is a foregone conclusion, King’s stories of the Odawa Nation elaborate pathways towards the (re)generation and (re)construction of Indigenous terms upon which relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can still emerge.

Whereas 2012 settler narratives of the tragedy of Tecumseh rely on linear, tragic conceptions of history that relegate to the past Indigenous claims to land and autonomous lifeways to the past, King's Odawa stories articulate an ongoing sense of place-based relationality. This sense of relationality is anchored not in time but in interdependent relationships between different beings in Odawa traditional territories around the Great Lakes. The stories King shares of the Odawa about the War of 1812,

Were not told to place us in the flow of the chronological development of our people; they were told to look at the experiences of the past in the context of our relationship with Kische Manito, the Physical World, the Plant World and the Animal World and lastly, with other Human Beings [that] are not fixed in time and space. They are used as examples of ways of behaving and ways of being an Odawak. (King 122; emphasis added)

In other words, traditional Odawak stories do not tell about what *was* but what always *is*. They tell of events to communicate knowledge about how relationships between all elements of creation are maintained according to Odawak principles of interdependence and mutual respect (122). King writes that “meaning existed for [Odawa] people in the interrelationships of things, in the way in which things happened together. We saw that only together things had meaning and became whole” (xx).

Tecumseh fell and was buried in land that embodies Odawa peoples' mutually dependent and respectful relationships. These relations inspire Odawa relationality. In his final moments of Mair's play, Tecumseh cries out for his axe: “my axe! My Axe / Ha! It is here!” and then exclaims that, “[n]o, no – the power is past” (126). Non-linear, place-based

historiographies allow me to read the tension in Tecumseh's final words regarding his axe; it is "here," he exclaims, and yet it is "past" (126). Settler colonial readings of these lines might place more emphasis on their temporal significance, locating Indigenous resistance in Tecumseh's dying body and his now inert axe. Non-linear and place-based readings can interpret the axe as an enduring symbol of Indigenous resistance. After all, Indigenous relationality continues to be rooted in "here," in place for many Indigenous peoples. The place where Tecumseh fell, the specific "here" or place he finds his axe, is said to be near the present location of Bkejwanong First Nation, a nation comprised of Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Anishnaabeg peoples. This land has "never been set apart as a reserve, giving it the distinction of being unceded territory" (walpoleislandfirstnation.ca). King explains that "gete-dibajimowinan," or old stories, elaborate place-based knowledge and practices outside of linear conceptions of time. *Gee meegaading kitchi gindaaswan a pee*, the War of the Big Numbers, or the War of 1812, as remembered by Odawa Kitchinshinaabek elders, is one of those old stories that serves to remind the Odawa how they are to relate to all other elements of creation.

King's Odawa storywork frames the celebrated alliance between Tecumseh and Brock as an example of the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships based in Odawa knowledge and practices of respect. Odawa stories remember how General Isaac Brock and Tecumseh became allies because they recognized their interdependence in the face of a shared threat (123). American General Hull issued a warning against those that allied with Indigenous peoples. King tells us that Brock said,

Be not dismayed at the unjustifiable threat of the commander of the enemy's forces to refuse quarter, should an Indian appear in the ranks [...] The brave bands of aborigines

which inhabit this colony were, like his majesty's other subjects, punished for their zeal and fidelity, by the loss of their possessions in the late colonies, and rewarded by his majesty with lands of superior value in this province ... The Indians feel that the soil they inherit is to them and their posterity ... They are men and have equal rights with all other men to defend themselves and their property when invaded. (King 123)

Brock responded with the above statement to Hull's threat that if Indigenous warriors appeared among British forces, the Americans would "refuse quarter" and kill everyone. Brock's response shows respect for Indigenous claims to the "soil they inherit" and that Hull's threat is tantamount to genocide. Brock echoes this in Mair's play when he "calls back extermination from its hell / To stalk abroad, and stench [the] land with slaughter" (81).¹⁴ Brock is remembered in Odawa stories as an individual who expressed an understanding and respect for Indigenous-non-Indigenous interdependence and Indigenous peoples' right to struggle to defend their "homeland, communities and families" (King 123).

King's text exemplifies the ongoing struggle of Indigenous peoples and nations to protect Indigenous relational knowledge and practices. For the Odawa, "meaning existed" in the "interrelationships of things, in the way in which things happened together" (XX). As noted, Leanne Simpson suggests the term *debwewin*, sometimes translated as "truth," signifies "the sound of my heart," that each heart speaks its own truth (Simpson 59). Respect is a regard for the truth of others, a practice of not imposing one's truth onto another being. The imposition of state sovereignty and market logics over Indigenous relationships is thus anathema to respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships according to Odawa and Nishnaabe terms. Despite contemporary state representations, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples is not a

foregone conclusion of the 19th century. Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships did not and do not have to be based on dispossession. There are other stories, other possibilities.

Conclusion

In 1885, at the time of writing *Tecumseh: A Drama*, the North-West Rebellion was raging in what are now the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. 2012 commemorations of the War of 1812 were circulated amidst the TRC's disclosures, public outcries against living conditions on reserves, Idle No More, and Theresa Spence's hunger strike. These settler representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations thus emerged at a time when the Canadian settler nation-state was enduring challenges from Indigenous peoples and their allies. The state's narrative about 1812 supports the idea that Indigenous peoples have been irrevocably subsumed within the settler colonial Canadian state. What I aim to contribute to existing critiques of settler colonial discourse is a consideration of how Indigenous scholarship on Indigenous governance systems sheds light on ongoing practices of relationality, leadership, and living legacies of resistance, even in canonical texts of the colonial archive such as Mair's.

Indigenous scholars such as Simpson and King provide grounds to unsettle notions that the struggle to protect and maintain Indigenous self-determination nationhood came to a tragic end in the early 19th century. While Indigenous nations were and continue to be as politically diverse as the lands to which they belong, King and Simpson maintain their peoples' non-hierarchical and non-coercive traditions of governance.¹⁵ These forms of leadership, which respect the autonomy of individuals, communities, and nations, as well as relationships with non-human beings on and of the land, trouble claims that Tecumseh's death somehow left a

political vacuum in which the Canadian nation-state could assert sovereignty over Indigenous lands and life.

Jo-Ann Archibald writes that some stories are more than mere texts; some stories you are invited to “have a relationship with” (33). In the face of the Government of Canada’s attempts to “increase Canadians’ knowledge of the War of 1812, an event that was key to ensuring our country’s existence and shaping our identity as Canadians,” we might ask, what story is being told? (Government of Canada). Which stories are not? Instead of taking the CBC and the state’s history of the War of 1812 at face value, non-Indigenous Canadians such as myself should explore how such stories implicate us and call us into relation with Indigenous peoples and their relations. “The communal principle of storytelling,” writes Archibald, “implies that a listener is or becomes a member of the community” (26). What is the nature of this “Canadian” community? Increasingly, stories such as those shared by Cecil King are becoming more visible, calling us to account for who we have been, who we are, and what we might become.

Chapter 2: Re-storying Canada: Lee Maracle's *Sundogs*, Oka, Idle No More, and The

Possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships

It was a moment of recognition that we were not destroyed, that you cannot destroy culture, you cannot destroy the spirit of people. You cannot destroy our need to be, ourselves. [...] And I think what Oka told us all is that we're worthy of being, not just surviving.

- Lee Maracle, "Coming out of the House" (Kelly 77).

[Idle no More is] restorying-Canada – using public gatherings and mass media, it is actively re-telling stories which have been silenced, minimized, and denied, but also provides multiple forums to share stories that inspire hope and promote social and political change.

- Shelah McLean, "Idle No More: Restorying Canada" (McLean 93)

Lee Maracle's first novel, *Sundogs*, was published in 1992 by Theytus Books and is, in part, a story about Elijah Harper's filibuster of the Meech Lake Accord (1987) and the standoff at Oka and Kanesatake.¹⁶ The novel also offers readers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, the opportunity to follow Marianne, a 20-year-old Indigenous university student as she re-awakens her relationship with herself, her family, the larger Indigenous community, and the land. The novel's representation of these two instances of Indigenous resistance in 1990 and their impact on Marianne and her family differs greatly from settler colonial representations of Harper's filibuster and the Oka Crisis, as well as of Indigenous activism more generally.¹⁷ The novel centers around Marianne's strained relationship with her mother, Anne, and her family. The plot of the novel takes place during several months during 1990. Through Marianne's painful, yet transformational, experiences, Maracle's novel depicts how Elijah Harper's filibuster and the resistance of the Kanien'kéha people of Kanehsatake restored a sense of place-based relationality and pride amongst Indigenous peoples in Canada.

In this chapter, I make two claims. The first is that *Sundogs*, with its focus on television and radio representations of Indigenous activism, sheds light on how settler colonial discourse overtly and covertly contained expressions of Indigenous resistance and relationality that emerged in 1990, as it also did in response to Idle No More in 2012 for its predominantly non-Indigenous publics. I examine Maracle's depiction of national settler colonial representations and responses to Elijah Harper's Meech Lake filibuster and the Kanien'kéha's resistance at Oka. I also consider how the novel explores the possibilities and limitations of counterpublic sphere theory. While useful in some contexts, I show how public sphere theory limits liberal understandings of 2012 Indigenous claims for relational, land-based self-determination and risks perpetuating settler colonial knowledge and institutions in 1990 and 2012.

While my focus is on overt and covert containment of Indigenous activism in 1990 and 2012, and contestations of the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations more generally, I do not want to suggest that these moments of marked intensity have been isolated instances. Eva Mackay, in *House of Difference*, discusses how, in the 1960s, the Centennial Commission was concerned with how to manage Indigenous peoples' demands to be involved in the celebrations (60). A policy study, entitled "Participation in Canada's Centennial by People of Indian Ancestry – Some Policy Considerations" (1964), recommended that the Commission treat "Native people as a special group based on a recognition of their poverty and marginalisation," and their inability to achieve a "level of organizational structure" in the "European style" (62). In other words, Indigenous peoples were not organizing themselves into hierarchical, centralized, liberal democratic structures of governance, abstracted from place and relational traditions. For Indigenous peoples to receive funds to participate in the

Centennial Celebrations, the report suggests that the Commission ought to assist in the construction of “an Indian organisation, or [assist] an already existing one” (62). Mackay reveals how settler discourse in the 1960s, “by defining and institutionalizing cultural difference,” established terms according to which Indigenous people could be seen to legitimately organize; national, pan-Aboriginal organizations, rather than place-based Indigenous communities were recognized as the legitimate organizations to receive funding.

In the years to come, official discourse on multiculturalism in Canada also contained Indigenous challenges to the settler colonial state. Under Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, multiculturalism, replaced “Britain as a central symbol of Canada” and “tolerance” became its enduring “national characteristic” (65). As Mackay writes, “state recognition of diversity also limits diversity”; official multiculturalism legislated support for “cultural groups to participate in and contribute to Canadian society and Canadian unity,” but “neither official linguistic nor political pluralism (other than for the French and the English)” is “part of the policy” of official multiculturalism (66). As Barker argues, the settler colonial state “accommodate[s] ‘aboriginal’ political claims as a demand for minority rights within the multicultural structure of Canadian law and policy” and disqualifies Indigenous assertions of “place-relationships,” exemplified by the show of resistance by the Mohawk people during the Oka Crisis, that challenge the “Canadian political economy” (Barker 4). Indeed, Coulthard sheds light in *Red Skin, White Masks* on how, since the 1960s, the Canadian state has “responded to increased levels of Indigenous political assertiveness and militancy by attempting to contain these outbursts through largely symbolic gestures of political inclusion and recognition” (Coulthard 162). While discourse constructs the settler state as a “peaceful, liberal, multicultural polity,” it works to

reconcile Indigenous relational self-determination with liberal democratic institutions “dominated by whiteness, capitalist property ownership, and individual rights” (Barker 5).

The second claim I make is that *Sundogs* not only offers insights into how settler colonial discourse contains Indigenous activism, but also sheds light for non-Indigenous readers on the demands of Indigenous relationality in the 21st century.¹⁸ In making this claim, I draw on Stó:lō educational theorist Jo-Ann Archibald’s storywork to draw provocative connections between what I consider to be Maracle’s “origin story” novel of Indigenous activism in the last two decades of the twentieth century and the 2012 emergence of the Idle No More Movement.

I take guidance from Archibald’s storywork by first considering Maracle’s story as knowledge that belongs to a community and place. The lessons I read from her story cannot be outright applied universally, but may only speak to Maracle’s sense of Coast Salish relationality. Secondly, her story’s significance extends beyond the 1990s by offering teachings on Indigenous place-based relationality that are relevant to conversations about these possibilities now and further into the 21st century. While I claim that the story Maracle’s novel tells has significance, I do not claim to uncover all its significance here; Indigenous storywork reminds us that the knowledge stories carry is emergent. If there is a constant, however, it is that storywork guides us to look for how stories teach us understanding and practices of respect and responsibility towards other beings. Thus, I read Maracle’s story to draw place-specific, non-totalizing insights into how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships can emerge in which there is respect for Indigenous place-thought and relationality.

The central catalyzing event in Maracle's novel is the Oka Crisis.¹⁹ For 72 days, between July 11th and September 26th of 1990, the Kanien'kéha people of Kanehsatà:ke maintained a blockade to stop the neighbouring town of Oka, Quebec from expanding a golf course over top of a Kanien'kéha cemetery. The Oka Crisis was a major focus of national media in Canada during that time. Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world watched as the people of Kanehsatà:ke held their ground against the town of Oka; Quebec's Provincial Police, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ); the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP); and, finally, the Canadian Armed Forces. The land dispute finally ended in an agreement not to pursue development at that time; however, during one skirmish between Mohawk Warriors and Quebec's provincial police, Corporal Patrick Lemay of the SQ was shot and killed. The events of that summer brought to light deep tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Secwepemc-Syilx scholar Dorothy Christianson writes that national media representations of the event "sensationalized the violence and promoted coverage" that fed into narratives of Indigenous peoples that racialize and criminalize their struggle to defend their "land rights" (Christian 72). The activism of the Kanien'kéha people of Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke was not represented as resistance to settler colonial violence but as an example of the criminal disposition of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous-informed representations of the events, available through Indigenous-managed communication channels, local radio stations, and local newspapers, "were largely ignored by journalists and editors of national media" (72). Gail Guthrie Valaskakis writes in *Indian Country* (2005) that Indigenous peoples are often implicitly and explicitly characterized as "savage," "noble or evil, lazy or militant," in order to

undermine their efforts to protect and maintain their self-determination and traditional territories (41). Indeed, national media representations help produce settler publics that are amenable to settler colonialism's deracination of Indigenous peoples from the source of their knowledge and practices of relationality: their lands and place-thought. Such representations produce understandings that Indigenous peoples need to be consumed and subsumed within the settler colonial state's liberal democratic body politic and neoliberal economy.

In part inspired by the American Indian Movement in the United States during the 1970s and the struggle to enshrine Indigenous rights in the Canadian constitution (1980-1981), several eminent Indigenous authors emerged in the Canadian literary public during the period of increased tension between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada in the 1980s and 1990s. Now-canonical works emerged in the period, such as Beatrice Culleton's *In Search of April Raintree* (1983), Jeannette Armstrong's *Slash* (1985), Ruby Slipperjack's *Honour the Sun* (1987), Thomas King's *Medicine River* (1989), and Lee Maracle's *Sojourner's Truth and Other Stories* (1990). Coast Salish author Lee Maracle calls the 1980s and 1990s an "awakening" for Indigenous peoples (Kelly 73). She emerged in the Canadian literary scene in the 1990s, publishing novels and books of poetry that continue to inspire generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike. Ojibway poet and professor Armand Ruffo, in his introduction to the fourth edition of *The Oxford Anthology of Native Writing in Canada*, writes that "Lee Maracle's writing career illustrates the struggles of Native people coming to voice" (Ruffo xxvii). Although there were many texts written about Indigenous peoples in the decades prior to the 1980s, and many influential texts written by Indigenous peoples published prior in the U.S., Ruffo states that there was essentially "no such thing as 'Native Literature'" as a body of

literature in the eyes of the general public in Canada (xxi-xxii).²⁰ Legally mandated residential schools had disastrous effects on Indigenous peoples and their communities, including Indigenous literatures. “In literary terms,” continues Ruffo, “one might think of it this way: these schools effectively severed whatever influence E. Pauline Johnson,” early 20th-century Kanien'kéha author/performance artist, “might have had on the next generation of Native writers” (xxii). Lee Maracle’s generation established its own publishing houses, such as Theytus Books, and won ground for Indigenous stories and perspectives in Canadian literary circles in tandem with constitutional activism (1980-81), which insisted Indigenous rights be enshrined in the repatriated Canadian Constitution in Section 35 of the Constitution Act (1982).

Despite the increasingly widespread availability of Indigenous peoples’ representations of their shared yet diverse struggles, national media continued to produce narratives that contain and disqualify challenges to the Canadian state’s claims to Indigenous lands and lives. Jennifer Henderson analyzes articles and editorials from the *Montreal Gazette*, *Toronto Star*, and the *Vancouver Sun* (among others) in “Residential Schools and Opinion-Making in the Era of Traumatized Subjects and Taxpayer-Citizens.” She argues that prior to the 2005 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, these national media producers helped to generate a “common sense” about the “agency, duration, and effects” of residential schools (5). This representation of residential schools contains challenges to settler colonialism’s ongoing, systematic assault on Indigenous relationality by asserting “that the wrong of residential schooling was limited to specific, individual crimes of sexual and physical assault” (5). In “Changing the Subject: The TRC, its National Events, and the Displacement of Substantive Reconciliation in Canadian Media Representations,” Matt James analyzes how 149 “news

stories, editorials, or opinion pieces” from 1995 to 2014 discuss and represent “reconciliation” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada” (8). He concludes that before and during the TRC’s National Events, national media “were overwhelmingly quietistic rather than substantive” in their representations of non-Indigenous participation in reconciliation (5). According to this narrative of how relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples might be mended, reconciliation was a matter of “listening, learning, and goodwill” for non-Indigenous peoples rather than a respect for the restoration of Indigenous relationality in the form of “lands, jurisdiction, and resources” (5). While national media now offers more varied content and tone in its representation of Indigenous peoples, it continues to safeguard the Canadian settler state from Indigenous demands for the protection and restitution of Indigenous place-based rights and relational self-determination, the form of relationality advocated for in *Sundogs*.

Despite the dramatic increase in the volume and scope of Indigenous-informed representations of Indigenous activism, national media continues to contain Indigenous challenges to the Canadian settler colonial state. While Waubgeshig Rice and Leanne Simpson agree that social and alternative media offer Indigenous peoples the opportunity to represent themselves, their resistance, and their terms for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships, both admit that alternative and social media have limited audiences compared with mainstream national media (Rice 270, Simpson 300).²¹ Indigenous peoples have, however, particularly since Idle No More, successfully circulated the perspectives of their own communities, “across multiple media” and do “provide Canadians with different stories, angles, and voices” (Simpson 300). As Simpson asserts, “Idle No More is not just a fight for [...] fair and accurate

representation of Indigenous Peoples and our issues. It is a fight for a better relationship, and that begins with truth, dialogue, and respect” (300).

Echoing Rice and Simpson’s concerns, Adam Barker discusses how national media first showed an interest in Idle No More, but by mid-2013, “protests under the banner of Idle No More trailed off” and “interest in Indigenous issues among mainstream Canadians plummeted” (14). Barker argues that this was, in part, due to how “[s]ettler Canadian political discourses have attempted” to inscribe Indigenous resistance “into mainstream political structures” (2). Settler media generated “perceptions of over-participation in systemic politics by various political figures, including the elected leaders of the [Assembly of First Nations]” (7). This aided in constraining the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships by defining Indigenous peoples, with a fundamental connection to place, as something like an *aboriginal* counterpublic, one of many minoritized groups in Canada struggling to be heard by and be represented within the Canadian state.

One Novel, Two Stories

I suggest that Maracle’s novel contains two stories. Like the novel’s namesake, *Sundogs*, an illusion of a triple-sun created when the sun is viewed under certain, rare conditions, these two stories elaborate partial perspectives of a whole; they represent polarized perspectives on the possibilities of the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship. The first story takes place in the first third of the novel. It centres on Elijah Harper’s filibuster of the Meech Lake Accord and its significance for Marianne and her family. His filibuster and his assertion of Indigenous perspectives in the space of public discourse on Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations vindicate

and inspire pride in Indigenous resistance to colonialism for the novel's protagonists. While the substance of Harper's filibuster cannot be fully contained by state discourse, it does not appear to radically disrupt the settler colonial narrative that Indigenous activism can be answered by an Aboriginal counterpublic's effective participation in Canadian public discourse and liberal democratic institutions.

The second story continues in the latter two-thirds of the novel and reveals the irreconcilable tensions between the responsibilities of place-based relationality and participation in liberal democratic discourse. Harper's filibuster blocks legislation but, as it takes place according to the rule of law, his actions are not met with settler colonial violence. As incredible as it appears for Marianne and her family, "the Mohawks at Kanesatake occupy a bridge" in protest of the city of Oka's attempt to extend a golf course over a Kanien'kéha graveyard in an area called "The Pines" (Maracle 126). The violent, military response of the settler state powerfully demonstrates the difference between participating in government discourse and truly practicing Indigenous relational self-determination.

Maracle's *Sundogs* sheds light on both the subtle and overtly violent containment strategies of settler colonial discourse manifest in representations of Indigenous activism. One may read the novel's account of Harper's filibuster and see only his resistance. Without reducing the significance of his actions, I want to suggest that his disruption of the Meech Lake Accord was insidiously undermined by the settler colonial order. In order to understand the subtle mechanisms of settler colonial containment strategies, I draw on theories of the public sphere. The insights I garner from Maracle's novel and public sphere theories are not, however, only relevant for discussions of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in the 1990s. I

demonstrate how the misrepresentation of Indigenous relational, place-based self-determination in settler media contributes to perpetuating settler colonial knowledge and institutions in 2012 and into the 21st century.

In my reading of the last two-thirds of *Sundogs*, I take seriously Maracle's suggestion that her novel is something of an origin story. Maracle writes in the preface to *Sundogs* that while the short story genre has most in common with the length and implicit significance of Indigenous stories, Indigenous storytelling traditions do have something of an equivalent to the novel, the Indigenous "origin story" (13). In the foreword, Muscogee poet Joy Harjo asserts that Indigenous homelands often "embody a story" about how a people "came to be in that place, their relationship to it and how they continue" (10). The land, as place-thought, as a network of living beings, offers what I take from Archibald's *Storywork* to be place-based and emergent teachings about relationality for Indigenous communities. *Sundogs*, particularly Marianne's experience running on the land, sheds light on Indigenous place-based relationality and activism and the demands it makes on Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships from the 1990s to 2012's Idle No More. In so doing, it suggests the need for an alternative to liberal public sphere theory as a lens through which to understand Indigenous resistance.

The First Story: Indigenous Resistance as Aboriginal Counterpublic

According to Richard Butsch in *The Citizen Audience*, publics are audiences, distinct from "crowds" and "masses" (1). The crowd is antithetical to reason and is prone to being disorderly, irrational, and unpredictable. National media tend to characterize Indigenous peoples, especially when defying state sovereignty or the demands of exploitative resource

development, like crowds. Publics, on the other hand, are considered as orderly manifestations, embodiments of classical liberal ideals; they are composed of rational, individual citizens (15).

Critical social theorists Nancy Fraser and Michael Warner address the gendered and racialized dimensions of theories of publics. In *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, Fraser proposes that we call publics formed by minoritized peoples such as women, workers, peoples of colour, and queer communities “subaltern counterpublics” (67). Counterpublics are discursive spaces where members of subordinated groups can form and articulate shared needs and desires. Warner writes that “dominant publics are by definition those that can take for granted their discourse pragmatics and their lifeworlds, misrecognizing the indefinite scope of their expansive address as universality or normalcy” (*Publics* 122). Counterpublics, on the other hand, generate and occupy “a critical relation to power” (56). Theories of counterpublics could thus appear to support useful, progressive ways of reading the aims of Indigenous resistance. They certainly seem to shed light on the grievances and goals of *Sundogs*’ protagonists. The problem, which I elaborate upon in the next section, “The Second Story,” is that ideas of counterpublics are rooted in abstract, state-centered notions of liberal democracy and not relationships with the place-thought of specific territories that inspire Indigenous knowledge and practices of relationality. While seeing Indigenous resistance and relationality through the lens of counterpublics might seem an improvement from othering Indigenous peoples as racialized crowds, this still undermines Indigenous relational self-determination and supports settler colonial institutions.

The distinction Taiaiake Alfred and Cherokee professor Jeff Corntassel make between the terms “Aboriginal” and “Indigenous” provides a language that can illuminate the differences between Indigenous relationality and counterpublics, or inclusion in liberal state discourse. Alfred and Corntassel assert that the term “Aboriginal,” incorporated in the 1982 Constitution Act, ties Indigenous peoples to the “institutional construct of the state” (598). For them, it is equivalent to claiming a hyphenated ethnic identity within the Canadian, liberal, multicultural mosaic. Thus, being Aboriginal in Alfred and Corntassel’s view is to identify oneself with one’s “political-legal relationship to the state rather than by any cultural or social ties to their Indigenous community or culture or homeland” (599). Indigenous relationality conceives of the self and community as embedded in intricate networks of rights and responsibilities, which, by virtue of being specific to place, are non-universalizable and are subject to neither the will of the state nor the demands of the economy. Indigenous relationality is centered on relationships generated and bounded by land, “family,” “clan systems,” “cultural imperatives,” “knowledge systems” and “treaties,” and is thus not on *common ground* with non-Indigenous political institutions (Ermine 195). While different from discourse that explicitly racializes and degrades Indigenous peoples, and more liberal than explicitly racist colonial discourse, counterpublic discourse still obscures Indigenous challenges to the legitimacy of the state as a structure that can and does assert, itself over top of the needs of Indigenous peoples and their responsibilities to each other and the land, as it did with Oka and Bill C-45 (7).

In a literary critical example, Petra Fachinger’s “Intersections of Diaspora and Indigeneity” suggests that Maracle’s novel reveals how there is little difference between the struggles of Indigenous peoples and other minoritized groups in Canada. Indeed, as I will show,

the first section of Maracle's novel at first appears to support this claim; however, once the Kanien'kéha is forced to mobilize, Maracle's novel powerfully demonstrates what is quite literally at stake for Indigenous peoples. While Fachinger stresses the necessity of an "awareness of the crucial differences between" the experiences of Indigenous and other minoritized peoples in Canada, she aims to unsettle "the binaries upon which the construction of Canada's diversity rests" (2). In contrast, Daniel Coleman argues that the Indigenous-non-Indigenous binary is necessary in order to create what Cree philosopher Willie Ermine calls "an ethical space of engagement" (Coleman 2). Considering that Indigenous struggles tend to focus their efforts on protecting and restoring place-based relational self-determination instead of achieving equality within Canadian political/legal orders, the argument put forth in Fachinger's essay is an example of the assimilative logics that concern me in this chapter (2).

I do not mean to downplay the significant moments in *Sundogs* that open the possibilities of solidarity between Indigenous peoples and other minoritized and racialized groups in Canada. Dorry, Marianne's sixteen-year-old niece is "a visionary painter whose trademark technique is superimposition" (Fachinger 6). In one of her images, Marianne depicts a "solitary black woman, sweet and innocent, [...] silhouetted over an [!]Indigenous woman, also young and innocent, in the foreground" (Maracle 85). The image could reinforce Fachinger's reading of the likeness between Black and Indigenous women regarding their "battles against racism and colonization" (Fachinger 6).

Many recently arrived immigrants experience the forced dislocation also endured by Indigenous peoples, and the struggle to (re)make a sense of belonging. Fachinger suggests that

this is what Anne experiences when she moves her family from their father's village in the Okanagan to Vancouver. Quoting Anishinaabe scholar Jean-Paul Restoule, Fachinger writes that "Aboriginal people" are "in many ways disconnected from the (home)land, as all diasporas are" (7). The problem is not in Fachinger's exploration of the possibilities of similarities between Indigenous and other minoritized communities but in the resulting obfuscation of Indigenous place-based relationality. This is not to say that Indigenous struggles are more important than those of diasporic communities, only that they are different. Indigenous relational activism imagines Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships beyond hegemonic beliefs in the sovereignty of the liberal democratic settler state.

In contrast to Fachinger's reading, Daniel Coleman suggests that the "different histories of displacement by colonialism," racialization, and minoritization by "the nation-state" have "set very different, even opposed, political and social objectives for Indigenous and diasporic peoples" (2). "The goal," writes Coleman, "for refugees and migrants excluded from national citizenry or from participation in the global economy has often expressed itself in a politics of inclusion" (2). The struggle for Indigenous peoples against the dominant culture is not limited to a desire for inclusion; rather, it "has often expressed itself in a politics of separatism and sovereignty" (2). Unsettling the binary between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, therefore, misrecognizes Indigenous demands and risks legitimizing settler colonial structures of power by supporting discourse that would erase Indigenous claims to the land and seek to subsume them as liberal citizens within the multicultural body politic (2). As Patrick Wolfe writes in "Recuperating Binarism,"

once the frontier is conquered by the settler state, disavowing the Indigenous/settler binary becomes the primary method of ongoing colonization: post-frontier settler policy typically favours assimilation, a range of strategies intended to separate individual Natives from their collective sovereignties and merge them irrecoverably into the settler mainstream. (cited in Coleman, "Indigenous Place," 3)

For Indigenous communities, however, like the one brought to life in Maracle's story, inclusion in Canada's practice of liberal democracy might at first appear as a path towards a more respectful, responsible Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship.

Indigenous Resistance as an Aboriginal Counterpublic

The central concern of the novel first appears to be the exclusion of Indigenous perspectives in Canadian public discourse on the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship. The answer appears to be the creation of something like an effective Aboriginal counterpublic. The novel opens with what becomes a strong motif throughout the story: Anne's "evening ritual" of ineffectively engaging with televised settler colonial discourse from her living room:

'Oh sure, and if you cut off your head, you'll end your headache too. Cut backs [sic]. That'll fix things.' I know the rest of the story. It must be six o'clock. It's my mother arguing with the six o'clock news again. (2)

Through the nightly news on television, Anne argues with the Premier of British Columbia, who announces cutbacks to the welfare system. Like her mother, Marianne is "more than aware of how many [Indigenous people] are on welfare in this city" (3). Anne is enraged by the Premier's

apparent apathy. “‘Not everyone will benefit from the food bank this year’,” announces the news anchor later in the novel (51). Food banks are not receiving the supplies they need to meet the needs of those struggling with poverty and, again, Anne is aware that Indigenous peoples are disproportionately affected by poverty and government cutbacks: “‘Momma’s fist is up. It threatens whoever is in charge. ‘Don’t you dare decide to deal my people out of the deck’” (51). Cutting back on supporting struggling individuals and families is shameful enough to Anne, but what enrages her is the way that the impact of the policy disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples. Anne asserts how this is inseparable from settler colonial practices that contribute to the underfunding and neglect of Indigenous populations. Her astute discourse analysis is, however, confined to her living room and thus highlights how Indigenous perspectives and critiques are excluded from the public discourse that is broadcast to her via national media.

Although not informed by the academic discourse to which her daughter Marianne is accustomed as a university student, Anne offers in these battles with televised settler colonial discourse powerful anti-colonial and anti-racist critiques. In one moment, Anne offers an astute semiotic analysis of the video broadcast:

The story changes. The newscaster talks to a bunch of rough-looking Indians on skid row. She commends a single white man for ‘bravely facing rough customers with bannock and fish soup at Oppenheimer Park’ [...] ‘Oh sure, the camera is on our face and she says ‘rough customers’ but let a white face come into view and suddenly she discovers ‘resident’. (51)

Here, Anne recognizes that, whether conscious of their racism or not, the broadcaster, and editing team, perpetuate racist, settler colonial discourse that subtly works to devalue Indigenous peoples. While Marianne is, in principle, sympathetic with her mother's anger, she sees little sense in "arguing with the Premier via T.V." (3). Anne is, however, "not the least bit embarrassed" by being discovered yelling at the television (3). In fact, Anne's one-sided arguments with televised settler discourse are an ongoing motif in the novel, which powerfully symbolizes the structured exclusion of Indigenous perspectives in settler governance and national media representation. Reading such scenes might suggest to readers the need for a more representative government, one which allows space for Indigenous perspectives to effectively articulate their needs.

Anne's interventions could be read as a call for a discursive arena where her interpretations and oppositions can be effective. Fraser writes that "counterpublics have a dual character"; they serve as spaces where people of like mind and social positioning may withdraw and regroup, in order to articulate their needs and desires (68). They also serve as "training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics" (68). Fraser further notes the activist nature of the "emancipatory potential" of counterpublics is in this dual character (68). Warner similarly writes that "dominant publics are by definition those that can take for granted their discourse pragmatics and their lifeworlds, misrecognizing the indefinite scope of their expansive address as universality or normalcy" (Warner, *Publics* 122). Counterpublics, on the other hand, generate and occupy "a critical relation to power" (56). Counterpublics can work to "elaborate new worlds of culture and social relations in which different subjectivities *and citizenships* can be lived" (57; emphasis added). When Marianne walks into the living room,

where Anne loudly engages the broadcaster, Anne is not the least bit embarrassed because her living room is a “training ground” where Anne might teach and circulate within her family counter discourses that resist settler colonial discourses that degrade, displace, and erase Indigenous peoples (68).

The desire for inclusion in public discourse, which Anne seems to embody, is answered by Elijah Harper’s intervention against the Meech Lake Accord. The Accord was a series of proposed amendments to the Canadian constitution negotiated in 1987, without meaningful consultation with Indigenous peoples. In the novel, once Indigenous perspectives via Elijah Harper begin to be included in public discourse, the setting and tone of Anne’s interventions alter radically. Rather than engaging national media at 6 p.m. in the evening, Anne listens to national media at 6 o’clock in the morning (61). The world has both figuratively and literally undergone a revolution; Anne is no longer engaging with national media at the end of the day but at the dawn of a new one. “Despite a number of attempts by a dozen Native political organizations to be included in the constitutional talks over the last ten years,” settler governments were continuing to exclude Indigenous peoples from national discourse (61). The situation, however, seems on the brink of changing, prompting Marianne to wonder “what magic has occurred to bring about an entire program devoted to Native leaders and how they ‘feel’ about Meech” (61). The setting is a “soft, sunny May morning” that “has an ethereal quality to it” that Marianne associates with the presence of a “radio program about our feelings on Meech” (61). That is, when national discourse turns to Indigenous perspectives, is early morning during the spring. The scene seems to signify growth, change, and perhaps new beginnings in the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship.

While at work, Marianne learns that Elijah Harper, “M.L.A. from Red Sucker Creek, Manitoba,” is going to be taking advantage of how the Meech Lake Accord was tabled; if he can keep talking, he will be able to stop the accord. Furthermore, his talk will be heavily covered and circulated by national media. Mark, Marianne’s Indigenous co-worker, suggests that Harper will share “endless trapper’s tales” and his experiences at “residential school,” exclaiming “that must be worth a story or two” (66). Elijah Harper’s filibustering of the Meech Lake Accord and the content of his filibustering speech asserts Indigenous perspectives on the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship.

Maracle’s novel demonstrates how Elijah Harper’s filibuster and its circulation through national media offer healing to Marianne and her family. It seems to open the possibility of more just Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships emerging in Canada. At Marianne’s home, Anne, Johnny, and Marie are no longer the sole listeners to Harper on the radio; his intervention is broadcast on the television and everyone watches the television (67). No longer does Anne argue against the one-way current of televised settler discourse; she, and others who are similarly transfixed by Harper’s words, sit silently and listen as an Indigenous voice is speaking back (67). As Mark predicted, Harper offers a very different story of Canada than the one supported and espoused by the state. He speaks about “the residential school system – the death of [Indigenous] culture, and every now and then Momma is affirmed: ‘See,’ she blurts out” (68).

Harper’s words flow into Marianne’s living room, vindicating Anne and what has, until now, been a source of shame and frustration for Marianne:

I look at Momma and see heroism. I see her fight day in and day out all her life [...] On television, for all to see, is the battle outlaid, the struggle for personal and psychological survival for Momma and all our old women [...] Our weapon? We have but one – dogged insistence on truth [...] I sit and watch hour after hour with my family, I shed hot tears of shame, cooling tears of pride, sweet tears of recognition, tears of joyous truth until exhaustion overcomes me and I sleep. (69)

The television in Maracle's novel often functions as a metaphor for settler colonial discourse, in the form of national narratives, that characterize Indigenous peoples and relationality as irrelevant, out-of-date in the face of liberal democratic institutions, state sovereignty, and market capitalism. Harper's mediated contestation, however, cleanses and heals the shame felt by Indigenous peoples as a result of these narratives. It suggests that Harper's words also bring pride, self- and collective-recognition, and a sense of "joyous truth" to Indigenous survivors of colonization in Canada (69). At the end of the broadcast, Marianne attests to the power of such words when she exclaims that she feels "exonerated for a crime I never committed" and that, in her eyes, she, her family, and all Indigenous peoples "become worthy of love" (69). Harper's discursive intervention suggests the dawning of a new Canada where Indigenous peoples' can articulate their traumas, truths, and aspirations.

Marianne and her family seem to feel that Indigenous peoples have finally succeeded in asserting a more politically effective voice into public discourse, one that might challenge settler colonialism and inspire the settler state to work towards more just relationships with Indigenous people. Anne's evening contestations and Mark and Marianne's workplace efforts seem to have generated what Fraser would refer to as a "parallel discursive arena" where

fellow Indigenous activists articulate and circulate counter-discourse through which they may assert their identities, interests, and needs (Fraser 67). Through in-person discussions between family members, through telephones and fax machines at Marianne's work, this expansive space allows for Harper to voice Indigenous peoples' collective concerns and needs. As stated above, this is consistent with what Warner describes as extra-institutional "social entities" (11) that are "poetically" (113) sustained through readership circulation. Such circulations and spaces are where the "emancipatory potential resides," where people of like-mind and social positioning may articulate their needs and desires and launch "agitational activities directed toward wider publics" (Fraser 68). Vindicating the work of communities within this circulating space of discourse, one might read Harper's filibuster as an assertion of the needs of an Aboriginal counterpublic. Indeed, one might read him as a portent of how the counter-discourse can be "transformative, not replicative merely" (122).

The problem with regarding Elijah Harper's filibuster as an outright success for Indigenous relationality is, in part, due to the physical and political separation between the needs and wants of Indigenous peoples, including Marianne's family, and the space of political discourse where Elijah Harper asserts Indigenous place-based perspectives. Robert Asen and Daniel Brouer write that Habermas' theory of the public sphere presupposes a "conceptual distinction between the public sphere and the state" (13). The public sphere emerged as a post-feudal, social, public space where private citizens met in coffee shops and other public spaces and, "acting in an advisory capacity, debated the activities of the state" (Asen 4). While they discussed the activities of the state and the market, individuals participating in the public sphere did not always exercise a direct influence on state decisions. Elijah Harper's filibuster

undoubtedly had an impact on the state; he caused the Meech Lake Accord to fail. His actions were supported and were in support of Indigenous governance. However, the state was able to contain his filibuster because it occurred in the authorized place and according to the rules of political discourse. The idea that the institutional and physical division between the public and the state is, however, according to Kanien'kéha Political Scientist Taiaiake Alfred, anathema to de-centralized Indigenous traditions of governance.

Alfred asserts in *Peace, Power, and Righteousness* that, according to Indigenous relational traditions, government is regarded as “the collective power of the individual members of the nation” and that “there is no separation between society and state,” between the *social* and the *political* (49). According to traditional governance practices, he continues, “there is no absolute authority, no coercive enforcement of decisions, no hierarchy, and no separate ruling entity” (80). Liberal democratic structures of government and normalized ideas of the public sphere are concepts and practices of governance that maintain settler dominance over Indigenous peoples and their *sui generis* rights to practice relationships with each other and their traditional territories on their own terms. In Alfred’s words, “the struggle for justice would be better served by undermining the myth of state sovereignty than by carving out a small and dependent space for Indigenous peoples within it” (82).

While national media showed what appeared to be an interest in Harper’s filibuster (May-June 1990), they tended to criminalize Indigenous participants in blockades at Kanesatake and Kahnawake (July-Sept. 1990) because those direct challenges could not be reconciled with crown sovereignty and liberal democratic institutions. Indeed, amid celebrations over Elijah Harper’s successful filibuster of the Meech Lake Accord, Marianne expresses an awareness of

this intractable tension. During a celebratory meal with her coworkers at the Union of B.C. Chiefs, Saul, a local leader raises his “mug in a grand salute” and exclaims that because of Elijah Harper, “Canada will never be the same” (111). Marianne responds with cynicism: “Why not? [...] Elijah may have stopped the process of constitutional betrayal, but Canada has yet to change. She is about to load a rickety old destroyer full of youth and send them to Iran or wherever, to kill men who look like all of you” (112). Honed by her mother’s long and committed critiques of the state, Marianne is reluctant to believe that Elijah Harper’s success will change how non-Indigenous Canada will relate with Indigenous peoples. Although Marianne is concerned that her cynicism hinders her ability to enjoy a legitimate victory for Indigenous peoples, her skepticism proves accurate; Elijah Harper succeeded in articulating an Indigenous counter-narrative to wider non-Indigenous publics through national media, but the Canadian state still participates in colonialism and violence against land defenders and abroad.

Saul acknowledges the truth of Marianne’s assessment. However, he gently asserts his more optimistic view on the impact of Elijah Harper’s filibuster: “True. But we have changed. We are all intoxicated with joy. The joy of the good fight. The joy of victory. We have fallen in love with the prospect of dignity. We have re-claimed our affection for some very unloved and weary people” (133). Elijah Harper’s words give hope and a sense of self-respect to the people in Maracle’s novel; they begin to see themselves as “worthy of love” (69). Through the lens of counterpublics, Elijah Harper’s successful assertion of Indigenous perspectives into official and dominant publics is a success unto itself as it challenges the hegemony of majority perspectives on the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship. We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that Elijah Harper’s stance in Parliament was linked with land knowledge and his resistance was

steeped in place-thought. However, while Harper's actions and words cannot be entirely contained by settler state discourse, Marianne's less optimistic appraisal of the impact of Elijah's Harper's filibuster on the state and the struggle for Indigenous relationality, political autonomy, and control over decisions pertaining to traditional territories proves accurate.

The Second Story

Relationality, Resistance, and Respect

The second story in *Sundogs* is about a young Indigenous woman, Marianne, whose experience running on and for the land reinvigorates her sense of relationality during the summer of 1990, when the Kanien'kéha of Kanesatake stood their ground against the town of Oka. I read the latter part of the novel through Maracle's positioning of it as an origin story of contemporary Indigenous place-based activism in Canada (Maracle 13). Indigenous storywork often features Tricksters who "remind us about the good power of interconnections within family, community, nation, culture, and land" (Archibald 9). Maracle writes in the preface to *Sojourners and Sundogs* that "in parts of *Sundogs*, Raven calls you forth to jump into her jogging shoes [...] to see the world through some other angle" (13). Raven, the Trickster, does not always reveal relational knowledge directly. The Oka Crisis, although devastating in many respects, continues to remind Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of the power of Indigenous relationality. I suggest that Maracle's novel helps us to understand how the Oka Crisis galvanized and continues to inspire Indigenous peoples but, more importantly, how the

later events of 1990 pose serious questions for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships in 2012 and beyond.

Both Maracle and Archibald discuss how Salish storytelling is about respectful and responsible forms of relationality. Maracle writes in her essay “Oratory on Oratory” that the point of studying stories is to “lead us onto a path of continuous growth and transformation, that will enable us to engage all life in a type of spirit-to-spirit relationship that leads all parties to the good life” (60). Archibald writes that Indigenous storytelling traditions embody teachings, rooted in place, about one’s “responsibility towards the generations of ancestors, the generations of today, and the generations yet to come,” as well as “the animal/human kingdoms, the elements of nature/land, and the Spirit World” (11). *Sundogs* tells a story that sheds light on Indigenous relational activism and the demands it makes on the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship from the 1990s to 2012’s Idle No More.

Sundogs depicts how the settler state might tolerate a challenge to its exclusion of Indigenous perspectives in discussions about legislation, but it will not tolerate direct challenges to state and corporate access to resources located in Indigenous territories. A month after Harper’s filibuster, Marianne learns that the town of Oka has decided to expand a golf course on a Kanien'kéha burial ground. “It seems incredible at first,” thinks Marianne, that “the Mohawks at Kanesatake occupy a bridge or some such thing” (126). The novel engages events that took place in 1990 when the Kanien'kéha people of Kanesatake established a camp to protect a Kanien'kéha graveyard in an area called “The Pines” from plans to extend a golf course. The Kanien'kéha of Kahnawake, in a show of solidarity, erected a blockade on the Mercier Bridge, a major traffic artery that connects the Island of Montreal to Kahnawake and

Saint-Constant. The town of Oka, supported by the SQ and the Canadian Army, violently assert their sovereignty over Kanien'kéha territory. Readers bear witness with Marianne and her family to the violence of settler colonialism enacted against Indigenous peoples and their relationships with place.

The situation is quintessentially settler colonial as the town of Oka, the province of Quebec, and the federal government attempt to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their land in the name of economic gain. Marianne registers the brutality of the situation when she reflects that she “can’t believe that the town could come to own our graveyards by legitimate means; more so, I can’t believe anyone would want to play golf on someone else’s graveyard” (26). Stan Wilson writes that Indigenous identity is “grounded in their relationships with the land, with their ancestors who have returned to the land and with future generations who will come into being on the land” (cited in Shawn Wilson 80). Moreover, he tells us that rather than “viewing ourselves as being in relationship with other people or things, we are the relationships that we hold and are part of” (80). While Elijah Harper was successful at asserting Indigenous perspectives in public discourse, provincial police, and the military are deployed to violently assert state and capitalist interests over Kanien'kéha assertions of place-based Indigenous relationality.

Public interest in Indigenous perspectives on Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships disappears as national media transmit settler colonial narratives that demean Indigenous peoples and their resistance to unwanted development to their lands. Marianne comments on the abrupt change in media representation: “[t]he press fills its pages with broadcasts full of ridiculous comments about how this is not going to do our land claims struggle any good,”

whereas there is “[n]ot a word about the shame the Quebec government and the town of Oka should feel about golfing on” the graves of the Mohawk people of Kanasetake (126). After Marianne and her family learn that the provincial police attacked the roadblock of the Kanesatake Kanien'kéha and one of their officers was killed, the television announces that the army has been called in to replace the local police. Now Anne “cries in front of the television each night, powerless, to express the horror and deep sadness she feels” (126). Unlike the interest in Indigenous perspectives that manifested during Elijah Harper’s filibuster, national media do not feature interviews with Indigenous peoples. Rather, the media explicitly and tacitly delegitimize the place-based Indigenous resistance of the Kanien'kéha.

Amidst the heightening violence, Anne learns that her daughter Rita, Marianne’s older sister, has been unfaithful in her loveless marriage. The news that her daughter has committed adultery draws out explicit recriminations against the settler state: “You have done everything to us; robbed us, raped us; pillaged us; until we are no more. No more. No morals, no culture, just a bunch of raggedy Indians. Indians, not even a people. A mistake. No identity” (Maracle 143). In a climax of pain and frustration at the damage that settler colonialism has inflicted on her and her family’s ability to relate to themselves and each other in healthy and respectful ways, she hurls a stone at the television, the novel’s purveyor of settler colonial national narratives: “I’ll fix you! I’ll fix you!” and then she throws one of the millions of stones the kids have collected at the television. A blue light flashes and the TV lets go a moan, then all is still, but for the terrified breathing of Momma’s audience” (143). The contrast between the utopic, early morning vigil for Elijah Harper’s filibuster and this scene in the novel expresses a deep sense of the discursive violence against Indigenous peoples and the vitality of their

relationships with each other and their land. While Elijah Harper's filibuster may have been successful at asserting a counter-narrative into settler public discourse, Maracle's *Sundogs* dramatizes how national media and the settler colonial state are all too willing to deploy discursive and physical violence in order to assert state and capitalist interests over place-based Indigenous relationships.

In the face of the violence faced by the Kanien'kéha people of Kanesatake, Marianne decides to join the Okanagan Nation's 1990 Oka Run for Peace. The run took place over six weeks during the summer of 1990 and "saw more than 73 Okanagan Nation members run from Syilx to Kanehsatà:ke territory to show solidarity with the Mohawk resistance to developments on their sacred burial grounds during the Oka Crisis" (Kelowna Capital News and Black Press Group). Marianne's solidarity run sheds light on the difference between participating in liberal discourse and place-based relationality. In contrast to the legislative assembly where Elijah Harper made his stand, readers witness Marianne's encounters with the land through which she runs. We bear witness to the revitalization and re-embodiment of her spiritual relationship with the land, her emotional relationship with her family, and her intellectual relationship with the truth of the struggle of Indigenous communities and other non-human beings connected with the land to survive in the face of colonization. Without diminishing the significance of state-centered interventions like Elijah Harper's, *Sundogs* offers Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples the opportunity to understand how relational, place-based Indigenous resistance differs from other forms of resistance. The struggle to assert and protect Indigenous relational self-determination exceeds what is deemed legitimate by settler colonial state institutions and economic interests.

At the beginning of the novel, Marianne is frustrated and embarrassed by her mother's passionate tirades against the television; however, Elijah Harper's filibuster generates a sense of pride in Marianne for her mother's resistance. Marianne develops a more relational understanding of Indigenous resistance practices that, as suggested by Leanne Simpson, have "kept our languages, cultures, and systems of governance alive. We have those things today because our Ancestors often acted within the family unit to physically survive, to pass on what they could to their children, to occupy and use lands as we always had" (Simpson, *Dancing* 16). When we look beyond the constraints of liberal democratic paradigms, resistance includes more than state-sanctioned forms of challenges like Elijah Harper's filibuster. Marianne comes to understand how her mother's "heroism," "her fight day in and day out all her life" against televised settler colonial discourse that generates and perpetuates racist stereotypes and policies that negatively affect Indigenous peoples, is also resistance (69). Marianne recognizes "the struggle for personal and psychological survival" waged by her mother "and all [their] old women" against colonialism (69). The resistance and political activism of Anne and other women does not end with their representation as liberal subjects of the settler state; rather, they resist settler colonialism by adhering to their languages, their truths, and practices of relationality. Practices of relationality include living-room contestations with family in the face of televised discourse that dehumanizes fellow Indigenous peoples. They include speaking in one's Indigenous language, which Anne and some of her children practice in the novel (153). *Sundogs* also depicts how, for some Indigenous activists, relational resistance means placing their bodies on the land.

Marianne's solidarity run with the Kanien'kéha embodies resurgence; it initiates her connection with a form of Indigenous relationality that includes the land and the larger Indigenous community. Marianne comes to understand that her mother's notion of the "plottiness of whites," her astute observances of the ubiquity of settler colonial discourse in everyday actions and policies of settler governments is nightmarishly accurate. Marianne learns that all Indigenous peoples and life forms are "besieged" by the rapacity of settler colonialism that would dispossess a people of their lands and burial grounds to build a golf course (180). Marianne guides readers to the recognition that the "Mohawks take up arms to show that they're dead serious about living, not simply surviving, but fully living with a sense of social affection," or respectful relationality with each other and the land (170). She offers readers the opportunity to better understand the degree to which place-based relationality matters for Indigenous peoples.

Kelly Aguirre writes that "the community of scholars forwarding the concept of resurgence indicates a kind of epistemic shift in storytelling on and of self-determination" (185). Aguirre's discussion about contemporary relationality and resurgence in her article, "Telling Stories: Idle No More, Indigenous Resurgence and Political Theory," helps me to understand and articulate the connection between Maracle's depiction of Indigenous place-based relationality and resistance and Indigenous resurgence today. "Resurgence," Aguirre continues, "involves a reorientation in ways of knowing, living more fully again from within Indigenous knowledge systems" (185). The land, place-thought, is the source of relational Indigenous knowledge systems. Through Marianne's run, readers are offered a glimpse into Indigenous relationality and its resurgence

Marianne travels alongside other Indigenous activists in the Run for Peace and narrates her experience of reconnecting with the land. As Marianne closes the distance between herself and Kanesatake, she listens to her “feet drum steps to the rhythm of the songs in front of me” (172). Like a pow-wow dancer, Marianne dances a song into the land with her steps and enters what appears as a spiritual relationship with it. “I fall in love,” she states, with the sense of relationality the land inspires in her (172). The run “rearranges [her] pattern of thought” and rips “up the hierarchy of arrogant men from my mind” (172). She not only feels connected to and feels the “worthiness” of “every man and woman” on the run, but the stones “come alive” and “each blade” of grass is revealed to her as a “relative” (172). “Life is sacred,” Marianne affirms; “creation is sacred, and my body changes” as she runs on the land (172). The “solitary gift” the run gives to Marianne, and the gift Maracle’s novel gives to readers, is a moment of peace from the incessant “siege” of settler colonialism in order to experience, if only for a short while, “the pure wonderment of creation” through the eyes of a young woman experiencing the resurgence of her kinship with the land (172).

Marianne’s run, her embodied practice of re-establishing her Indigenous relationality, creates a clearer sense of Indigenous peoples’ struggle to affirm, strengthen, and protect relationships with each other and the land. She comes to understand that non-Indigenous “encroachment” and “disease” contribute to the Indigenous peoples’ sense of being “valueless” (164). The solidarity that she comes to feel with her fellow runners, the Kanien'kéha, and the extended Indigenous community teaches her that a loving relationship with oneself, one’s family, and one’s community is needed to survive “storm[s] that try to negate our perfect right to be” (164). In short, the run allows her to sink “little webs of roots in the soil of [her]

homeland” and to establish a sense of belonging and wholeness. Her transformation contrasts dramatically with the sense of alienation and shame that colours her characterization at the beginning of the novel (203). Afterward, Marianne reflects that the “run re-created” her and her fellow runners (203). *Sundogs* allows Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers alike to understand how Marianne learns the power of the living earth or place-thought and thus to better grasp what is truly at stake for Indigenous relational self-determination (178).

In the end, *Sundogs* not only is a story that allows us to better understand not only Indigenous relationality and resistance, but also how non-Indigenous peoples may or may not effectively build respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities. Towards the end of the novel, through Marianne’s settler classmate, James, *Sundogs* teaches us that there are dimensions of Indigenous relationality that are not and may never be open to non-Indigenous peoples. Moreover, even if the active dispossession of Indigenous peoples was to end today, sustainable, respectful, and responsible Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships would require a lot of work; hence, my attempt in this project to better understand how Indigenous theories and stories might suggest more respectful alternatives to current settler colonial conceptions and practices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships.²²

Sundogs teaches the possibility for settlers to better understand and respect Indigenous peoples and their boundaries through the missteps of James, who develops simultaneous interests in Indigenous perspectives and Marianne. James is more than a mere foil to Marianne’s increasingly sophisticated Indigenous critique. His blunders and missteps offer teachings, by way of allegory, to non-Indigenous peoples about how settler colonial narratives produce and pervade the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship. Through James, Maracle’s

novel suggests how even seemingly well-meant attempts at developing relationships with Indigenous peoples can go wrong if there is not a common understanding of, let alone respect for, Indigenous relationality and boundaries.

It is amid heightened interest in Elijah Harper's filibuster that James shows an interest in Marianne. His interest seems to be intellectual, but the story suggests that it might also be romantic. We are introduced to James when he runs to catch up and have a conversation with Marianne. Marianne notes that James appears not to be "used to running," has "clean even teeth," and that "the lines of his [face] indicate his life contains no major crises" (81). She is annoyed but also amused by his unself-conscious class, gender, and racial "privilege" (83). Like many non-Indigenous peoples at this moment, James is interested in the "real Native's perspective." However, Marianne informs him that "You don't, as a golden boy, just walk up to some darky and treat him (sic) as equal if your whole life experience has been exactly the opposite. A whole series of contexts have to be accounted for and if you can't do that, communication is next to impossible" (84). Marianne has, at this point in the novel, become increasingly aware of the degree to which she, Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous lands have been degraded by settler colonial discourse. In other words, Marianne understands that James' wealth and health are in part made possible through the dispossession of Indigenous peoples' relational self-determination. As she demonstrates a reluctance to satisfy James' sudden, unself-reflexive interest in her perspectives, she simultaneously teaches readers that working towards Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships will require a lot of work. A proper Canadian, James apologizes for his part in the oppression of Indigenous peoples, but Marianne lets him know that "it doesn't feel or sound good" (84). Non-Indigenous readers have the opportunity,

through Marianne's rejection of James, to deepen their understanding of the "whole series of contexts" that need to be redressed before sustainable, respectful, and responsible Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships can emerge (84).

James and Marianne do not develop a relationship with each other in part because James is unable to see how his attempts at doing so are disrespectful towards Indigenous relational boundaries and thus sustain settler colonial claims to Indigenous lives as resources to be drawn upon at will. During her first conversation with James, Marianne comforts herself that his interest is purely "intellectual"; she will see him in her sociology class but doesn't "have to bring him into the intimate sanctuary of [her] family circle" (87). Marianne is surprised, however, on two occasions when James decides to "stop by" uninvited to her home. He fails to see how he trespasses relational boundaries. Although Marianne implies that he is unwelcome, she arrives home on a separate occasion to find him, again, sitting with her family: "What is wrong with this man," she thinks to herself. She "left the door open a crack and he had seen it; the rest is history" (119). Indeed, his lack of respect and understanding for Marianne's boundaries and his presumption that her life is open to him enacts, in microcosm, the history of non-Indigenous exploitation of Indigenous peoples and lands in Canada.

David Garneau's diagnosis of the colonial attitude in "Imaginary Spaces of Conciliation and Reconciliation" sheds light on James's behaviour with Marianne. The colonial attitude is "characterized by a drive to see, to traverse, to know, to translate (to make equivalent), to own, and to exploit" (29). It traverses and trespasses territorial, communal, familial, and personal boundaries. James seems to presume "that everything should be accessible, is ultimately comprehensible, and a potential commodity or resource, or at least something that can be

recorded or otherwise saved” (29). James’ inability to see or to respect the intimate space of Marianne’s home life stands in for the history of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships in which non-Indigenous peoples have learned to disregard and disqualify Indigenous peoples and their relational self-determination. His missteps exemplify how “sites of resistance” are not always,

open battles between the minoritized, oppressed, or colonized and the dominant culture, but the perpetual, active refusal of complete engagement: to speak with one’s own in one’s own way; to refuse translation and full explanations; to create trade goods that imitate core culture without violating it; to not be a Native informant. (Garneau 29)

James’s blustering attempt to initiate a relationship with Marianne sheds light on how the imposition of state sovereignty and capitalist interest over Indigenous place-based relationality is sustained by insidious and pervasive assumptions regarding the accessibility of Indigenous peoples, their families, communities, and lands. Ultimately, James disappears from the narrative but we, non-Indigenous readers do not. Like some trickster stories, *Sundogs* teaches readers through antithesis by revealing what settler attitudes block sustainable, responsible, respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships.

Idle No More

In this section, I extend my discussion of *Sundogs*, Maracle’s “origin story” of Indigenous activism, to address the contemporary discursive impacts of settler colonial narratives about the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship, the possibilities and limitations of liberal theories of counterpublics, and the ongoing, place-based demands of Indigenous relationality (Maracle

13). Indeed, the parallels between the struggles for Indigenous relational self-determination in the face of settler colonial discourse in 1990 and 2012 are significant. One might read the Idle No More movement as a real-life sequel to the nightly interventions, family teach-ins, and public proselytizing of Anne as well as Elijah Harper's filibuster.

In December 2012, the middle of the TRC's 5-year mandate, Indigenous activists and allies braved the winter cold in defiance of the settler state's impositions of its sovereignty and the capitalist resource economy over Indigenous communities. They rallied under the banner of Idle No More and "engaged in an extensive self-representation media campaign as an alternative to the mainstream press, aimed at both educating Canadians on Indigenous issues and inspiring [Indigenous] youth" (Simpson, "Where the Mainstream Media" 298).²³ As a reminder, the catalyst for Idle No More was a sweeping set of reforms contained in Bill C-45, passed by the majority Conservative Government. It removed federal protection of over 99% of lakes and rivers from the Navigable Waters Act and made alterations to the Indian Act, which made it easier to lease and to lose reserve land to non-Indigenous peoples (Bill C-45). Indigenous communities across Canada saw this omnibus bill as a serious affront to their relational self-determination, with respect to both their communities and traditional territories. While Indigenous resistance to settler colonization has never been idle, seldom has Indigenous activism achieved such visibility as it did during the winter of 2012.

Widespread acts of Indigenous resistance, in numbers not seen since the Oka Crisis, coalesced and achieved national visibility in national media during 2012 under the banner of Idle No More. Activists demanded a recall of the changes to the Navigable Waters Act and the Indian Act, a promise to provide for the health, housing, and culturally appropriate education of

Indigenous peoples, and an end to the unilateralism of the settler state regarding Indigenous peoples and territories (Manifesto). These demands were circulated in higher volume and with a wider scope than ever before, often circumnavigating national media altogether. According to the editorial team of the Kino-nda-niimi Collective, Idle No More “went around national media, emerging in online and independent publications as articles, essays, and interviews” (25).

Indigenous peoples, to an unprecedented degree, took up available media technologies in order to define and to assert their perspectives and relational self-determination, including their rights and responsibilities to their traditional territories.²⁴

In the collection of articles, essays, and art pieces entitled *The Winter We Danced*, members of The Kino-Dami-Imi Collective assert that, through social media and round dance flash mobs, Idle No More is “re-storying Canada” and engaging the “oft slumbering Canadian public as never before” (93). One of the most compelling aspects of Idle No More for me was the ubiquity of the drum. For Indigenous peoples, the drum signifies the connection of Indigenous peoples to each other and the land. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis writes that the drum is “the heartbeat of the Anishnabek nations” (Valaskakis 155). In *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back*, Simpson suggests that the word *dewe’igna*, the Nishnabemowin word for drum, “means the centre of our nations, or heartbeat” (Simpson 111). In her article entitled “Telling Stories: Idle No More, Indigenous Resurgence, and Political Theory,” Nahua scholar and Idle No More activist Kelly Aguirre writes that the drum “is the heartbeat of nations and of our Mother Earth” (Aguirre 187). Through their discussions of the power of the drum in Indigenous traditions, these scholars have helped me to better understand Indigenous, place-based relationality manifested through cultural practices. Aguirre writes that “bringing the drum into Settler

spaces imposed over Indigenous places, does not simply defer to the State's power through protest"; rather, the power of the drum signals that Indigenous activism is in "continuity with all other land-based practices" by recalling and reconfirming one's relational connections to place (187). The children of Maracle's generation, for whom the way was cleared by her generation's survival and storywork, began asserting their bodies and voices in settler institutions, such as government buildings, and centers of capitalist consumption, such as shopping malls.

Anishnaabe hip-hop artist, journalist, and politician Wab Kinew writes that "Idle No More started with four young lawyers trying to inform the people in their communities about an issue they were passionate about. Now many people are engaged" (98). Four Indigenous women, Nina Wilson, Sylvia McAdam, Jessica Gordon, and Sheelah McLean, sent out an open invitation to a teach-in about the Conservative Government's 2012 Bill C-45 and how it was going to affect Indigenous peoples and their relationships with their homelands. They called their teach-in "Idle No More." Sparked by their teach-in, Idle No More grew into a nation-wide grassroots movement that garnered the attention of national media.

Relative to Anne's living-room and community contestations and Elijah Harper's filibuster, Idle No More marked an intensification of Indigenous presence throughout national media. Indeed, at its height in 2012, Idle No More activists, write the editors of the Kino-nda-miimi Collective, "had control of [their] media representation" (25). Through Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms, "artists and writers [have presented] Canadians with rich art, and stories [that] evoke visions of the past, present, and future" of Indigenous cultures in

Canada (25). Indigenous voices more broadly and effectively challenged settler colonialism and its eradication and erasure of Indigenous place-based relationality and self-determination.

I am concerned, however, with how national media, as in *Sundogs*, constrains the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships to ones that leave unchallenged the settler colonial deracination of Indigenous relationality. Anishnaabe comedian Ryan McMahon writes that, for a time, “mainstream media were ignoring the movement” until a “round dance flash mob was planned and executed in Regina” (99). Following the round dance in Regina, “a round dance broke out in the West Edmonton Mall in Edmonton (North America’s largest mall)” and “then round dances started appearing everywhere” (99). These round dances seized the attention of national media. This is similar to the moment in *Sundogs* when Marianne asks, “what magic has occurred to bring about an entire [radio] program devoted to Native leaders and how they ‘feel’ about Meech” (61). However, public attention soon began to shift away from Idle No More.

It is apt that, as Jeff Corntassel (Cherokee), Corey Snelgrove, and Rita Dhamoon discuss, non-Indigenous support for Indigenous peoples was limited to a moment in time rather than being grounded in place. Barker suggests that non-Indigenous support for Idle No More was transient in part because it coincided with a time when Stephen “Harper’s popularity plummeted along with confidence in the [Conservative Party of Canada]” (14). The Conservative’s 2012 omnibus bill, which “undemocratically altered a number of key pieces of legislation” and catalyzed Indigenous resistance, was a source of widespread discord amongst many Canadians (14). As a contentious piece of legislation that drew public attention to

Indigenous struggle, it bears some similarity with the Meech Lake Accord. As with interest in Elijah Harper's filibuster, at least some non-Indigenous interest in Idle No More may have developed because it coincided with increased public awareness of legislative change and less out of a sense of solidarity with Indigenous peoples' place-based relationality.

Support for Idle No More was not only limited in time, but it was also limited in scope; as in the 1990s, non-Indigenous responses to Indigenous place-based resistance ranged from benign curiosity to outright violence. Barker notes that during the height of Idle No More, there were instances ranging from "violent assaults with vehicles to rapes," where non-Indigenous perpetrators "either explicitly targeted Idle No More protesters or referenced Idle No More as their motive" (Barker 13). Although the movement was diverse and grassroots, some elements of national media characterized Theresa Spence's hunger strike as the epitome of Idle No More and targeted her with overtly racist settler colonial discourse. Simpson notes how Christie Blatchford, in her column in *The National Post*, described Spencer's hunger strike as having a tone of "puffery" and "horse manure" (Blatchford). However, not all non-Indigenous peoples opposed the movement; Alfred asserts, for instance, that "Idle No More has shown that there is support among Canadians for a movement that embodies principled opposition to the destruction of the land and the extension of social justice to Indigenous peoples" (Alfred 213). As with *Sundogs'* depiction of settler colonial narratives about Indigenous resistance during the Oka Crisis, however, it appears that when Indigenous resistance challenges the sovereignty of the settler state and the interests of capitalist resource development, settler discourse can manifest in discursive and material violence.

What is certain is that, in both 1990 and 2012, settler colonial discourse in national media produced and maintained the narrative according to which there was an appropriate and inappropriate way for Indigenous activists to express their concerns. Place-based activism, such as the Kanien'kéha resistance at Oka and Spencer's hunger strike, the latter of which effectively re-claimed Victoria Island as a sacred site, was deemed inappropriate. What was and is tacitly approved by national media is participation in the settler state's liberal public sphere. Anishnaabe journalist Waubgeshig Rice writes that Idle No More's visibility in national media began fading after "the ill-fated meeting between chiefs and the Prime Minister on January 11" (270). The meeting Chief Spence sought was with Prime Minister Harper and the Governor General. In doing so, Barker writes that Spence "inherently asserted that Canadian sovereignty could only be functionally practiced through a partnership between Chief and Crown"; accordingly, the authority of federal and provincial governments was positioned "*a posteriori*" to that partnership (10). Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders did meet on January 11th, but it was not the meeting Chief Spence, or many grassroots activists, had in mind. National Chief of the AFN Sean Atleo and Stephen Harper met together, amidst widespread protests by Idle No More participants. Coulthard writes that by meeting with government officials, the AFN coopted Idle No More, turning "transformative potential into just another process and not policy change" (Coulthard, *Red Skin* 162).

In the months that followed, it became clear that, as Leslie Belleau states in *The Winter We Danced*, "Grand National Chief Shawn Atleo [...] undercut the [Idle No More] movement by the meeting on January 11 with Stephen Harper and other elected officials" (351). January 11

“marked the single most concentrated day of protest and involvement in Idle No More” (Barker 7). The meeting “provoked a great deal of debate and dissent” because it signalled the AFN’s recognition of the state as the sovereign authority over Indigenous community and place-based relationality (7). In effect, the AFN acted as an Aboriginal counterpublic that, while in “critical relation to power,” recognized the power of the Canadian state as the decision-making authority (Warner, *Publics*, 56).

By meeting with the Prime Minister, Atleo voiced Indigenous concerns; but his actions also tacitly reinforced the positioning of Indigenous peoples as an Aboriginal counterpublic. Thus “the monopolization of the political discourse by the AFN,” writes Barker, “had a chilling effect on the growth of Idle No More” because, for many, the state performed its due diligence as a ruling authority – it listened. Atleo’s actions also seemed to authorize “who could step into positions of leadership and how contention could be structured” (17). Like the Canadian parliamentary system, a single, authorized representative of a multitude could bring concerns upward and forward. Undoubtedly, Elijah Harper did stoke the ire of politicians and many other Canadians; however, the Kanien'kéha, by practicing place-based, relational resistance, stepped beyond such settler colonial definitions of what was appropriate. Thus, the Kanien'kéha blockade, like Spence’s hunger strike, attracted more violent forms of settler colonial discourse in the form of racist national media coverage. The sudden decrease in national media attention following the AFN’s January 11th meeting exemplifies how tacitly positioning Indigenous peoples, with their myriad ways of practicing relationality with each other and the land, as a legitimate Aboriginal counterpublic is an effective way for state actors and national media to

contain place-based and relational forms of Indigenous resistance. Through this sleight of hand, Indigenous place-based relationality and resistance can be disqualified and hindered from asserting Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships as structured, not according to hierarchical and state-centered liberal models of governance, but instead according to lateral forms of respect.

Conclusion

Sundogs sheds light on past and present containment strategies of settler colonial discourse that manifest through physical violence, but also through national media and settler colonial discourses. Maracle's story also helps us to see the possibilities and limitations of a liberal counterpublic sphere theory that not only limits non-Indigenous understandings of Indigenous claims for relational, land-based self-determination, but also perpetuates the deracination of Indigenous communities from their lands and sources of relational knowledge, place-thought. I have drawn on Stó:lō educational theorist Jo-Ann Archibald's storywork to guide the connections I make between Maracle's "origin story" of Indigenous activism since the 1990s and the 2012 emergence of the Idle No More Movement. When read through the lens of storywork, *Sundogs* suggests that the same demands for place-based, respectful, responsible forms of relationality that drove Indigenous resistance in the 1990s continue to be relevant today.

Through Maracle's novel, non-Indigenous readers have the opportunity to understand how we, like James, benefit from the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous-informed representations of resistance increasingly "regenerate and refigure still existing, particular and substantive alternatives to colonial forms of relationality" (Aguirre 185). They offer to

Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike alternative possibilities for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. While national media might still work to contain Indigenous resistance to the abstract space of the liberal democratic public sphere, they fail to tell the whole story. As Maracle's novel reveals, the Oka Crisis and Idle No More are more than protests by an Aboriginal counterpublic within the liberal democratic settler state. They are place-based practices of relationality, resistance, and resurgence by Indigenous peoples, families, communities, and nations, on emergent terms that are generated by the land rather than granted to Indigenous peoples by the settler state.

As Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel suggest, "good relations across difference take time and care" (3). Like James, non-Indigenous people may ask questions and make mistakes that reveal that learning and unlearning must happen before relationships can emerge according to respect on Indigenous terms. Maracle writes in her essay "Oratory on Oratory" that the point of studying stories is to "lead us onto a path of continuous growth and transformation [...] that will enable us to engage all life in a type of spirit-to-spirit relationships that leads all parties to the good life" (Maracle. "Oratory" 60). *Sundogs* suggests how Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships can emerge based on responsibility and respect for each other's relational self-determination.

Indigenous selves are often characterized by a relationality that renders the self indivisible from relationships with ancestors, peoples, animals, and place. For sustainable relationships to emerge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, non-Indigenous peoples must understand this relational quality and practice respect for it. Salish storywork helps us to see how Maracle's novel reveals place-based pathways we may take

towards “the good life” and “spirit-to-spirit” relationships, rooted not in a moment but in place, in recognition and respect for all to exist on their own terms (Maracle, “Oratory” 60). Maracle may not have had non-Indigenous peoples in mind when she wrote *Sundogs*, but as she says in her introduction to the novel, Raven is rarely, if ever, direct. Through James, she calls “upon the [settler] listener/reader to see yourself in this story” and to respond by practicing being in relation with Indigenous peoples and places (Maracle, *Sundogs* 14).

Chapter 3: The Economics of Reconciliation: CBC's *8th Fire* and *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee*

Documentaries

Hi, I'm Wab Kinew, I'm Anishnaabe from the Onigaming Ojibway First Nation. It's been about 500 years since *your people met my people* and things look a little different. But let's face it though, our relationship still needs a lot of work. Some people call it *reconciliation*. Some people call it the *8th Fire*: A First Nations' prophecy that says that now is the time for all peoples to come together to build a new relationship ... So, come meet the neighbours ... and I promise, honest injun, no guilt trips and maybe even a few surprises. (CBC / Radio-Canada. "Indigenous in the City.")

The words above are the opening lines of *8th Fire*, a four-part television documentary series created and broadcast by CBC between January and February of 2012. The series is one of several initiatives by state institutions aimed at reconciling relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada (available on the CBC's website, CBC.ca/8thFire). As Kinew's greeting suggests, *8th Fire* produces a narrative about "reconciliation"; however, "reconciliation" is a highly contested term. I argue here that some instances of the *8th Fire* documentary maintain settler colonialism in Canada by constructing a national narrative about reconciliation as a means of wealth creation in the context of global capitalism, through the coming together of self-reliant market participants and the commodification of land. These characteristics represent principles and practices of neoliberalism that increasingly inform Canadian settler colonial policies enacted at the expense of the political autonomy and place-based relationalities of Indigenous nations. Although the CBC documentary series gives some

scope to Indigenous decolonial positions challenging the hegemony of these driving principles of contemporary settler colonialism in Canada, *8th Fire* contains the energy of this challenge within its own representation of the most viable terms for new relationships.

I have tried to pursue my criticism of *8th Fire* with the understanding that its creators perhaps thought it necessary to couch “reconciliation” in such instrumental terms because, at the time of *8th Fire’s* creation, appeals to the legal and the ethical obligations of non-Indigenous people to support initiatives aimed at addressing Indigenous peoples’ grievances had not been answered with a groundswell of non-Indigenous support. For example, RCAP was lauded by many critics for its representation of the legal and ethical grievances of Indigenous peoples and the path it recommends for more sustainable future relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. However, many of its more substantial recommendations remain unimplemented (Hughes 107).²⁵ The TRC, which has since published its *Final Report* and *Calls to Action*, was given a budget of \$60 million and a five-year mandate to host public hearings and to compile a record of peoples’ accounts of their experiences in residential schools. In his essay, “Towards a Hopeful Practice of Worrying,” Roger Simon hoped that the TRC might

inform a practice of public memory that instigates the formation of a new public, one committed to supporting the work that needs to be done in order to further just policies and practices regarding issues that matter dearly to Indigenous communities: those not just of land claims and land use, but as well those relating to health, education, housing and water. (Simon 138)

At the time of *8th Fire’s* production, however, a public such as the one Simon hoped for had not

yet been generated by the TRC findings.²⁶ I show how the *8th Fire* website worked to call such a public, one centered on dialogue and critical understandings of the past and present Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship, into being. The producers of the *8th Fire* documentary, to generate support for reforms that might begin to address Indigenous peoples' grievances, may have strategically framed reconciliation and the possibilities of new relationships in terms that might appeal to the economic desires of liberal Canadians. Be that as it may, the result of their efforts is, I argue, a representation of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that props up practices that contain and delimit Indigenous rights and desires.

There are two stages to the argument that I put forward in this chapter. Informed by theories and practices of Indigenous resurgence, I first offer a critical discourse analysis of the *8th Fire* documentary. I show how the CBC documentary confines the possibilities of new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within neoliberal narratives of prosperity. The broadcast content of *8th Fire* supports the neoliberal commodification of land through resource development and assertions of state sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and their relationships with the land. The documentary series further normalizes these pillars of settler colonialism in Canada that continue to suppress and oppress Indigenous knowledge systems. The documentary does this, in part, through Kinew's narration and by offering strategically edited and arranged commentary with Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics, community leaders, and artists. In the second stage of my analysis of *8th Fire*, I argue that, in tension with the broadcast content of *8th Fire*, the *8th Fire* website provides a space for

alternative forms of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships grounded in collectively held understandings of the place-based, relational networks of Indigenous peoples.

In the second stage of this chapter, I juxtapose the broadcast content of *8th Fire* with *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee (The EEI)*, a four-part documentary series commissioned by the Grand Council of the Crees in Quebec and produced between 2010 and 2015. Like Maracle's text and King's historical accounts, the development of the Cree documentary was produced by Indigenous peoples and offers insight into Indigenous understandings and forms of relationality. Drawing on Jo-Ann Archibald's *Storywork* and my understanding of Indigenous place-thought, I offer a reading of *The EEI* because its principle subjects are relationships between the Cree and non-Indigenous people, within the contested contexts of economic development, namely the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (1975). I contrast the portrayals of reconciliation and new relationships in the broadcast content of *8th Fire* and the Cree documentary with a focus on the question of economic development. *The EEI* depicts the Cree as having increased in material prosperity despite successive waves of mass development by Quebec and its Crown Corporation, Hydro Quebec. However, this development has taken place on Cree lands and has involved acts of trespass against what Cree philosopher Willie Ermine calls "those crucial lines we draw to delineate our personal autonomy and demarcation of boundaries others should not cross" if they want to cultivate ethical relationships (195). As opposed to *8th Fire*'s privileging of assimilation into the market economy, *The EEI* offers an Indigenous story about the survivance of possibilities for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships grounded in respect for Indigenous relational self-determination.

Survivance was first used by Gerald Vizenor in his 1999 book, *Manifest Manners*:

Narratives on Postindian Survivance. In the edited anthology, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (2008), Vizenor writes that “survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy [such as the tragedy of Tecumseh, which I discuss in Chapter 1], and the legacy of victimry” (1). Although Vizenor never explicitly specified his associations with survivance, Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior, in *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, write that the term “survivance” is linked with both endurance and resistance (89). Diane Glancy, in her chapter, “The Naked Spot: A Journey Toward Survivance,” writes that survivance combines a sense of survival with “vivance,” life, and thus signifies the “vitality” of survival in Indigenous poetry and prose (Glancy 271). Like the words that make up survivance, Indigenous narratives that elaborate the ongoing vitality of Indigenous lives and lifeways bespeak the *endurance* and *resistance* of Indigenous knowledge, practices, and peoples in the face of settler colonialism. *The EEI* is an example of such storywork; it tells a story of an Indigenous community galvanized in the face of colonial aggression and adversity.

This chapter principally engages with the genre of documentary, with television and the internet as its media of dissemination. Raymond Williams writes in *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* that texts coded as documentary are expected to offer a relatively “direct presentation of the substance of a problem or an experience or a situation” (78). The documentary genre, because of its cultural status as a realist medium relative to fictional films, is thus a powerful tool for both the production and the critique of discourse. In the introduction to *Candid Eyes: Essays on Canadian Documentaries*, editors Jim Leach and Jeannette Slonioski offer a slightly more nuanced discussion of the documentary genre. Documentary, they write,

depends on the “‘public gaze:” publics expect that “the images on the screen and their arrangement in the editing room must provide an external and ostensibly objective viewpoint on the film’s subjects” (4). This becomes rather more complex when we recall that public opinion itself is “not an empirically verifiable object” but rather, something that is produced in part by state-subsidized and corporate-owned media (Henderson, “Residential Schools” 5). Therefore, documentaries have a dialectical relationship with public opinion in that they both emerge from and produce public opinion. Regarding public institutions like the CBC, “the ‘public’ gaze” takes on an added meaning. As products of publicly funded institutions, the representation of events and issues that CBC documentaries produce are held accountable by the citizenry and institutions of the state. My contention is that the broadcast content of *8th Fire*, in its representation of what reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples might look like produces, in part, the settler state’s institutions, and the increasingly hegemonic logics of neoliberalism, in the context of the continued colonization and resistance of Indigenous peoples and their relational self-determination.²⁷

Documentary theorists Leach and Slonioski inform my understandings of how even though Wab Kinew narrates *8th Fire*, the documentary can still be complicit in settler colonial nation-building. They discuss how early Canadian documentaries used a male voice, dubbed “the voice of God,” as a narrator (5). This commentary tacitly claimed “the same status of evidence” as the images depicted in the film “for its argument about the meaning of the observed reality” as the divine authority (5). In other words, the commentary positions itself as fact. The voice “narrated these documentaries, assigning meaning to the images on screen” (7). Later documentary filmmakers, to decrease the “sense of a disembodied voice of authority,”

used their own voices and sometimes appeared in their own films (7). Some would also centre on the commentary of their subjects interviewed. The problem, write Leach and Slonioski, is that “none of these practices necessarily make the films less manipulative” or less likely to propagate a dominant view of what constituted Canadian identity (7). “Indeed,” they continue, “the lack of commentary can be a way of denying that the film offers any point of view at all” or that “the film’s point of view is that of the subjects who speak for themselves” (7). In this chapter, I argue that the broadcast content of the *8th Fire* documentary offers a constrained version of reconciliation, but does so implicitly by relying on a combination of both embodied and voice-over narration by Wab Kinew, a male Anishnaabe hip-hop artist, CBC journalist, and recently Member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba for Fort Rouge, as well as on an array of interviews with Indigenous peoples from a variety of nations and walks of life. The effect of this is a documentary series that appears as a diverse representation of the perspectives of Indigenous peoples in Canada on the possibilities of reconciliation; however, there are key instances in the *8th Fire* documentary that reveal how the documentary’s narrative constrains the possibilities of new relationships to ones that reproduce settler state power and the market economy.

The *8th Fire* Documentary

Supporting Themselves and Standing Alone

“Indigenous in the City,” the first of the CBC documentary’s four installments, is primarily concerned with overturning certain stereotypes held about Indigenous people in North America. My concern here is that it tries to redeem Indigenous people by depicting them

not as communities or nations but as individuals, like many others, able to support themselves and to thrive in the economy: the official aim of residential schooling. As Jennifer Henderson writes, “[c]ompulsory residential schooling was the mechanism through which *liberal individuals* were to be made out of Indigenous people, the mechanism through which, in the words of Duncan Campbell Scott, Indigenous people could be made ‘to support themselves, and stand alone’” (Henderson, “The Camp, the School, and the Child” 67; emphasis original). *8th Fire’s* emphasis on materially successful individual Indigenous peoples is troubling given its apparent alignment with Canadian state legislation directly aimed at the destruction of Indigenous cultures in favour of integration into Canadian liberal society.

Elizabeth Strakosch, in *Neoliberal Indigenous Policy: Settler Colonialism and the ‘Post-Welfare’ State* (2015), argues that in the last 15 years, Indigenous policy in several settler states has shifted from negotiating entitlements and the possibilities of self-determination to “reforming Indigenous behaviour, intervening in community ‘dysfunction’ and driving economic integration through mainstream employment” (1). This shift is in part an outgrowth of a related shift from “social to neoliberal framings of citizen-state relations” (2). In the post-war period, Strakosch argues, that the imagined role of the state was to guarantee and secure “citizen entitlements”; however, neoliberal logics have increasingly won ground in perceptions, held across Western liberal democracies, of such institutional practices, framing them as meddling and likely to produce welfare-dependency (2). Strakosch’s point is not that classical liberalism or social liberalism were political-economic systems that were better with regards to Indigenous struggles for self-determination and jurisdiction over traditional

territories, but rather that neoliberal discourse intensifies the dispossession of Indigenous land and life.

8th Fire produces a narrative according to which Indigeneity can be subsumed within settler-state-colonial neoliberalism, which frames Indigenous peoples “as legitimate subjects of state policy authority” (7). As Strakosch writes, “[i]n the settler colonial context, domestic Indigenous policy is a crucial site of political encounter” (2). Classical liberalism, social liberalism, and neoliberalism do not constitute a progression away from settler colonialism; rather they represent different incarnations of the “imbrication of liberalism and colonialism” (2).

In the early moments of “Indigenous in the City,” video clips are shown of Indigenous individuals who list stereotypes shared of Indigenous peoples that characterize them as alcoholics, drug addicts, lazy, and prone to poverty. This segment works to undermine these stereotypes by ironically juxtaposing the appearance of the Indigenous people in the clip with the stereotypes that they list: the first interview subject standing alone against an urban background is athletic-looking, stylish, and young. He thus embodies a contradiction to the very generalizations he lists; he embodies a neoliberal wealth-gaining potential ideal. Similarly, the second person shown is a young Indigenous woman in semi-casual business attire and stylish glasses whose appearance bespeaks her fit in the world of business. These visual representations of Indigenous individuals do overturn some stereotypes trafficked about Indigenous people through ironic juxtaposition, but portrayals of materially comfortable individuals signify a certain form of social value. In other words, while the stereotypes held about Indigenous peoples are overturned, the settler colonial, neoliberal system of value that

constitutes these stereotypes is left unchallenged. When considered alongside the in-depth features of Indigenous individuals that follow, it is apparent that these representations are tailored to the assumptions of an imagined audience whose values are informed by a system that privileges the individual accumulation of material wealth as a sign of prosperity.

Lee Maracle, author of *Sundogs*, is featured following the above segment. She explains that stereotyping is an integral component of settler colonial discourse; it devalues and dehumanizes peoples designated for colonization. Indigenous peoples are strategically depicted as vanishing, thus appearing to require such assimilative structures as residential schools to integrate them into the Canadian liberal mainstream. By presenting Indigenous people as wealth-seeking and -acquiring individuals, *8th Fire* risks indirectly affirming the goal of assimilating Indigenous peoples into majority culture qua capitalist economies and materialism. Maracle's discussion of stereotyping implies that the documentary will offer more authentic representations of Indigenous peoples. However, neoliberalism *qua* entrepreneurial individualism informs the terms through which the interview subjects are selected as examples of prosperity in contrast to depicting individuals who maintain relations with lands and communities. By framing prosperity thus, *8th Fire* offers a form of reconciliation that risks normalizing the settler colonial narrative of progress that imagines the communal and place-based as necessarily and beneficially evolving into the individual and urban.

To be fair, the producers of *8th Fire* may have been responding to the circulation in the broader public of televised media testimonies from the TRC. They may have been responding to the concern that some non-Indigenous peoples might perceive Indigenous peoples as being over-determined by their traumatic history. The producers may have sought to produce an

empowered counter-narrative.²⁸ The Indigenous people represented are certainly not victims; rather, they are the first examples of many highlighted in *8th Fire* that illustrate, for an imagined non-Indigenous audience, Indigenous people's potential to become successfully integrated participants in the market economy.

Throughout the rest of the first installment of the documentary, several case studies are presented that continue to counter negative stereotypes and to obliquely champion the individual's capacity to pursue wealth. The first of such case studies focuses on Steve Keewatin Sanderson, a Plains Cree digital comic book artist from Saskatchewan (CBC / Radio-Canada. "Indigenous in the City"). The segment begins with a sequence of shots of Vancouver by night. It is beautifully lit by office buildings, street lamps, and the headlights of speeding cars. Underneath this clip appears the text, *Vancouver: Coast Salish Territory*. With the introduction of segments throughout the documentary, English place names are superimposed across video images of cityscapes coupled with the location's traditional Indigenous names. While I at first thought that the effect unsettled settler perceptions of familiar Canadian cities, I now see them as contributing to the overturning of stereotypes of Indigenous peoples; while learning that the bustling city of Vancouver is on "Coast Salish Territory" may defamiliarize one's assumptions about the city's history, in particular about former and present Indigenous inhabitants, I wonder if, as with the stereotypes, the effect is to impress upon non-Indigenous viewers that Indigenous territories can also be "modern" and economically successful metropolises. In this sense, then, as with the overturning of certain stereotypes, the effect of these clips is again to construct neoliberal frameworks for recognizing prosperity and desirability. In this instance, the

value of a place is predicated on its potential to generate wealth as opposed to place-based Indigenous relationality.

Following the sequence of Vancouver streets, we are shown images of Sanderson, his art, and his apartment. Located in a high rise, Sanderson's apartment is full of new, stylish furniture. A large flat-screen television sits mounted on a wall. The quick survey of Sanderson's apartment expresses his considerable affluence and his modern, individual lifestyle. A clip of Sanderson drawing on his state-of-the-art digital drawing tablet is overlaid with his voice stating that only four generations ago his family were buffalo hunters (CBC / Radio-Canada, *"Indigenous in the City"*). The suggestion, which is supported by his high-tech furnishing and occupation, is that Sanderson no longer makes a living on the land because he is a young, urban, and creative individual. Sanderson goes on to jokingly talk about his experiences with stereotypes. He describes how some people have been surprised that he does not use flint in his art or paint totem poles. Against such expectations, he is a high-tech digital artist. His comment further alerts audience members that Sanderson overturns stereotypes; however, as noted above, the neoliberal framework that informs both stereotype and seemingly benign alternative is simultaneously normalized. This focus on Sanderson indeed disrupts any residual victim assumptions by exemplifying the modernity and economic vitality of Indigenous individuals. However, in foregrounding representations of Indigenous people as self-reliant and economically prosperous individuals without any overt connection to the land, the underlying system of settler colonial, neoliberal values remains untroubled. This is not to say that "authentic" Indigeneity requires one to hunt, however, *8th Fire's* representation of Indigeneity risks affirming the goal of integrating Indigenous peoples into liberal capitalism, the

longstanding aim of settler-colonial state policy, and away from community and place-based relationships.

A possible criticism of my analysis of *8th Fire* may be that regardless of the Canadian state's policies, the documentary's representation of Indigenous people is designed to show an expansive assortment of individuals, one which of course does include professionally successful, urban people. I am not asserting that Indigenous peoples like Sanderson are somehow less Indigenous than someone living near their nation and traditional territory; after all, 2011 census data revealed that 56% of Indigenous peoples in Canada live in cities. My concern is that *8th Fire* highlights these individuals as examples of prosperity. In doing so, the documentary contributes to neoliberal logics that aims to contest by rearticulating Canadian settler colonial representations of Indigenous peoples. "Indigenous in the City" selects its interview subjects to maintain an ideology that has become increasingly hegemonic among Western states since the late 1970s and that has been transforming Indigenous policy across several settler states for the last 15 years. This ideology asserts that "human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2). In other words, I am concerned that *8th Fire*, in overturning stereotypes, normalizes neoliberal logics in which the "economy defines morality" (Hewison 211).

The selection of Sanderson and the other Indigenous individuals, as upwardly mobile and urban citizens, is based on the intensification of neoliberal ideas of state-citizen relations; *8th Fire* overturns stereotypes of welfare-dependent peoples in order to promote an image of the self-reliant and materially successful Indigenous individual, which conforms to neoliberal

logics in domestic social policy. These depend on “a language of economic insecurity as justification for comprehensive reforms to increase competitiveness, efficiency and responsibility” and to encourage “individual economic participation” in capitalist “markets, contracts and disciplinary ‘workforce’ regimes” (Strakosh 6).

Neoliberal discourse works to depoliticize settler colonial Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships by deploying a language of economic necessity, individual responsibility, and self-reliance. Like the social liberalism of the post-war period that thrust citizenship upon Indigenous peoples, often framed as an emancipatory gift from the state, neoliberalism “includes Indigenous people as citizens and therefore” presents itself as post-colonial. Through such emphasis on “economic necessity” and “individual welfare,” however, neoliberal discourse works to depoliticize and mask its perpetuation of settler dominance over Indigenous nationhood and elide ongoing calls for Indigenous self-determination and decision-making power over traditional territories (Strakosh 7).

This trend continues in the second installment of *8th Fire*. At the 16-minute mark of “It’s Time!” the former Prime Minister Paul Martin is depicted offering decidedly neoliberal arguments for reconciliation. Looking earnestly into the camera, Martin explains that Canada has “34 million people [...] we’re in competition with countries like China and India with populations that exceed a billion; we cannot afford to waste a single talent and Aboriginal Canadians are not only the faster growing, they are the youngest members of our society” (CBC / Radio-Canada, “It’s Time!”). Indeed, according to federal census data collected in 2006, the Indigenous growth rate in Canada exceeds other groups by 6:1. According to Martin, Indigenous peoples are necessary for the Canadian economy as labour. The negative stereotypes that the

imagined non-Indigenous audience has in mind, which Sanderson and others implicitly oppose, reinforce neoliberal logics that configure Indigenous peoples as a resource.

In contrast, Elaine Coburn in *More Will Sing Their Way to Freedom* (2015), writes that according to theories of Indigenous resurgence, “justice is not conceived in the mainstream, colonial language of autonomous liberal individual (or human) rights [...] Instead, justice appears as a matter of fulfilling responsibilities, in the familiar language, toward ‘all our relations’” (44). What is marketed to the imagined non-Indigenous audiences of *8th Fire* is a form of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, a new relationship, that will not challenge but further entrench the neoliberal idea that prosperity is best achieved by privileging individual enterprise and resiliency in accordance with market demands. Troubling stereotypes about Indigenous peoples by championing neoliberalism might interest *8th Fire’s* imagined non-Indigenous audience, but it risks obfuscating and depoliticizing Canada’s ongoing settler colonial relationships with Indigenous peoples. Taiaiake Alfred writes that the goal of Indigenous self-determination “ought to protect that which constitutes the heart and soul of Indigenous nations: a set of values that challenge the homogenizing force of Western liberalism and free-market capitalism” and prioritize relationships rooted in respect for Indigenous peoples and the land (quoted in Coulthard, “Subjects of Empire” 447).

Developing the Land

Regarding the specific question of land, the *8th Fire* documentary also reassures its non-Indigenous viewers that reconciliation presents Canadians with a means of generating increased wealth through land and resource development. According to the synopsis of “It’s

Time!,” the second installment of *8th Fire*, the episode “challenges Canadians with this reality: if we don’t improve our relationship with Aboriginal people, we will cripple our economy” (CBC / Radio-Canada. “It’s Time!”). True to the synopsis, Kinew appears at the opening of the episode and states, in a matter-of-fact tone, that “Asia is booming, and they need our stuff” (CBC / Radio-Canada, “It’s Time!”). Kinew further states that there are “300 billion reasons” (or 300 billion dollars’ worth of resources on and in Indigenous land) for why we need to improve or reconcile relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (CBC / Radio-Canada. “It’s Time!”). Prior to framing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples as a means of providing labour to help make Canadian businesses more competitive globally, former Prime Minister Paul Martin states the following, regarding the land and its store of natural resources:

Many of the First Nations, many Aboriginal Canadians, are sitting on a vast reserve storehouse of resources and we’re going to have to consult with them and deal with them to basically be able to develop them – umm – I think that’s an important argument for improving the relationship. (CBC / Radio-Canada, “It’s Time!”)

Here, Martin delegitimizes Indigenous peoples who do not want resource development in their territories. As noted, the interviews and images presented in the *8th Fire* documentary are assigned meaning and coherency through Kinew’s narration as well as interviews with selected Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. While Kinew functions as an Indigenous voice of authority, the Former Prime Minister of Canada commands a certain institutional authority. The agreement between them on the question of land in “It’s Time!” constructs a sense that there is consensus on the instrumental meaning of reconciliation and, furthermore, that the land is a mere storehouse of resources. Reconciliation, or the development of a new relationship, is

represented here as an opportunity to free up and accelerate the oftentimes destructive and undesired “development” of Indigenous lands.

As Todd Gordon writes, “the success of [Canadian] neoliberalism is in large measure contingent on the increased commodification of Indigenous land and labour, turning it into something to be bought and sold on the market” (Gordon 18). Indeed, as Alfred laments, “[b]eing land-based societies, Indigenous peoples have always been the prime targets of capitalist expansion and imperialist objectives” (2). In Europe, lands held in common were enclosed long ago in order “to facilitate the development of increasingly capitalist, export-oriented farming operations” (McCarthy 276). Such alterations were seen as “‘freeing’ up nature, i.e. detaching it from complex social constraints and placing it under the auspices of the self-regulating market” (276). For the last thirty years, western states have operated under intensified variations of this rationale. Although a “mixed bag,” says Joseph Stiglitz, former World Bank chief economist, neoliberalism may be characterized by “extensions of various forms of commodification” (quoted in Peck 107). *8th Fire* seems designed to assert that reconciliation can emerge alongside the continued commodification and development of land in Canada, much of which is situated on traditional Indigenous territories.

The third installment of *8th Fire*, “Whose Land is it Anyway?,” tries to substantiate the above claims made by Kinew and Martin through a case study of the James Bay Cree, in which it highlights the money the community gained from a deal struck between the Cree and the Quebec government in the early 70s. “Whose Land is it Anyway?” describes how Hydro Quebec was forced by the Quebec Supreme Court to sign a deal with the Grand Council of the Crees, whose rivers it would dam and lands it would flood as part of the construction of hydroelectric

dams. The installment does not immediately elaborate on how the Cree had been forced into compromising their territories nor how the deal continues to be a major cause of strife in the Cree community. Instead, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) is presented as having set a precedent for the recognition, by settler governments, of First Nations title to land. After years of struggle in the courts, the Cree accepted 168 million dollars from Hydro Quebec, priority consideration for jobs, and financial assistance for health services and schools in exchange for permission to develop hydroelectric dams and cables in parts of traditional Cree lands. "Whose Land is it Anyway?" foregrounds how, in the following years, the James Bay Cree invested heavily in its community by establishing an airline and the fourth largest construction company in Quebec. The narrative *8th Fire* offers of the JBNQA seems designed to show how Indigenous and non-Indigenous reconciliation can emerge alongside such large-scale projects of resource development that jeopardize and dramatically alter relationships on and with the land; however, this claim depends on *8th Fire's* subtle containment of a serious challenge to its representation of its terms of reconciliation.

Pakesso Mukash, son of the Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Cree in Quebec, musician, and activist, suggests at the end of the focus on the James Bay Cree that his people may have lost more than they gained from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Despite the monetary gains won from the deal struck with Hydro Quebec, Mukash laments that his people continue to struggle with high rates of suicide and substance abuse. He suggests that his people suffer from these social diseases, in part, because of a loss of cultural identity. To secure some of the basic rights that most Canadians enjoy, such as access to an education and a health system, Mukash laments that the Cree have had to "give up rivers and identity and

culture” (CBC / Radio-Canada, “Whose Land is it Anyway?”). Speaking to this sense of loss and to the oppressive nature of the relations between Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, Mi’kmaw scholar Bonita Lawrence, in *Fractured Homelands*, discusses how “naked power imbalances marked the [negotiation] process from the beginning to end” (68). She cites Matthew Coon Come, former Grand Chief of the Eeyouch Cree in “Survival in the Context of Mega-Resource Development: Experiences of the James Bay Crees and the First Nations of Canada” states that “Canada refused to intervene on our behalf, and Hydro-Quebec held a gun to our heads—the destruction of our lands and rivers continued daily while we negotiated” (Lawrence 68, Coon Come 156). Coon Come goes on to state that many of the benefits promised under the JBNQA “have failed to materialize,” benefits that everyone else who lives “in Canada enjoy as a right. My people had to bargain for clean water supplies and sanitation, for clinics and schools, for our rights and our way of life” (68). Coon Come echoes Mukash’s lament and substantiates his critique that the JBNQA did not represent a straightforward victory for the Cree over settler colonization. Not only were the Cree not consulted before development began but it proceeded against their wishes. The loss of land to flooding and development negatively impacted the Cree and thus, concludes Lawrence, little distinguishes “modern treaties” from their early 20th century counterparts (69).

Cherokee Professor of Indigenous Studies Daniel Heath Justice writes that fundamental to Indigenous cultural identity is an “understanding of a common social interdependence within the community, the tribal web of kinship rights *and* responsibilities that link the people, the land, and the cosmos together in an ongoing and dynamic system of mutually affecting relationships” (cited in Weaver 45; emphasis in original). Mukash and Coon Come not only

relate how the JBNQA failed to deliver on the benefits the Cree were promised, but they also express a sense of having lost the kinship relations that Justice describes. They suggest that the Cree suffer because of Canadian government policies and industry that have separated or seriously disrupted Indigenous peoples from their traditional land bases and networks. In “Whose Land is it Anyway,” Mukash’s reference to the loss of land is, however, subtly redirected and contained by Kinew, whose narration bookends the focus on the Cree. Although Mukash explicitly connects the problems his community faces with the loss of land, moments later Kinew associates the prevalence of suicide and substance abuse among Indigenous populations solely with the legacy of the residential schools and not with ongoing colonial processes. He then asserts that with the James Bay Agreement, the Cree secured the means, monetary and political, to support and protect their cultural practices. Regarding the social problems that persist amongst Indigenous communities, both Mukash’s and Kinew’s assertions are accurate. However, by focusing on residential schools, Kinew’s narration contains the serious challenge that Mukash offers to the notion that reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples might emerge without challenging the commodification of Indigenous lands.

The Irreconcilability of the Osoyoos

A second case study in *8th Fire* focuses on the Osoyoos First Nation of British Columbia, offered in “Whose Land is it Anyway?” and “At the Crossroads.” The study seems to represent a more nuanced way for Indigenous worldviews to coexist alongside market-centered values. However, in the way it works to overturn stereotypes and to advocate for the intensification of

Indigenous-led resource development, the segment persists in reducing neoliberal aversion to welfare dependency and idealizes the accumulation of wealth and participation in the global economy as reconciliation's end goals.

Kinew introduces the focus on the Osoyoos, reiterating how Canada's gains have meant losses for First Peoples; however, he states, "there are ways of working it out" ("Whose Land is it Anyway?"). At first, the segment opens with images of a picturesque mountainside resort sitting at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The voice of Chief Louie is heard stating that the "best relationships between Native peoples and non-Native peoples are business relationships" (CBC / Radio-Canada, "Whose Land is it Anyway?"). Louie boasts that his community has more band-owned businesses per capita than any other First Nation; the Osoyoos own various enterprises, including a golf course, a five-star hotel, and a vineyard, which they share with Vinecorps Canada, Canada's largest producer and marketer of wines. He states that many of the Osoyoos grew up in poverty; now, however, in spite of constraints still imposed on them through the *Indian Act* and the administration of Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, the Osoyoos Indian Band has been successful in striving towards financial independence, even enjoying an "economic boom in recent years" ("Whose Land is it Anyway?").

8th Fire's representation of the apparent economic prosperity of the Osoyoos works to exemplify how "reconciliation" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples will be a boon to the Canadian economy and will perhaps alleviate the perceived state-dependency of Indigenous communities. Indeed, this segment on Chief Louie's promotion of business relationships applies key principles from the *Final Report on the Royal Commission on*

Aboriginal Peoples in imagining future relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within a market-centered paradigm.

In their Final Report, the commissioners suggest four principles as a basis upon which renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples might grow: recognition, respect, sharing, and responsibility (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada). These four principles are based on an understanding of the treaties between the Crown and Indigenous peoples as “constitutional instruments that create and regulate the relationship” between Indigenous nations and Canadian governments (Henderson “Residential Schools and Opinion-Making” 428). The first two principles, recognition and respect, demand that non-Indigenous Canadians recognize that Indigenous peoples were the “original inhabitants and caretakers” of what is now called Canada and so have “distinct rights and responsibilities flowing from that status” (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada).²⁹ “Respect,” the second principle, “calls on all Canadians to create a climate of positive mutual regard between and among peoples” (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada). The principle is to protect Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities from the others attempting to “dominate or rule over [one] another” (Canada). It requires that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people “acknowledge and relate to one another as partners, respecting each other's laws and institutions and co-operating for mutual benefit.” In a sense, the segment on the Osoyoos seems designed to represent how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can engage in mutually beneficial partnerships if non-Indigenous peoples respect the autonomy of Indigenous institutions and businesses.

Louie's promotion of business relationships as the ideal form that Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships can take also highlights "sharing," the third principle that the commissioner of RCAP recommends for future relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (CBC / Radio-Canada, "Whose Land is it Anyway?"). Although terms such as sharing may easily be co-opted by proponents of resource development in order to gloss over less equitable relationships, the *Final Report* uses it to signify a pillar in renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities based on "mutually beneficial economic interdependence" (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada). Indeed, the focus on Chief Louie and the Osoyoos suggests that there is much wealth, derived from Indigenous labour and modest natural resource development, to be shared amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as well as the global market. Non-Indigenous peoples are asked only to relinquish the stereotypes they have about Indigenous peoples and communities, since, according to the 8th *Fire* documentary's representation, Indigenous peoples, like everyone else, deserve and desire an equal opportunity to become self-reliant, responsible, competitors in the Canadian and global market.

As with the overturning of stereotypes in "Indigenous in the City," the segment on the Osoyoos seems designed to overturn generalizations about Indigenous peoples and communities and, like the earlier episode, it does so by implicitly taking up neoliberal critiques of state interference and the valorization of market participation. The segment positions reconciliation as a process of freeing up Indigenous peoples and communities from state constraints so that they can become more independent and wealthier through participation in the market and the development of their lands.

My argument is not against Indigenous peoples becoming economically successful; my concern in this chapter is how the segment on the Osoyoos Nation emerges from and contributes to settler colonial myths of progress and how such myths are instrumental to prior and ongoing Canadian policy that sidelines Indigenous place-based relationships. Such settler colonial constructions designate practices of reciprocity and respect with the land as anachronistic for modern society. For instance, the relationship with Vinecorp, a profit-centered company, seems offered as an example of the kind of new relationships that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples might pursue together. “Whose Land is it Anyway?” features an interview with Randy Picton, Winemaker for the Vinecorp/Osoyoos vineyard. He states that the Osoyoos “understand what it takes to survive in the 21st century from an economic standpoint and they’re very forward in their thinking. They understand where they have limitations and that’s why I think this winery is a joint venture” (CBC / Radio-Canada, “Whose Land is it Anyway?”). While Picton’s comments seem positive, they contribute to the *8th Fire* documentary’s representation of a single, market-focused, form of “forward” thinking and progress, one that is decidedly in the direction of adhering to economic demands of, in this case, British Columbia’s tourist and restaurant industry. Like Former Prime Minister Martin’s appeal to audiences in “Indigenous in the City,” the message of “Whose Land is it Anyway?” is that reconciliation, or whatever form new relationships will take, is not only desirable but necessary in the context of the related need to “increase competitiveness, efficiency and responsibility” and to develop further “economic participation” (Strakosch 6).

In *8th Fire*’s final mention of the Osoyoos, during “At the Crossroads,” Chief Louie asserts his community’s relational ethic, a firm reassurance that the last principle of the RCAP

Final Report, responsibility to the land, will continue to be priority in developing new, business-like relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. However, this assertion stands in tension with the documentary's emphasis on upcoming resource development in response to market demands. Responsibility, according to the commissioners in the Final Report, has a "strong environmental ethic to it, an ethic of stewardship" that has "often been eclipsed by a careless and uninformed attitude to nature [...] that tacitly assumes that the earth is a virtually limitless resource" (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada). Chief Louie's depiction in "At the Crossroads," speaks to that environmental ethic. He is shown, standing arms akimbo, looking over his shoulder at an expanse of land behind him. His voice over narration states that his band could make millions of dollars if they were to develop it, but they're going "to leave it just the way it is" (CBC / Radio-Canada, "At the Crossroads"). This gesture, however, contradicts his earlier suggestion that more development is to come since the Osoyoos Nation has been able "to create jobs, decent-paying jobs, and that [they] have to make more". Louie's statement regarding coming development is followed by Kinew who states that "development is the dream of Aboriginal people" ("Whose Land is it Anyway"). Indeed, in these instances the *8th Fire* documentary seems designed to convince its audience that, like the Osoyoos, Indigenous peoples are not opposed to the development of their lands; rather, they are desirous of development but demand their share of their land's unrealized wealth.

Kinew suggests that what holds back opportunities for growth and Indigenous participation in the economy is state interference in the form of the *Indian Act*. Immediately following Kinew's statement, *8th Fire* features an interview with Clarence T. (Manny) Jules, Chairman of the First Nations Tax Commission. As Jules writes in his preface to *Beyond the*

Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights (2010), he is committed to an agenda that he has been “pursuing all [his] adult life”: to grant Indigenous peoples the freedom to leverage their lands for business loans (Jules vii). Mi'kmaq Lawyer and Chair in Indigenous Governance, Pamela Palmater writes in her review of *Beyond the Indian Act* that in order to improve the lives of Indigenous peoples, the authors propose to abolish the Indian Act and to “beg First Nations to ignore their culture, identity, rights, and responsibilities for their future generations and focus solely on the pursuit of individualized material wealth” (Palmater). Indeed, in Jules’ preface, he insists that “we are trying to get a system of First Nations government that allows our individuals to have the freedom to pursue their creativity, have access to capital, and be entrepreneurial. This system has to generate sufficient revenues for us to be self-reliant” (Jules vii). *8th Fire*’s interview with Jules, featured directly after Kinew’s statement that the Indian Act holds back opportunities for economic growth, is troubling because it further substantiates my claim that *8th Fire* elaborates a neoliberal vision of the way forward for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Despite tensions and contradictions, Kinew’s commentary, as well as the editing and arrangement of recorded interviews in the four installments of the *8th Fire* documentary, works to establish reconciliation for non-Indigenous peoples as a process that will satisfy the material needs of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. “Indigenous in the City” and “It’s Time!” share a focus on the overturning of stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, which characterize them as state welfare-dependent. These installments replace these stereotypes with the impression that, if given the chance, Indigenous peoples, like everyone else, would become self-reliant and materially successful individuals who can contribute to and participate

in the market. The problem is that the *8th Fire*'s documentary's representation situates Indigenous identities and desires within neoliberalism and state policy authority. Neoliberal accepted realities of economic necessity and individual responsibility obfuscate ongoing settler colonial subjection of Indigenous nationhood.

The land question in the context of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada is a focus of the *8th Fire* documentary's subsequent installments, "Whose Land is it Anyway?" and "At the Crossroads." While in "Whose Land is it Anyway?" Matthew Mukash associates the loss of lands and rivers with a terrible sense of loss in his community, one that he suggests is a major contributor to substance abuse and poor mental health, Wab Kinew's narration redirects the documentary's focus away from the land so that the discussion around reconciliation seems exclusively linked to the legacy of residential schools. This sleight of hand allows the documentaries to maintain the representation of reconciliation as a process of accelerating the development of the natural resources on and within Indigenous lands.

At the end of the focus on the Osoyoos in "Whose Land is it Anyway?" Chief Louie is depicted celebrating relationships the Cree forged with people in government and business. He states that, because of "forcing the Quebec government and the federal government to the table," the Cree have become a major economic force in Quebec. In contrast to Louie's portrayal, however, *The Eeyouch of Eeyouch Istchee* suggests that there is nothing inevitable about the *8th Fire* documentary's vision of reconciliation as a means of wealth creation. Rather, the principle relationship non-Indigenous peoples are called upon to respect is that of the Cree with their traditional territories.

The 8th Fire Website: Opportunities for Settler Public Understanding and Solidarity

The *8th Fire* documentaries, broadcast over four weeks in 45-minute installments from January 12 to February 2 in 2012, were accompanied by a much more nuanced website that featured extended and sometimes provocative interviews with people featured in the documentary as well as sections where visitors were able to comment or engage in dialogue with other audience members through Facebook or Twitter. While the *8th Fire* documentary offers a somewhat delimited representation of the possibilities of new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, one that I contrast with *The Eeyouch of Eeyouch Istchee* with respect to the normalization of neoliberal logics, the *8th Fire* website stands in tension with the documentary as it makes space for more diverse visions of what new relationships might look like. Tabs ran across the top of the website, under the *8th Fire* heading, and read: Main, TV, Radio, *8th Fire* Dispatches, Aboriginal 101, Maps, Profiles, Q & A, Reporter's Notebook, Aboriginal Filmmakers, and Books. Each tab, once clicked, presented visitors with more information, in diverse media and genres, such as short videos or text-based biographies accompanied by images, and with diverse content, about the past, present, and possible future of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships.

While the *8th Fire* documentary carried assumptions about the nature of relations past, present, and future, the *8th Fire* website provided a space where public discussions were able to take place on the topics, themes, and representations. Connie Walker worked as a producer and a VJ on *8th Fire*, both the documentary series and the digital site. In a 2012 article, entitled "Revisiting 8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada & the way forward," she writes, "I still get goosebumps when I remember watching the first episode air and seeing the instant reaction on

social media. It really got a lot of conversations going” (Walker). It is beyond the scope of this study to track the effectiveness of the *8th Fire* site as a public forum concerned with generating relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples based on a respect for Indigenous relationality; however, *8th Fire*’s website community hub was a space in which such cultural and social relations might have been cultivated.

Visitors to *8th Fire*’s website were given the opportunity to participate in discussions through Facebook and Twitter with fellow visitors about the documentary, as well as other videos and texts that the website offered. A live Twitter feed appeared on every page of the website featuring tweets of people who watched the documentary and who were interested in learning more. Connected to the tab labeled “Community,” visitors were invited to “[p]ost to Facebook along with other fans and cast.” Although a more comprehensive discourse analysis of the Twitter and Facebook posts might reveal more nuanced discourse on Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships, certain posts written here by non-Indigenous visitors suggest not only participation in the recognition of Indigenous cultural continuity. Some also express a general commitment to enriching their relations with Indigenous peoples. What follows is one comment entered through Facebook in *8th Fire*’s “Community” hub:

I am so glad that I saw the program. I am ashamed to have ever thought in the ‘them and us’ mentality. I am ashamed of my ignorance. I also found this program very inspiring. I choose to move forward with my words, thoughts and actions [...] I will inform my kids and those close [...] we cannot change our history, we can learn from it and change our futures. (Muirhead)

Muirhead's statement suggests that watching the *8th Fire* documentary has inspired her to rethink and work towards new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. By posting her reaction to *8th Fire's* community message board, Muirhead invited dialogue with other audience members, including Indigenous peoples who were also posting and responding to people's messages and questions. Warner writes that publics are generated, grown, and maintained through "circulatory field[s] of estrangement" (*Publics* 113). In other words, texts are produced, circulated and then read by readers who, although strangers to each other, can be moved into action through a sense of connection over the sharing and reading of texts. When they recognize themselves as addressees of these texts, the sense of a belonging to a public can manifest without readers ever actually having a sense of the actual number of people in their public (113). Although Muirhead expressed her reaction to the documentary, which I have argued offers a curtailed vision of reconciliation, she entered into a public that held out the possibility of fostering, amongst non-Indigenous peoples, a sense of solidarity with Indigenous people and a desire to learn more about them.

In addition to providing a virtual space where public discourse can take place around the possibilities of new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the *8th Fire* website offered an alternative framing of featured texts that signaled to its visitors the centrality of land to Indigenous nations. It did so through the website's creative presentation of community stories. By clicking on the tab labeled "Maps," visitors had the option of accessing texts and videos through dozens of hyperlinks placed over corresponding regions on a map of Canada. The content of many of the texts, as well as their mise-en-scene, foregrounded Indigenous peoples' connection to the land to the website's audience. For instance, by clicking

on an icon that seemed placed over empty land on the shore of Hudson Bay, visitors to the *8th Fire* website could read the biography of Matthew Mukash, former Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Cree in Quebec and father of Pakesso Mukash, whom I discuss above. Though the hyperlink might seem to be placed over an empty region near to Hudson's Bay, the link specified the community of Whapmagoostui, where the elder Mukash was born. It related how, despite the billions of dollars of potential revenue, he led a successful campaign against the Government of Quebec's plan to build a hydro-electric dam on the Whapmagoostui River because it would disrupt his nation's traditional use of the land. The *8th Fire* website linked its texts to Indigenous peoples and territories; stories like the one offered by Mukash provide openings for the possibility for non-Indigenous Canadians to recognize and respect the centrality of relationships with the land and community to Indigenous peoples. These stories complicated the *8th Fire* documentary's framing of reconciliation and the possibilities of new relationships as catering to neoliberal logics. Indeed, the strong and enduring sense of community and stewardship over lands that Mukash's story relates are not singular. They are representative of many other biographies and stories that the *8th Fire* website made available to publics through its innovative use of interactive websites.

The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee

I turn now to consider *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee* (2010-2015) because it and *8th Fire* (2012) are contemporaneous documentaries that depict the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, and because they offer contrasting possibilities for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations. *8th Fire's* underlying message privileges the integration of Indigenous peoples and

lands into the market economy. At times, *The EEI* also foregrounds this message and shores up the GCC's power as a governing authority over Cree peoples and territories. Its affective power, however, lies in its representation of the survivance of Indigenous relational self-determination and the possibilities for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations.

The four installments of *The EEI*, “Together We Stand Firm” (2010), “Delivering the Promise” (2012), “We Rise Up!” (2013), and “Our Way, Our Future” (2015), offer a story about how the Cree struggled to protect their lands and place-based practices from resource development. Francoise Dussart and Sylvie Poirier write in *Entangled Territorialities* that “for Indigenous peoples, in Canada and Australia, the 1970s marked the beginning of the era of negotiating ‘modern’ land rights” and of forming new “alliances, entanglements, and dialogues” with, at times, “vexing outcomes” (15). In the early 1970s, Liberal minister Robert Bourassa took office as Premier of Quebec. At that time the Quiet Revolution was underway; a national sentiment drove Quebecois nationalists to fight for increased autonomy and a more robust economy apart from the federal government. Premier Bourassa “looked north, to the land of the Cree, and saw jobs, resources, and power” for the province (“Together We Stand Firm” 2010). The Quebec government and Hydro Quebec worked to develop Cree lands with or without the consent of the Cree even though they had been living on the land “for thousands of years” (“Together We Stand Firm” 2010). When the Cree voiced their resistance, Quebec MPs asserted that the Cree were “squatters” and that their hunting, fishing, and trapping privileges could be taken away (“Together We Stand Firm,” 2010). Chief Smally Petawabano of Mistissini recalls how agents of Quebec stated that they “didn’t have to” consult the Cree; they would “just give them the welfare cheque” (“Together We Stand Firm,” 2010). *The EEI* depicts Cree

survival in the face of the destruction of river systems, and the flooding of hunting grounds and graves.

Celebrating the Grand Council of the Crees

A substantial part of *The EEI* depicts the 40th anniversary of the JBNQA and the chiefs who negotiated and signed the agreement with a celebratory tone. Neal McLeod writes that in the tradition of “Cree narrative memory” stories are told to “suit a particular audience” and “occasion” (McLeod, *Cree* 7). Indeed, the same is true of the storywork *The EEI* exemplifies. In 2015, the Grand Council of the Crees celebrated Cree elders and leaders featured in the documentary who fought for and negotiated the agreement that recognized Cree rights. With the signing of the JBNQA, Cree leaders won an agreement that would help keep settler colonial assertions of control over the Cree and their traditional territories at bay. It ostensibly allows the Cree to be “decision-makers in striking that balance between [their] traditional way of life and involvement in a modern economy” (7). Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come writes in the *GCC’s Annual Report 2015-2016* that celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the JBNQA “reminded [the Cree people] about the basic foundation, and the bedrock, of the Cree Nation – the land” (Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), “Highlights” 7). Indeed, the JBNQA recognizes Cree rights to the land in the form of hunting, fishing, and trapping, as well as their community’s education, health, and social services (“Together We Stand Firm”). It was a milestone in the Cree’s survival in the face of settler colonialism and so the 40th anniversary of the JBNQA was regarded as “a time for honoring the courage and dedication of those who saw the necessity to defend [Cree] ancestral and inherent rights” (Grand Council of the Crees

(Eeyou Istchee), “Highlights” 56). But this was not a milestone of survivance for all; indeed, there are some in the Cree community and beyond who regard the agreement as a loss for place-based relationality.

The celebratory tone with which the GCC’s documentary represents the GCC and the JBNQA discursively shores up the GCC’s governing authority in the face of challenges from both within and without the Cree community. Professor Harvey Feit discusses how *The EEI* was produced in part to address the sense among Cree youth that, despite the money and self-governing powers taken up by the GCC, too much of their lands and lifeways were lost. “In the last decade,” Feit writes, “Eeyou leaders and organizations have undertaken a series of initiatives to enhance Eeyou youth’s awareness of the histories of Eeyou Nation-building that have been continuous since the fight against the James Bay project” (42). Such initiatives were needed because some Cree youth believe that not enough was done to protect Cree “culture, land, and rivers” and what was done was “too little too late” (42). “[P]ublications, streamed internet videos, community gatherings, educational programs, electronic cafes, museum exhibits, and touring plays” were thus produced by the GCC in order to foster “an awareness of the struggles since 1971” among Cree youth (42). Thus, like *8th Fire*, *The EEI* does some of its own discursive work: it produces a story that legitimizes the institutional authority and legacy of the GCC for a Cree and non-Cree audience.

In addition to shoring up its legitimacy as a governing authority, *The EEI* obscures how the GCC trespassed over the place-based relations of neighbouring Indigenous communities in their negotiations with the Quebec Government. A neighbouring Cree people, the Nehirowisiwok, “were not consulted, nor were they invited to the negotiation table or informed

of” the outcome of the JBNQA (Dussart 224). The JBNQA strengthened the Crees’ ability to defend their interests, but the “Cree now claim exclusive ‘modern’ rights over territories which they once shared with Nehirowisiw families [...]” (224). “It goes without saying,” continues Sylvie Poirier, “that this situation has since given rise to contention between the Council of the Atikamekw Nation and the Grand Council of the Crees” (224). This conflicting land claim is not mentioned in *The EEI*. Rather, it is obscured in the narrative of how the GCC protected Cree lands and negotiated economically prosperous relations with settler governments.

The final documentary, “Our Way, Our Future” is comparable to *8th Fire’s* representation of the successes of the Osoyoos as it frames recent agreements with settler governments, which allow for continued resource development, as part of an “era of greater cooperation, respect and trust between old adversaries” (CBC / Radio-Canada, “Our Way, Our Future”). In 2002, former Grand Chief Ted Moses and Bernard Landry of the Parti Quebecois signed “The Agreement Respecting a New Relationship Between the Cree Nation and the Government of Quebec,” otherwise known as *La Paix des Braves*. The agreement is presented by Donovan Moses, son of Ted Moses, as a turning point in relationships between the two nations. Like *8th Fire’s* segment on the Osoyoos, *The EEI* depicts how an Indigenous people “overturned colonial assertions of power and became an economic and sustainable people” (CBC / Radio-Canada “Our Way, Our Future”). Like the Osoyoos, the GCC seemed to work towards economic sustainability by participating in the resource economy.

“Our Way, Our Future” describes how Premier Landry wanted to develop the Rupert River but, given the fierce resistance of the Cree in years past, he knew he had to work with the Cree. Moses states in the documentary that representatives of both nations agreed that

“mutual respect” and “mutual interests” should be pillars as they went forward with their “nation-to-nation” relationship (CBC / Radio-Canada “Our Way, Our Future”). Indeed, these are words that might describe respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations were they not attributed to negotiations over the ongoing disruption of Indigenous place-based relations by way of the development of natural resources. “Our Way, Our Future” is thus comparable with *8th Fire*'s case study of the Osoyoos in that both work to represent how Indigenous worldviews might be reconciled with market-centred values. The problem is, however, that in advocating for Indigenous-led resource development, both documentaries frame Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations as instrumental to accumulating wealth and participating in the global economy in contrast with foregrounding respect for relational self-determination and those boundaries generated by “family,” “clan systems,” “cultural imperatives,” “knowledge systems,” and “treaties” (Ermine 195).

Storying Nation-to-Nation Relationships

While *The EEI* at times triumphantly represents the successes of the Cree chiefs and works to shore up the legitimacy of the Grand Council of the Cree, its affective power is in its telling of the irrecoverable loss the Cree suffered because of their now flooded lands. The Cree documentary thus emphasizes the need for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations to be based not on the dispossession of lands from Indigenous peoples but rooted in respect for Indigenous relational self-determination.

While Kinew opens *8th Fire* with a friendly invitation to “meet the neighbours” and reassurances that there will not be any “guilt trips,” the tone of *The EEI*'s introduction is quite

different. *The EEI* was commissioned by the Cree Nation of Quebec and is narrated by Donovan Moses, son of Former Grand Chief Ted Moses. *The EEI* opens with the images of Cree territories and Moses who states, *in Cree*, that “it’s easy to forget that everything we are comes from the land” (“Together We Stand Firm”). Cree scholar Neal McLeod writes that place-based Cree relationality is “housed” in the language (McLeod 6). Speaking Cree “grounds” Cree people in the land (6). Thus, from the very first moments of the documentary, Moses emphasizes Cree connection to place. Moses continues, stating that the film series tells “a story of people who wanted to take this land from us” (“Together We Stand Firm”). In contrast to *8th Fire*, which seems to reassure non-Indigenous audiences that they will not be unsettled by the CBC’s documentary, Moses introduces the GCC’s documentary in Cree and with what appears to be an indictment of non-Indigenous peoples. This might first appear designed to alienate and unsettle non-Indigenous viewers, rather than encourage respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations.

The EEI elaborates on the intimate and long-standing relationships that the Cree have with their territories. Speaking to the role of story in Cree traditions, Neal McLeod writes, “Indigenous people tend to envision their collective memory in terms of space rather than time” (6). He continues, “[i]t is the sense of place that anchors our stories; it is the sense of place that connects us to other beings and the rest of creation” (6). In “Delivering the Promise,” Moses relates how the Cree communities mourned not only the loss of land but the tragic deaths of some 10,000 caribou who drowned because the hydro dams flooded their migratory paths. The caribou have sustained the Cree since time immemorial. The segment also tells us of Samuel Bearskin of the Chisasibi Cree community and how the development of La Grande

flooded the gravesite of his parents. He explains in *The EEI* how he tried to visit their graves one more time before the flooding took place, but he was horrified to discover that he was too late; his parents' gravesite was underwater. Following his account, the documentary shows a marble monument sitting atop a promontory overlooking the new lake. It depicts the names of dozens of people whose gravesites are now under water. The documentary presents these heart-breaking accounts of how resource development came at a terrible cost to the animals and the peoples that inhabit the land. This story expresses the Cree's respect for and deep connection with the land as a network of beings living in relation with each other.

While *The EEI* might unsettle settler viewers, the documentary series also offers non-Indigenous peoples an opportunity to learn how they might respectfully relate with Indigenous peoples, albeit by way of antithesis as with James in Lee Maracle's *Sundogs*. Non-Indigenous peoples may feel implicated by Moses' opening lines: "a story of people who wanted to take this land from us" ("Together We Stand Firm"). However, by referring to Quebecois and Canadian government agents by way of the indirect pronoun, "people," Moses allows non-Indigenous viewers some distance from the events described in the documentary. In the distance between the discomfort of being accused and the allure of being offered a compelling story of Cree survivance, Moses generates what Cree philosopher Willie Ermine calls "an ethical space of engagement" (2).

Ermine discusses a space in which productive dialogue can take place between "Indigenous and Western thought worlds" (Ermine 193). This space requires that Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties respect the boundaries of "family," "clan systems," "cultural imperatives," "knowledge systems" and "treaties" (195). Moses's Cree-language opening lines

generate the possibility for this ethical space of engagement where non-Indigenous peoples can learn about how the Cree lost much of their lands to settler colonial governments, without directly triggering in non-Indigenous audiences a sense of guilt or defensiveness. This indirect style of offering a lesson on respectful relationality is also used in Maracle's *Sundogs*, as discussed in the previous chapter. Both James in Maracle's novel and the GCC's story about the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement offer non-Indigenous readers the opportunity to learn, through antithesis, about the necessity and possibilities of responsible, respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships.

Conclusion

This chapter examines representations of the economics of reconciliation and the future of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Canada. CBC's *8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada, and the Way Forward* represents a diversity of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and their perspectives on the possibilities of future Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations. However, the documentary takes for granted that neoliberal forms of prosperity must determine the nature of these relations. In other words, *8th Fire* privileges entrepreneurial individualism and resource development *at the expense* of Indigenous holistic concepts of place-based relationality. The *8th Fire* website did provide a space for discussion and perhaps better understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. This now-disappeared website shared stories of relationality that challenged the neoliberal qua settler colonial idealization of individual entrepreneurialism and extractivist logics of land development.

In comparison with 8th Fire, *The EEI* tells a powerful story about Indigenous survivance and the need for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations founded in respect for Indigenous relationality. *The EEI* at times champions economic development as part of its triumphant representation of the Cree chiefs who have negotiated relations with settler governments. The documentary, however, also challenges both the necessity and desirability of resource development by telling a powerful story of Cree relationality and survivance. Moses states in “We Rise Up” that the documentary is for the Cree people, the Cree Nation, and “for the world”. It is an alternative to 8th Fire’s possibilities of reconciliation and a renewed Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship articulates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous viewers. With powerful affect, *The EEI* delivers a story that impresses upon viewers the need for respect of Indigenous relationality to be at the root of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in contrast with the accumulation of wealth through individual entrepreneurship and resource extraction.

Conclusion: “Something all agree is better than before”

On one hand, we recognize that humans have the capacity to be concatenate, to link with all beings and phenomena, to be conscious, to be aware of our personal motives, to be curious, to be open to the discovery of others, and to be creative, to make the links and connections happen in a mutually beneficial way. On the other hand, we recognize that humans are very much like viruses; given the opportunity, they will colonize another being, unless disciplined to travel in another direction toward relationship and away from conquest.

[...]

We determine the nature of relationship [sic], and the mythmakers create oratory as story so that each person can conduct himself or herself in a complementary fashion. We can know that we are successful only if both the being and ourselves flourish, or if the phenomenon (e.g., colonialism) is transformed into something all agree is better than before.

- Lee Maracle, “Oratory on Oratory.”

Stories matter. They have the power to both represent and to create reality. This dissertation juxtaposes representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships within national settler colonial representations (circa 2012) and selected Indigenous stories. While both produce Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships, I mobilize Foucauldian discourse analysis to show how selected settler colonial representations produce and are produced by discourse that displaces Indigenous relational self-determination. The aims of this dissertation are not, however, limited to critiquing things as they are, but move toward envisioning how they could be. Lee Maracle teaches us that humans “have the capacity to be concatenate, to link with all beings and phenomena” (“Oratory” 63). We also have the capacity to dominate and to “colonize” others like a virus (63). The goal of Indigenous storytelling is to cultivate relationships in which all beings can “flourish” and to refashion oppressive relationships

towards “something all agree is better than before” (63). Each of my three chapters has offered Indigenous-inspired readings that can generate more respectful relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples: relations that are better than they are now.

I have centered my focus on 2012 because during that year several national representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations were circulated, including commemorations of the War of 1812 in a CBC documentary and website, and the CBC’s *8th Fire* documentary and website. Concurrently, Indigenous peoples organized one of the largest grassroots movements since the Oka Resistance in the early 1990s: Idle No More. There were other aspects of 2012 that make it a particularly salient year in the history of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations. The TRC was in the middle of its 5-year mandate and was disclosing state-structured violations of Indigenous children and families, public outcries were gaining visibility in national media against the living conditions on underfunded reserves, Idle No More demonstrations were increasing in size in shopping malls and in front of legislative buildings, and Theresa Spence’s hunger strike was attracting international attention on Victoria Island, unceded Algonquin territory. My critique centers on three sets of official settler colonial representations about Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships that were in national circulation that year. My selected Indigenous stories were not all produced in 2012 but, I argue, they offer important, relevant, and enduring points of contrast via articulations of place-thought and Indigenous relational self-determination to juxtapose with these settler colonial representations.

As Chandra Mohanty writes in “On Race and Voice: Challenges for Liberation Education in the 1990s,” resistance to repressive and oppressive discourse “lies in self-conscious

engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations and in the active creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces” (Mohanty 148). This dissertation has been part of my re-education as a settler to understand not only how I am produced and positioned by settler colonial discourse, but also how I can be in relation to myself and to Indigenous peoples and places differently. It represents my attempt to learn how to resist being complicit in the production of unsustainable relations with Indigenous peoples. Indigenous stories are not always for non-Indigenous peoples, like me, but they do often have something to teach non-Indigenous peoples. In this project, I examined textual representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Canada to unsettle settler colonial discourse and practices and to envision possibilities for more responsible, respectful relations between Indigenous peoples and settler Canadians.

The Two Row Wampum teachings of the Haudenosaunee have offered a guiding principle for what more respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations could look like in Canada. Taiaiake Alfred writes that the Two Row Wampum, or the *guswentha*, represents “two vessels, each possessing its own integrity, traveling the river of time together” (*Peace, Power*, 76). The purple beads represent the parallel journeys of the two vessels and the white beads are suggestive of peaceful co-existence founded on “respectful (co-equal) friendship and alliance” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (76). Unfortunately, the settler ship has been and continues to be driven by discourses of settler state unilateralism and global market capitalism. These are not discourses that allow space for the integrity and self-determination of peoples within the territories they claim. Thus, the white of the wampum, representative of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations, has been characterized not by co-equal

respect but by erasure and dominance. Glen Coulthard summarizes his thoughts on the possibilities of reconciliation when he states that it would require the decolonization of the relationship first and that he believed “decolonization means sinking that fucking ship” (“Panel Discussion: Red Skin, White Masks. Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition.”). I do not, however, believe he hopes to drown all its passengers and crew.

Understanding of and respect for the full spectrum of Indigenous relationality by non-Indigenous peoples and governments is the only way that Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations can move forward sustainably and ethically. It is the only way for travelling vessels to have peace between them. Daniel Coleman argues that respect is an awareness of the limitations of one’s perspective and a reverence for the subjectivity of the other (Coleman, “Imposing subCitizenship” 179). Cree scholars Stan Wilson (2001) and Shawn Wilson (2008) teach us that, unlike white liberal concepts of the individual, the Indigenous self is extended; it is indivisible from relationships with family, community, nation, ancestors, future generations, and the land (Shawn Wilson 80). Relationality is a characteristic trait of Indigenous peoples. Stó:lō theorist Jo-Ann Archibald tells us that, for Indigenous peoples, “respect is the foundation for all relationships” and not only between humans but all living things (23). For us to live the white of the Wampum according to the precepts of Haudenosaunee diplomatic traditions, which has come to function as a “framework for decolonization right across Turtle Island,” we must first identify, analyze, and challenge settler colonial discourse (Keefer). We must seek out and come to practice ways that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can be in relation with each other and different territories in ways that foster respect for each others’ self-determination.

All three chapters of this project focus on representations of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Canada, but each is rooted in a different Indigenous peoples' traditional territory. Of course, each chapter's textual representations have implications for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations across Canada, but it is a characteristic of discourse to overgeneralize. Jennifer Henderson writes that certain hegemonic Canadian narratives maintain settler political orders over top of lands "thick with alternative, Indigenous logics" (Henderson, *Settler Feminism* 18). The Two Row Wampum remains important as a guiding principle in this project for imagining respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations, but one aim of critical discourse analysis is to challenge totalizing discourses and to reclaim the plurality of subjugated knowledge. Thus, in my dissertation chapters, my analysis of selected representations and understandings of relational respect draw from and worked with Indigenous theorists from the communities from which my selected representations are derived.

My first chapter, "Unsettling the Tragedy of Tecumseh," predominantly dealt with Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations on Anishnaabe lands around the Great Lakes, a major setting of the War of 1812. Therefore, for its instruction on respectful relationality, I drew upon the writings of Odawa scholar Cecil King and Nishnaabeg scholar and writer Leanne Simpson and their elaborations of Anishnaabe practices of respect. King shares with us that Odawa storytelling teaches "interdependency," often depicting all elements of creation as "parents, siblings and kin" (xx). Simpson complements King's extended sense of family and relationality when she shares with us the significance of the word *debwewin*. It signifies "truth" as well as "the sound of my heart," and it can signify the importance of honouring not only one's truth but the truths of others (Simpson, *Dancing* 59). Respect, rooted in Anishnaabe lands around the

Great Lakes, involves honouring Nishnaabeg perspectives, needs, desires, and self-determination rooted in community. This form of respect is not what underpins Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations produced by the 2012 Conservative Government's and the CBC's commemorations of the war of 1812.

This chapter intervened in how state commemorations of the War of 1812 maintain settler colonialism in Canada by juxtaposing settler representations of 1812 in 2012 with my somewhat revisionist reading of Charles Mair's *Tecumseh: A Drama* (1886). The former seeks to portray Indigenous self-determination as something destroyed in the 19th century. The latter, according to my Indigenous-informed reading, represents Indigenous place-based leadership and resistance in a way that suggests that both would survive the 19th century. I argue that Mair's play can thus be leveraged to disrupt the legitimacy of contemporary settler colonial assertions that Indigenous political autonomy was somehow lost in the 1800s.

My second chapter, "Re-Storying Canada: Lee Maracle's *Sundogs* (1992), Oka, and Idle No More," sheds light on the ways that settler colonial discourse in mainstream media contains Indigenous activism. Some containment strategies are explicit and violent, as was the case during the Oka Crisis. However, some forms of containment are subtle and insidious. Maracle's novel portrays how national media and the settler state worked during Elijah Harper's filibuster and the Oka Crisis in 1990 to both subtly and overtly contain Indigenous challenges to settler colonialism. I show how the novel prefigures insights into the subtle ways that the demands of Idle No More were also disarmed and contained by the state and national media in 2012. Despite their differences, the conceptual displacement of Indigenous relationality supports the literal displacement of Indigenous peoples from traditional territories.

As this chapter focuses on Maracle's novel about Marianne, a young Salish woman from Vancouver, I have tried to ground its discussion of relationality and respect in Salish place-thought and understandings of relationality. Archibald teaches us that storywork is rooted in place-specific contexts (73). Maracle writes in "Oratory on Oratory" about Salish understandings of the good life. Salish storytelling elaborates pathways of "continuous growth" towards "spirit-to-spirit relationship[s]" invested in helping each other live the "good life" (60). Marianne is first introduced as suffering from a sense of alienation from her family and relational Salish knowledge. Throughout the course of the novel, however, Marianne reconnects with her family and learns to appreciate the right of all to the good life. The good life is not, however, imagined along the lines of some materialist fantasy. Rather, the good life in Salish terms is based in a practice of honoring "the perfect right to be for all beings" (60). Marianne's participation in the Okanagan Peace Run reconnects her with place-thought and with place-based relationality. I show how the lessons she learns and shares with the reader, as well as her experience with James, her settler admirer, offer teachings on the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations according to Salish place-based teachings.

Placed-based teachings about relationality inform my critique of the subtle ways that Indigenous activism is contained through its conflation with counterpublics in this chapter. Counterpublic spaces of discourse are powerful spaces where oppositional and minoritized subjectivities, opinions, and practices can be forged (Warner, *Publics* 122). However, theories of the public sphere, from which theories of counterpublics stem, are rooted in abstract, state-centered notions of liberal democracy. Counterpublics are not rooted in relation to place, let alone the place-thought of specific territories that inspire Indigenous knowledge and practices

of relationality. Thus, an Indigenous counterpublic would, paradoxically, risk perpetuating settler colonial knowledge and institutions by being solely defined in opposition to them. Moreover, the state can appear to “hear” and recognize the source of counterpublic antagonism and thereby appear to settler publics to have reconciled the political antagonism. In this way, the settler state can mobilize the aim of counterpublics to legitimize itself.

The Oka Crisis and Idle No More were more than protests by an Aboriginal counterpublic within the liberal democratic settler state. They were place-based assertions of the nation-to-nation terms embodied by the Two Row Wampum and invoked by Maracle’s discussion of “the good life,” “spirit-to-spirit” relationships rooted not in a moment but in place, in recognition and respect for all to exist on their own terms (Maracle, “Oratory” 60). Like James in Maracle’s novel, non-Indigenous peoples like myself will make mistakes, but learning and unlearning must happen before relationships can emerge according to relational respect on Indigenous terms.

Chapter 3, “The Economics of Reconciliation: *8th Fire* and *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee*” centres around a critique of how the CBC’s 2012 documentary, *8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada, and the Way Forward* constrains reconciliation to neoliberal understandings of prosperity. In the second part of this chapter, I juxtapose the broadcast content of *8th Fire* with the Grand Council of the Cree in Quebec’s four-part documentary series, entitled *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee (The EEI)*. I selected *The EEI* over other documentaries because, like *8th Fire*, it examines Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships in the context of economic development. However, *The EEI* does not (unlike *8th Fire*) uncritically celebrate individual prosperity and

resource development, but rather foregrounds the survival, endurance, and resistance of Indigenous relationality in the face of forced resource development.

As this chapter deals in large part with issues pertaining to Cree traditional territories, I centre its critique of settler colonial discourse and its envisioning of the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships in Cree relationality. Cree philosopher Willie Ermine writes that ethical relationships between peoples must include considerations of the boundaries that peoples establish and maintain for themselves (195). These boundaries, whether they are defined along the lines of “family,” “clan systems,” “cultural imperatives,” “knowledge systems,” and “treaties” are the “the contours of our sacred spaces that we claim for ourselves as autonomous actors in the universe” (195). Ermine’s discussion resonates with Maracle’s and Simpson’s because they articulate shared, Indigenous respect for the self-determination of relational peoples, which have been under attack by resource development. Gerald Vizenor’s term “survivance” thus plays a key role in this chapter’s discussion of *The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee* and the chapter’s elaboration of the *endurance* and *resistance* of Indigenous knowledge, practices, and peoples in the face of settler colonialism. It gives me a language to examine the Cree’s story of surviving the forced development of their territories by Quebec and its Crown Corporation, Hydro Quebec. The Cree maintained a partial defense of place-based Cree knowledge and practices of relationality that extends to all of creation on their lands. Ermine helps me understand in this chapter how the Eeyouch Cree articulate an alternative to 8th Fire’s possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations, not focused on resource development and the accumulation of material wealth, but on respect for Indigenous place-based and community relationships.

This dissertation comes from my ongoing desire to learn, as a non-Indigenous person who calls both Haudenosaunee and Algonquin territories home, how Indigenous storywork challenges my understandings of how to live in relation with Indigenous peoples, lands, and myself. Margery Fee writes in *Literary Land Claims* that as a descendant of British settlers she is “implicated in narratives of difference that support settler colonialism” (12). While I am of Irish ancestry, and thus have my own family history of colonization, I experience some privileges of settler colonialism. Like Fee, I do not want this privilege, yet I am committed to learning how it implicates me.

It is my hope that this project will contribute to efforts to center Indigenous thought and experience in envisioning more respectful possibilities for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. I aim not only to unsettle settler colonial knowledge of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships by highlighting place-based and community-specific perspectives on current relationships. My aim has also been to better understand respect on Indigenous terms not only for Indigenous peoples but for myself and other non-Indigenous peoples.

Stories matter. They have the power to represent and to create our reality. Settler colonial discourse from 2012 tells stories that not only render as permanent and inevitable state sovereignty, liberal democratic institutions, and global market capitalism but also erase Indigenous knowledge and relational self-determination. In contrast, the Two Row Wampum tells a story about the enduring possibilities of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada rooted in respect and responsibility. I hope to have contributed to the unsettlement of settler colonialism and to have shed some light on the possibilities of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships rooted in traditional understandings of the white of

the Wampum because we all need to do better, “to be curious, to be open to the discovery of others, and to be creative, to make the links and connections happen in a mutually beneficial way” (“Oratory” 63).

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¹ This dissertation emerges from my desire to understand, as both a literary scholar and a non-Indigenous person who lives and works in both Kanien'kéha and Algonquin territories, how resurgent place-based Indigenous storytelling knowledges and practices challenge my understandings of how to live in relation with Indigenous lands and peoples. The work of self-location that Margery Fee engages with in *Literary Land Claims* is particularly helpful for me as a catalyst for my own reflection on how I am produced by and positioned within settler colonial discourse. In her introduction, Fee writes that she, a

descendant of British settlers, is “implicated in narratives of difference that support settler colonialism” (12). Despite the various ways in which she may be privileged by settler colonialism, she asserts that she does not want to leverage her “ancestry to ground a privileged relationship to Indigenous people or to the national imaginary” (12). She would “rather write out of [her] own standpoint as clearly as [she] can in hopes of getting others to engage with the issues [...] as well as to note what issues [her] embodied subjectivity has blinded [her] to” (12). I too am coming to understand how my own ancestry and embodied subjectivity (as not only a white Canadian but as a temporarily able-bodied, heterosexual, cis male of relatively comfortable financial means) informs how I see, am seen, experience, and participate in the production of the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. Like Fee, “I do not want a privileged” relationship with Indigenous peoples or to the national imaginary but “to write out as clearly as I can, in hopes of getting others to engage with the issues” and to challenge the dispossession and privilege within asymmetrical power relationships (12).

² Taiaike Alfred, the former head of University of Victoria’s Indigenous Governance Program (IGOV), resigned from his position following a 2018 investigation into the harmful learning environment that he helped produce. According to reports, it fostered toxic masculinities. On his personal blog, he writes the following:

I have listened carefully to those who have criticized me and my work, and I have taken their messages to heart. My former partner, friends, and mentors such as Lee Maracle and Graham Smith have helped me understand the ways I embodied toxic masculinity and how I did wrong and harmed people because of it. I know that even as an Indigenous man who has battled against racism and colonialism, I carry old and harmful ways of thinking [...] I’m here, I’m listening, and I am accountable. Skennen, Taiaiake. (Crescenzi).

I continue to find value in Alfred's resurgence work but do acknowledge, as well, the harm that he has caused.

³ Of course, this project itself can be said to produce a form of academic discourse on Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations. I hope that this contributes to a growing discourse about how practices of mutual respect and understanding are much needed in order to generate more respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations.

⁴ Coleman addresses the wariness some may feel towards Indigenous claims of belonging to the land; however, for many Indigenous epistemologies the land is not "inanimate territory over which sovereignty can be asserted" ("Indigenous Place" 11). "[T]he language of treaties," which ostensibly attempts to bridge Indigenous and non-Indigenous understandings of relationships with the land, has often been interpreted in ways that undermine Indigenous "relational understandings and replaces them with the Euro-western language of land-as-object" (13). Such language configures the land as something that can be bought, sold, or developed without care (13). As noted, place-thought fundamentally opposes notions that the land is an inert object or a resource to be developed. Indigenous knowledge and practices are not based in a sense of privileged access that a people may have to the land based on race, class, or creed but, rather, dynamic individual, familial, and national relationships of respect, reciprocity, and reverence rooted in place.

⁵ Critics have pointed out how the TRC risks relegating the harms of residential schools to Canada's past (Coulthard 127, Corntassel 375-376). Overall, while the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and the formation of the TRC are designed to address the devastating legacies of residential schools, they run the risk of framing these questions in a narrow way that does not fully appreciate the ongoing impacts of residential schools on communities, families, and individuals, and the lived

experiences of resilience and resurgence that need to be shared with intergenerational survivors and other Indigenous peoples. State-centred processes of reconciliation attempt to repair the damages caused by residential schools, but do little to reunify and heal families and communities dispersed and dislocated by the trauma of these schools.

⁶ The Indian Act has and continues to be a source of consternation for Indigenous peoples and their allies. In January 2019, the “United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled that Canada continues to discriminate against First Nations women and their descendants by denying them the same entitlement to full s. 6(1)(a) status under the Indian Act as First Nations men and their descendants” (Neel). Mi’kmaq Lawyer and Chair in Indigenous Governance, Pamela Palmater authored a full-length study of the Indian Act and its impacts on Indigenous peoples in her book, *Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity*.

In addition to its discrimination against Indigenous women and girls, the Indian Act is also considered to be an obstacle to Indigenous economic growth and opportunity. Critics, however, do not agree on what Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations should look like if the 143-year-old act were abolished. *8th Fire* features an interview with Clarence T. (Manny) Jules, Chairman of the First Nations Tax Commission. Jules would have the federal government grant Indigenous peoples the freedom to leverage their lands for business loans (CBC / Radio-Canada, “At the Crossroads”). On the other hand, Palmater writes, in her review of the *Beyond the Indian Act* (Flanagan, Alcantra, and Le Dressay), that in order to improve the lives of Indigenous peoples, Jules would abolish the Indian Act and “beg First Nations to ignore their culture, identity, rights and responsibilities for their future generations and focus solely on the pursuit of individualized material wealth” (Palmater). The debate around abolishing the Indian Act and envisioning its replacement continues to be a heated one.

⁷ Nearly 12,000 people demanded compensation from the Canadian government and the churches who administered the residential schools (Corntassel 141). The response of the federal government was the *2006 Indian Residential School Agreement*, an out-of-court settlement signed by the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), regional Inuit representatives, representatives of the four churches who administered the residential schools, and the several lawyers involved in the negotiation process (142).

⁸ Nancy Fraser, in *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, extends Jurgen Habermas' theories of the public sphere in order to analyze the power of discursive spaces formed by minoritized peoples such as women and peoples of color (67).

⁹ Until his death in 1927 at the age of 88, Mair pursued a career as a poet, political activist, and newspaper correspondent. Albert Braz writes in "Wither the White Man: Charles Mair's 'Lament for the Bison'" (2001), that "Mair's literary reputation has fluctuated dramatically over the years" (40). He was first acknowledged for his publication, *Dreamland and Other Poems* in 1868, which was regarded as the first notable collection of poetry of the Confederation era. By the mid-20th century, however, some considered him a poor poet while others utterly refused him the title of poet at all.

¹⁰ As I discuss in more detail in the third chapter, this discursive shift towards neoliberalism in Canada is marked by a turning away from ideas of the welfare state and towards a celebration of individual resiliency, responsibility, and the market economy.

¹¹ Cecil King cites as his source for the Prophet's message *The History of the Campaign of 1812, and Surrender of the Post of Detroit* (1848) by the Grandson of General William Hull.

¹² Alfred and Lowe discuss present-day Indigenous national resistance in the contemporary Mohawk Warrior Society, which grew out of "an urban-based movement established in the United States to resist

oppression and discrimination against Indigenous people in all of North America” (Alfred and Lowe 14). Closer to the Great Lakes region, one of the major theatres of the War of 1812, the Ojibway drew inspiration from their Mohawk neighbours and established their own warrior society. Like Tecumseh, those leading these warrior societies articulate “long-standing grievances in a vocabulary that [reflects] both traditional culture and contemporary political discourse” (15). Moreover, leader of the Mohawk Warrior Society, Teyowisonte, states, “the ultimate vision is for a *union of independent Indigenous nations* in the whole of the Western Hemisphere” (Alfred and Lowe 9; emphasis added). Like Tecumseh and Pontiac’s movements, Teyowisonte describes how contemporary warrior societies are composed of self-determining nations who negotiate between interdependence and autonomy to achieve shared goals. Rather than vanishing with Tecumseh, Indigenous practices of resistance survived Tecumseh and the War of 1812, adapting to changing political and geographic fields of engagement with settler colonization.

¹³ The mystery surrounding the whereabouts of Tecumseh’s remains is a widely speculated topic in Canadian history. Mair’s play dramatizes how Harrison’s troops were unable to confirm the whereabouts of his body. The CBC documentary refers to several rumours that abound. One such rumour has it that American soldiers devilishly divided Tecumseh’s body into “souvenirs”. Another rumour describes how his body was kept in a nearby attic or under a hastily built stone cairn.

¹⁴ I would be remiss not to point out how Brock’s statement, in response to Hull, defends Indigenous peoples within a liberal rights framework that presumes Crown sovereignty and that Indigenous peoples are perhaps imagined to be gifted land in exchange for their service in the war effort. In other words, he defends Indigenous peoples inasmuch as they can be reconciled with the settler colonial state; Indigenous peoples have “equal rights” according to understandings of the rights of man, a precursor to

today's human rights, but those rights are guaranteed by and subject to the institutions of the nation-state. When he states that Indigenous warriors are "like his majesty's other subjects" that were "rewarded by his majesty with lands," Brock refers to the settler state as well as assertions of settle colonial power over Indigenous lands. While Brock may justifiably be commemorated in stories for challenging Hull's threat against Indigenous peoples, he asserts that Indigenous peoples have the same rights as "his majesty's other subject," not as separate nations (Davis-Fisch 139).

¹⁵ The Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the largest Indigenous organization in Canada, is a site of struggle between those championing national and individual self-determination and those calling for collective action. During the height of Idle No More in 2012, grassroots activists circumnavigated the AFN, which they criticized as being ineffective as a channel to address their grievances. The AFN, led by then National Chief Sean Atleo, acted as a representative of the grassroots movement and met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Glen Coulthard writes in *Red Skin, White Masks* that this marked the cooptation of Idle No More by the AFN (Coulthard 162). In reaction to Atleo's decision to meet with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, activists staged nation-wide demonstrations (164). Following his meeting with Harper, Atleo resigned his position amidst critiques that he undermined the grassroots Indigenous movement and acted in a manner that did not respect the self-determination of Indigenous individuals and nations.

¹⁶ For more on Indigenous resistance and the genre of writing referred to as resistance literature, see Emma LaRoque's *When the Other is Me: Native Resistance Discourse 1850-1990* (2010).

¹⁷ For a study on how Maracle's novel, *Ravensong*, like *Sundogs*, unsettles unified reading positions in order to emphasize cultural difference, see Helen Hoy's chapter on *Ravensong* in *How Do I Read These?*.

¹⁸ I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that Maracle has explicitly said that this novel is not for non-Indigenous peoples as her primary audience. She stated in a 2004 interview that she “used to not want to read and write for white people” (Maracle, “Coming out of the House” 76). In fact, she delayed publishing *Sundogs* because she knew “white people would be reading it” (76). Maracle explains that when writing, she envisions Indigenous peoples and communities as her audience. However, Maracle states that one morning in 1988 she awoke and “thought it was time Raven came out of the house”; she was no longer bothered that “white folks” would read her writing, although Indigenous people continue to be her principle audience (76).

¹⁹ Richard Wagamese’s *The Terrible Summer: The National Newspaper Award-Winning Writings of Richard Wagamese* (1996), Amelia Kalant’s *National identity and the conflict at Oka: Native belonging and myths of postcolonial nationhood in Canada* (2004), and Rita Dhamoon’s article “Dangerous Internal Foreigner” also offer powerful studies of the significance of the Oka Crisis.

²⁰ Ruffo’s point is not that there was no Indigenous literature in Canada at all but that there was not the expansive body of literature that there might have been, and that what existed was not treated as a unique “body” of literature.

²¹ Rice argues that one of the ways to overcome limited and limiting representations of Indigenous resistance in national media is to increase the amount of Indigenous journalists working for national media: “Indigenous journalists” were “more closely connected to IDM teach-ins, art workshops, and would help non-Indigenous understand what’s going on behind the rallies and round dances” (270). Having Indigenous journalists represent acts of resistance might help to counter pervasive settler colonial narratives that disqualify place-based, relational resistance. “I got into media,” Rice continues, “to get the story out there” (271).

²² Of course, coming to understand how more respectful Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations can be practiced takes more than work on paper. I want to thank Professor Sukeshi Kamra and Armand Ruffo for their insistence that I take my learning outside of academia and into the Indigenous community. The lessons I learned as a volunteer and friend at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre, the Wabano Health Centre, and Carleton's Ojikwanong Indigenous Student Centre helped me greatly in better understanding how I might relate with not only Indigenous peoples but with myself, my family, friends, and other beings of creation.

²³ The accessibility of media technologies today relative to the 1990s contributes to how, rather than being the subject of and subjected to mainstream media, Indigenous peoples have "grabbed the mic" and mobilized to represent Indigenous resistance on their terms. A multitude of blogs have emerged, like Métis artist Christi Belcourt's *dividednomore.ca*, managed by Indigenous peoples, which challenge the limitations of what is legitimate regarding the possibilities for Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships.

²⁴ In the 20 years since the standoff at Kanesatake, the Indigenous population in Canada has increased and the majority of Indigenous people are younger than 25 (Statistics Canada). These figures in part explain how, as Valerie Alia indicates in *The New Media Nation*, Indigenous peoples are at the forefront of digital media applications; Indigenous peoples widely use digital media tools not only to revitalize their languages and lifeways but to more effectively and more widely mobilize against such instances of settler colonialism as C-45 embodied.

²⁵ The Canadian government, in response to an "acute crisis in Indigenous – Settler society relations" in the early 1990s, most notably exemplified by the Oka Crisis, established RCAP: "an extensive and constitutional and historical review of Indigenous-settler society relations" (Hughes 101). Following the

final report of RCAP in 1996, the Canadian government responded with *Canada's Indigenous Action Plan* and a Statement of Reconciliation delivered by Jane Stewart, Minister of Indian and Northern Development. The Action Plan included 350 million dollars to establish the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, a non-profit and Indigenous-managed foundation with the mandate of funding "community-based healing and renewal initiatives," and called for a public inquiry into residential schooling (Henderson and Wakeham 10).

²⁶ Critics worried that the TRC would disappoint those expecting substantial reforms. The format of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is based on processes, which have taken place in nation-states undergoing transitions from radically unjust forms of government to more morally legitimate ones. TRCs have occurred often as a result of government legislation or decree. Julia Hughes reminds us in her article, "Instructive Past," that Canada is neither transitioning into another form of government nor was the TRC initiated by decree; rather, the TRC was initiated through a judicial agreement (Hughes 110). As such, it is fenced in by a multitude of legalities. For instance, the commission had no subpoena powers and survivors were not allowed to name their abusers to the public (Henderson and Wakeham 2009: 12). As Henderson and Wakeham have stated, "[w]hile many past TRCs have had more robust investigatory powers and influence upon the judicial prosecution of perpetrators, Canada risks shifting the TRC model away from a justice-based focus and toward a more symbolic emphasis upon witnessing and national healing" with no promise of substantive reform vis a vis land or sovereignty (12).

²⁷ The use of the documentary genre to discursively maintain the Canadian settler state is not novel. The first commissioner of the NFB, John Grierson, was a champion of the British documentary film movement in the 1930s. His aim, as was the aim of the NFB, was the creation of an informed citizenry,

“informed,” that is, write Leach and Slonioski, “in a particular way” (5). Until the 1960s, Griersonian documentaries were integral to “the effort to construct and communicate a sense of national identity” (8). That is, Griersonian documentaries brought together images that sought to normalize and give form to ideas, values, and social practices that were considered essentially “Canadian”. The classic style of documentary that Grierson established presumed the pre-discursive existence and objectivity of its representation of what was “Canadian”.

²⁸ The problem is that the way they overturn stereotypes and offer examples of “respectable” Indigenous peoples is steeped in and props up increasingly taken-for-granted neoliberal discourse on what is respectable. While the TRC’s testimonials and stories of survival do tend to produce strong affective responses, they may also be met with a form of pity that undermines the political solidarity that may be needed for the substantial redress of the Canadian state’s colonization of Indigenous peoples. These stories may contribute to the reduction of Indigenous people to victims, whose lives have been “over-determined by a history not of [their] own making” and thus are viewed as deserving of pity rather than respect (Simon 131). And, as Simon writes, “[w]hat is ‘forgotten’ is that ‘victimhood’ is a position in a power relation” in which Canadians are indeed implicated through the election of successive settler governments that have continued to oppress Indigenous nations (132).

²⁹ The term recognition is, of course, laden with a theoretical debate within discourses such as postcolonialism, critical race studies, and biopolitics. In fact, Glen S. Coulthard in his essay “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the ‘Politics of Recognition’ in Canada” troubles the efforts of Indigenous peoples in Canada to seek social justice through the politics recognition. His concern, which he shares with Taiaiake Alfred, is that while such projects may result in some gains for Indigenous peoples, they may not address the underlying fact that state power maintains the power to determine the terms of recognition.