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Indigenous and Postcolonial Studies: Tensions and Interrelationships, Creative and Critical Interventions

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In December 2019, Cree artist Kent Monkman unveiled his latest work to a large audience in the Grand Hall at the entrance to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. In the two massive canvases, entitled *mistikôsiwak*—a Cree word that means "wooden boat people," referring to the French who arrived in wooden boats and more broadly the many arrivants to Turtle Island or North America—Monkman recalls and re-positions nineteenth-century history painting to expose Romantic myths about vanishing Indigenous people. Monkman comments: "some of the main references in both paintings [are] of Indigenous people as dying or becoming irrelevant—these were popular themes in the nineteenth century that really gave [settler] people permission to come in and dispossess us of our lands" ("Kent Monkman"). In these paintings the colonial gaze is reversed, and Indigenous people—their histories, experiences, and complex subjectivities—become central. Monkman's work is provocative, uncomfortable, troubling.[1] But Monkman's purpose is not merely to reframe Indigenous-European history. His portrayal of the arrivants shows a close attention to a diversity of genders, races, sexualities, cultures, and ethnicities, interrogating and displacing the centrality of the white settler figure in narratives of cultural contact. What Monkman's paintings underline is the role of relationships across differences, which is, for us, the enduring purpose of reigniting the conversation between postcolonial and Indigenous literary studies.

The subtle and affective portrayal of the complexities of these historical and ongoing relationships explains why we chose to open our special issue with an analysis of these two paintings. The left-hand painting of the diptych, titled *Welcoming the Newcomers*, depicts

Figure 1. *Welcoming the Newcomers.* Kent Monkman. 2019. Acrylic on canvas. 132″ x 264″. Image courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2. *Resurgence of the People.* Kent Monkman. 2019. Acrylic on canvas. 132″ x 264″. Image courtesy of the artist.

encounters between Indigenous people and shipwrecked voyagers of African, Asian, and European heritage. Monkman's gender-fluid persona is Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, whom Monkman describes as "a time-traveling, shape-shifting, supernatural being" ("Biography"). Here she "is literally bending over to assist people arriving to North America," which for Monkman underlines another, often untold, story of Indigenous generosity ("Artist Interview"). In the right-hand painting, *Resurgence of the People*, Miss Chief is "commanding this boat that looks a lot like a migrant vessel. Many people across the world are being displaced from their own lands. Miss Chief is leading this resurgence of the people to represent a return to our languages and a return to our traditions" ("Artist Interview"). Her pose recalls and transforms a famous history painting from the Met, Emanuel Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851); however, another source Monkman draws upon are "those heartbreaking photographs of migrating populations set afloat on those often too-small boats, hundreds of people crammed into these boats going to somewhere better." He continues: "the two paintings together really speak to the arrivals . . . , migrations, and displacements of people around the world. And the Great Hall [of the Met] is this place of people entering and people leaving" ("Artist Interview").

In engaging with history painting and its fraught depictions of Indigenous and racialized people, particularly in response to other works at the Met, Monkman is deliberately critiquing setter-colonial institutions like museums while reclaiming a place for Indigenous perspectives on art history within those very structures. Monkman's purpose is to create history paintings that will last well into future centuries, housed in the heart of those cultural establishments that carry with them a history of exclusion and erasure, and, to invoke another of Monkman's recent exhibitions, "shame and prejudice."[2] Monkman's paintings frankly depict the genocidal crimes of colonial policy—including the dispossession of land, the establishment of residential schools, the institutionalization of white supremacy and violent conquest, and the suppression of Indigenous languages. With *mistikôsiwak* now occupying the Great Hall at the Met, Monkman comments on the shift this moment represents:

"it sends a very strong and powerful message [not only] to Indigenous artists, but also to the vast audience of the Met" ("Kent Monkman"). That message is that the narratives of nation, history, and identity—even those enshrined within sites of settler-colonial cultural power—can be reappropriated, transformed, and redirected to serve the aims of social justice and redress within a framework of "the Resurgence of the People." With this title Monkman is re-centring Cree perspectives and prioritizing the revitalization of lifeways, languages, social justice models, and systems of governance.[3]

Monkman's work can be understood as contributing to a long and rich—yet also troubled and deeply contested—conversation between postcolonial studies and Indigenous studies. To a great extent, postcolonial studies emerged as a way to counter and dislodge the role of European philosophical, theoretical, and political traditions, and, in making this critique, scholars often described how writers and thinkers from formerly colonized parts of Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia were "writing back" to metropolitan centres. Yet this notion of postcolonialism as an expression of "writing back" has always been fiercely contested and even outright rejected by many of these same writers and thinkers. Indeed, the foundational, insurgent writers in genealogies of postcolonial social movements and traditions of thought such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Frantz Fanon, Audre Lorde, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Stuart Hall, Edward Said, Sylvia Wynter, Ato Sekyi-Otu, and Aijaz Ahmad were always more motivated to articulate a vision of *decolonization*—particularly in resisting the need to continually reference Europe and its cultural legacies, and in finding ways to re-centre the cultures and languages of the colonized. Indigenous writers continue to be at the forefront of enunciating this multifaceted and intercultural project of decolonization. It is an inconvenient but incontestable fact that Indigenous decolonization does not meaningfully draw from (or even feel the need to respond to) postcolonial studies.[4] However, postcolonial studies now has the powerful opportunity to refresh its historically complex and difficult relationship with anti- or decolonial thought by engaging critically with contemporary Indigenous thought and writing.

Monkman is just one of the many Indigenous artists who have contributed to this challenging but necessary search for a language and politics of decolonization. Increasingly, work by Indigenous writers is taught at universities, reviewed in mainstream literary magazines, and published by large presses with global reach. In the United States, scholars often point to the importance of Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*'s winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 and the subsequent success of writers like Louise Erdrich (Anishinaabe), Joy Harjo (Muscogee [Creek]), Tommy Orange (Cheyenne/Arapaho), and Layli Long Soldier (Oglala Lakota) in taking some of the most important prizes in American literature in recent years.[5] Indigenous writers from the lands currently claimed by Canada are at the leading edge of this ongoing revitalization of Indigenous literatures. Writers like Eden Robinson (Haisla/Heiltsuk), Thomas King (Cherokee), Katherena Vermette (Métis), Cherie Dimaline (Métis), Liz Howard (Anishinaabe), Jordan Abel (Nisga'a), Billy-Ray Belcourt (Cree), Louise Halfe (Cree), and many more have won some of the most prestigious literary prizes.[6] In 2017, when a high-profile editor of the Writers' Union of Canada made a bad joke about awarding an "Appropriation Prize," thereby ignoring the difficulty Indigenous writers have had historically to access publication, over 1,500 people donated a total of over 115,000 Canadian dollars in support of often marginalized, under-published Indigenous authors. The funds are now being distributed by the Indigenous Voices Awards, a literary award for emerging Indigenous writers.[7]

These successes are impressive given that the scholarly field of Indigenous literary studies is so young—notwithstanding two hundred years of Indigenous writing and millennia of storytelling in Nation-specific contexts. In the US, many date the origins of the field to what settler scholar Kenneth Lincoln calls the "Native American Renaissance," his term for the "first generation of Indian poets, novelists, and scholars" that emerged in the 1960s (184). But in *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literatures* (2014), editors James H. Cox and Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice note that the moment Lincoln names is marked by scholarship dominated by non-Indigenous scholars

and concern with authenticity to the neglect of "history, political crises, and the complexities of cultural identity" (3). Cox and Justice consider that "[m]ost post-1995 criticism accepts tribal nation and community-specific contexts as the most important points of critical reference for the interpretation of Native texts[,] . . . repudiat[ing] the concern with mixed-blood as a central critical focus" (3) in favour of work that supports land, treaty rights, and sovereignty.

Likewise, it was not until the 1990s that Canadian professors had access to a comprehensive textbook on Indigenous literatures. Delaware poet and playwright Daniel David Moses paired up with postcolonialist Terry Goldie to produce the first edition of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, published by Oxford University Press in 1992. Pulling together a wide array of writing, often from hard-to-find sources, it became a reliable teaching anthology for those instructors who wanted to add Indigenous content to their courses.[8]

In the same decade, Indigenous scholars on both sides of the border were insisting on theoretical paradigms that were based on their epistemologies. Cherokee-Creek scholar Craig Womack is often credited as the first to articulate Indigenous literary nationalism, in his classic *Red on Red*, published in 1999. However, Syilx knowledge holder, poet, novelist, and editor Jeannette Armstrong spoke at a postcolonial and Commonwealth literatures conference at Queen's University in 1992, espousing the idea that Indigenous literatures were best studied using Indigenous-centred paradigms. She never mentioned postcolonial concepts but instead noted that her concern "was with reading First Nations Literature and its subsequent pedagogy"; because Indigenous literatures are culture-specific, "experts within those cultures . . . are essential to be drawn from and drawn out" (qtd. in Reder and Morra 229).[9] Armstrong went on to collaborate with Indigenous writers and scholars from both sides of the border to produce *Looking at the Words of Our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature*, released by Theytus Press in 1993. Significantly, as the late Cree author and publisher Gregory Younging notes, Theytus Press is the oldest Indigenous-run press in the world, and Armstrong's anthology is the first in which all the articles are by Indigenous writers (Younging).[10]

By the turn of the millennium, conferences began to reserve space for this new field, and an increasing number of Indigenous and settler scholars began asking how we could position ourselves on the land we live on and how we could integrate Indigenous perspectives into our academic discussions. This led us to questions not typical in the academy: do we have responsibilities to the texts, authors, and communities that we write about? Do we have special responsibilities to each other?

It is in recognition of these special responsibilities and debts to current and previous generations of writers, scholars, and mentors from several communities that we come to this special issue, which focuses on an ongoing, if at times fraught, conversation between postcolonial and Indigenous studies. Postcolonial theory deserves some credit for initiating discussions of Indigenous literary studies. In *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin point out that the first generation of texts produced in European colonies were "frequently . . . by 'representatives' of Imperial power"; they introduce the binaries of postcolonial study such as: home versus native, metropolitan versus provincial or colonial; dominant versus colonized (5). And as they discuss the influence of the Imperial centre on the development of a colony's literature, they assert that "[a]ll post-colonial countries once had or still have 'native' cultures of some kind" (116). This inevitably begs the question: what have Indigenous people said or written, in their own languages or in imposed European ones, before or since colonization? But Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin do not pursue these questions. Instead they conclude that "[p]ost-colonial culture is inevitably a hybridized phenomenon involving a dialectical relationship between the 'grafted' European cultural systems and an indigenous ontology" (195). For them, "the project of post-colonial writing [is] to interrogate European discourse and discursive strategies[,] . . . to investigate the means by which Europe imposed and maintained its codes in its colonial domination of so much of the rest of the world" (196). Even as postcolonial theory recognized the existence of Indigenous cultural production, it deemed that culture unknowable without an examination of the effects of Imperial power.[11]

By 2002, high-profile Choctaw/Cherokee writer Louis Owens was less concerned with the interrogation of the effects of colonialism than frustrated by a wholesale neglect of Indigenous literatures by academics, especially postcolonialists: "it would not take much time browsing through contemporary critical/theoretical texts—including especially those we call postcolonial—to discover a . . . complete erasure of Native American voices" (13). For Owens, whether theorists were in support of or critics of the canon, the result was the same: "Those of us working in the field of what we call Native American literature can and undoubtedly will chafe at the ignorance and erasure of Native American voices within the metropolitan center and within what at times appears to be the loyal opposition to that center called postcolonial theory" (23). Meanwhile, an emerging generation of Indigenous academics turned their backs on postcolonial theory in favour of Indigenous-centred or nation-specific interpretation. In *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction* (2005), Osage critic Robert Warrior argues that Christianized texts written in English in early America, for a long time dismissed as the products of colonization, are instead valuable examples of Indigenous intellectual inheritance that preserved knowledge from ancestors prior to contact. The next year, in 2006, Justice released *Our First Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History*.[12] And in 2009 Métis scholar Jo-Ann Episkenew released *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing*, arguing that reading Indigenous texts has a therapeutic effect for settler and Indigenous readers alike, if for different reasons.[13]

Since 1989, scholars have articulated potent critiques of *The Empire Writes Back* for flattening internal social hierarchies within complex and diverse communities, for the limitations of the critical paradigm of "writing back," and for re-centring European discourses.[14] Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the scholars who have attempted to bridge postcolonial and Indigenous studies and the history of the conversation between the two fields.[15] An inspiring thread in this conversation involves scholars reigniting conversations about foundational decolonial theorists—such as Fanon, C. L. R. James, and Ngũgĩ—and connecting debates about decolonization to other struggles around the world.[16] With respect

to Indigenous studies engaging with decolonization movements in particular, a stand-out example is Dene scholar Glen Coulthard's book *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014). This book took Indigenous studies by storm by using Fanon's theories of decolonization in African contexts to reject a colonial politics of recognition in Canada and to articulate new directions in Indigenous resurgence.[17] More recently, Coulthard's work on Secwepemc activist and intellectual George Manuel illuminates the links between the Red Power movements of the 1970s and 1980s with global decolonization movements.[18]

Despite the volume and impact of these critiques and adaptations of postcolonial theory, scholars in Indigenous studies continue to seek out autonomous critical pathways to articulate self-determining goals, responsibilities, and a sense of purpose. We cannot pretend that the conversation between postcolonial and Indigenous studies has been consistently productive, mutually informing, or mutually beneficial. However, the fissures between the fields need not be paralyzing to ethically minded, responsible scholars. What may be crucial for scholars, including postcolonialists, to acknowledge is that the language and theoretical frameworks for conceiving and mobilizing comparative studies have changed—to a large extent because Indigenous and racialized scholars and writers have pushed to change them and to challenge the power relationships underpinning these disciplines. Again, questions of *how* and *for whose benefit* scholars build comparative frameworks are important considerations in the process of reigniting the conversation between scholarly fields in general, and in particular between postcolonial studies and Indigenous studies.

Monkman's paintings undermine the dominance of the white settler/Indigenous narrative and draw attention to multiple histories of encounters. However, the process of building connections across differences is never obvious or guaranteed. His depiction of Miss Chief shows her honouring her responsibilities and acknowledging how she is accountable to communities, but the subjects' emotional reactions within each staged relationship are complex and situated. These paintings ask viewers to reflect upon their own blindspots. Monkman states: "I love the capacity for painting to tell a story. I have always been drawn to

history painting because so many Indigenous experiences were never portrayed. This was an opportunity to engage with this master narrative, to reflect upon it, and to offer perspectives that come from the outside" ("Artist Interview"). Monkman's work, now housed in one of the most prestigious art institutions of the world, gives us pause in thinking through the parallels to Indigenous Studies, which increasingly is asked to integrate within settler colonial academic institutions.

Monkman's attention to form is echoed in the contributions to this special issue, with many of the authors articulating their social critique against the rigid containers of institutional, disciplinary, and academic norms. The articles demonstrate a mix of creative and critical interventions—formal academic essays, poems, images, autobiographical criticism, Indigenous protocols, interviews, and "reflective practice[s] of contemplating . . . lived experiences" (Purewal 121, n47). The departures from standard academic practice are intentional, and in some cases quite radical in resetting the manner in which one writes about, to, and for specific audiences. Iñupiaq scholar Rachel Taylor makes clear that her work is primarily accountable to her own family and to the Indigenous communities she is a part of by introducing herself at the beginning of her essay and demonstrating how she practices some of the Indigenous protocols that she has learned about (220, 222). In Nisga'a poet and scholar Abel's words, how can we "open up this space here [of the academy] for a dialogue instead of defaulting to the usual structures" (235)? Black Canadian author and scholar David Chariandy echoes this sentiment, arguing that while the academy should not be dismissed lightly, "we should always be prepared to work in radical or 'unhoused' ways" (65). In "gauntlet," Acholi poet Ontoniya Juliane Okot Bitek continues this theme by allowing thirty-four footnotes to crowd out her five-line poem. In other words, by extravagantly using a standard academic convention of acknowledging sources (the footnote), Okot Bitek is asking her readers to think about what kinds of knowledge and which knowledge holders get credited—and which do not. What we take from these pieces is the profound necessity to transform the very forms of thinking in order to bring about the type of discursive and other changes that these writers are calling for.

* * *

The contributions included in this special issue are divided into three parts, reflecting a range of approaches from Indigenous and postcolonial perspectives. We take seriously Chariandy's point that in attempting "coalitional work, particularly among variously racialized and colonized peoples," it is important to acknowledge that "we can only begin to think and act across differences when we adequately recognize our differences" (79). Part One, "Constellations of Co-Resistance" (borrowing an apt phrase from Anishinaabe writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson), discusses the opportunities that this moment might pose in reflecting on both the successes and failures of postcolonial theoretical frameworks in uncovering longstanding relationships between and among Black and Indigenous histories, writings, and experiences. The authors included in Part Two, "Dialogues and Fissures," flesh out the multiple and competing senses of postcolonial and Indigenous critical approaches, clearly describing why and to what extent this dialogue has, at times, been one-sided. Yet they also express the hope that an open acknowledgment of differences can lead to finding common ground and sharing experiences, insights, and theories across those differences. The texts in Part Three, "Extraction and Reclamation" (a tension named by Younging, as Taylor notes in her essay), unpack the opposing forces of extraction and reclamation, particularly in Indigenous cultural politics but also more generally in scholarly citational practices of acknowledging others' ideas and recognizing wider communities of knowledge holders.

I. Part One: "Constellations of Co-Resistance"

Rebecca Macklin's "Unsettling Fictions: Relationality as Decolonial Method in Native American and South African Literatures" points out that each of these bodies of literature is commonly discussed within the context of their respective settler-colonial nations. She argues that a more expansive comparative framework is needed. Macklin is well aware of the many drawbacks of postcolonial theory, including its tendency to homogenize, ahistorize, and depoliticize the experiences of those living in, through, and against a postcolonial condition. She also acknowledges

that current approaches to Indigenous studies fit uneasily within a South African context. Yet Macklin makes the case for the continued relevance of both postcolonial and Indigenous studies as a way "to understand interconnected experiences of colonialism across diverse geographic, cultural, and temporal spaces" (27). In her comparative reading of K. Sello Duiker's novel *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001) and Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), Macklin addresses issues that have recently become more visible in postcolonial theory, including Indigenous-Black relations in North America, capitalism, class, homelessness, and environmental poisoning. Her method of tracing the emergence of her comparative framework draws on theories of "relationality as a decolonial method" (39)—relationality being a key word in Indigenous studies. She argues that "relational modes of living are necessary for future planetary survival—interventions that are rooted in the recovery of non-Western epistemologies" (50). She stresses that differences in methods of decolonization and building solidarities are always irreducibly specific, yet these differences should not preclude "an awareness of shared forms of suffering" (44).

In "interlude: little brother," a short, reflective piece of auto-criticism, Yurok Diné scholar Natalie Knight draws on her own experiences in order to articulate a potent social critique from a principled, positioned place. She describes growing up as an Indigenous youth with two Black siblings, all three children having been adopted by white parents, in a predominantly white rural town in western Washington state. In an attempt to help her little brother navigate anti-Black racism, Knight introduced him to Black writers, artists, and thinkers who provided him with a sense of self. Yet Knight was unaware of how she, a young Indigenous woman with similar issues, was not receiving the same support. Only by reading activist works by Black and Red Power Indigenous authors did Knight find a way to name her experiences and contextualize her feelings. Knight experienced a profound sense of dissonance as she attempted to reconcile the incompatibilities between Marxist analyses of class, anti-colonial critique, multicultural politics of difference, feminist theory, and Indigenous theory. Yet the yawning gaps in these established academic theories fueled Knight's commitment to address persistent

elisions in critical approaches to social justice movements, especially with respect to Indigenous studies.

We view "Conversations at the Crossroads" as the heart of this special issue because it vividly demonstrates the urgency of the search for a critical language for how to work across differences and craft comparative frameworks. This interlogue records a unique and powerful exchange among Black and Indigenous writers and scholars that took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, on the unceded, ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil Waututh Nations, in November 2018. The conversations underlined the many powerful connections between Indigenous and Black writing, histories, and communities, while at the same time highlighting the need to pay careful attention to differences when mobilizing comparative frameworks.

While the gathering was initially conceived as a conversation between Indigenous studies and postcolonial studies, the participants were instead motivated to speak to a vibrant and emerging dialogue between Indigenous studies and Black studies. This does not mean that Black studies is in any way synonymous with postcolonial studies. Indeed the opposite is true: like Indigenous studies, Black studies has struggled to and successfully defined its own terms of critical debate and asserted its autonomy from dominant theoretical approaches, including postcolonial ones. Yet the scholars and writers who participated in this gathering expressed strong interest in speaking together—beyond the polite acceptance of an invitation. While Cree-Métis scholar Deanna Reder emphasizes how "Indigenous writing in Canada owes a debt to Black thinkers" (62), Chariandy offers two frameworks for understanding ties between the communities: as a "poetics of relation," derived from Caribbean writer Édouard Glissant, and as "constellations of co-resistance," derived from Simpson. He suggests these are productive models by which to illuminate "a precious and powerful—if also imperfect—legacy of solidarity [among Black and Indigenous peoples] that ought to be remembered and asserted" (63). The speakers passionately debated the available theoretical frameworks for creating solidarity and relations across communities. For example, Okot Bitek, "born to Ugandan exiles in Kenya" of Acholi heritage, living in Canada since 1990, rejects the

term "intersectional" because of the way it is applied to "minorities" and not to those who imagine themselves to embody an unmarked norm. Once again, the caution is to not homogenize and simplify in using terms such as people of colour or theoretical frameworks such as multiculturalism or postcolonialism, which risk erasing the specific experiences and oppressions of people and communities. In Black Canadian poet Cecily Nicholson's words, these broader terms threaten to elide the "function of power and anti-Black racism" (79). Stó:lō scholar Karrmen Crey, the discussant for the roundtable discussion, underlined the most important theme of relationality: "The act of listening is the basis for meaningful relationships. Relationships bridge artificial and real divides that hold us apart. We define identities in order to make them visible, and yet, of course, they overlap. They overlap in our relationships with one another, in our collaborations, and in our partnerships" (78). As such, "Conversations at the Crossroads" might serve as a possible model for conversations between Indigenous and postcolonial scholars.

In "Holding It Together: Indigeneity, (Settler)Postcolonialism, and M. Nourbese Philip," Tavleen Purewal further discusses how Black and Indigenous relations have emerged across time and continents through an analysis of M. Nourbese Philip's verse-novella, *Looking for Mr. Livingstone* (1991). In the novella, "a diasporic Black woman visits Indigenous African women" (96), traveling to many African villages and learning about each village's "rituals of hospitality, pedagogy, and living" (98). Purewal explores an extended metaphor of the "hold," taken from Christina Sharpe's groundbreaking work of autocritical theory, *In the Wake* (2017), in which the hold is the crushing hull of a ship, carrying Black people as cargo during the transatlantic slave trade. But Purewal also invokes another meaning of "hold" as spaces of emotional support like a hug or an enclosure of "care, teaching, and self-growth" (96). Purewal aims to keep the tensions within "hold" sharp, partly as a way of bringing a self-reflexive gaze upon her own struggle to be relevant to Indigenous decolonization and land-based movements. Purewal recounts an anecdote from her experience of being a visitor to a reoccupation site of unceded St'át'imc lands, named Ulluilsc, which was threatened by commercial logging. Here Purewal struggles with feelings of implication when she

learns about "Punjabi settler history and its ongoing threat to Ulluilsc" through commercial logging. She asks the following question: "Can an alternative Punjabi relation to our narrative within the nation-state result in a different Punjabi relation to Indigenous sovereignty?" (118).

II. Part Two: "Dialogues and Fissures"

In Part One, Macklin asks, "How can literary expressions of decolonial resistance offer new avenues for solidarity that are not dependent on (potentially exclusionary) definitions of indigeneity and postcoloniality?" (37). The essays in Part Two attempt to answer this question.

In "The Turn to Indigenization in Canadian Writing: Kinship Ethics and the Ecology of Knowledges," Ana Maria Fraile-Marcos asserts that epistemicide or 'the murder of knowledge' was instrumental in the genocide of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas and Africa; she argues that "the centrality of kinship in Indigenous epistemologies and scholarship" (127) disrupts the hegemony of scientific knowledge and shifts Canadian writing and criticism towards "an ecology of knowledges," multiple and diverse (126). She discusses the work of three authors as examples of this shift: King's novel *The Back of the Turtle* (2014), which compares the destructive effects of the foundational Euro-Christian myth—the Fall of Man and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden—with the Haudenosaunee creation story "The Woman Who Fell from the Sky"; Wayde Compton's *The Outer Harbour* (2014), a collection of stories that features the city of Vancouver in the past and the speculative future but also symbolically as the Black Pacific[19]; and Daniel Coleman's *Yardwork: A Biography of an Urban Place* (2017), about his search to learn about Hodinöhsö:ni[20] thinking as a way to understand the land he is living on. All three, Fraile-Marcos contends, decolonize Western thought through "cultural Indigenization," a move she insists can be respectful and non-appropriative.

Leonie John, a settler scholar, similarly draws on the Māori concept of "being a *manuhiri*," a visitor. In her essay "With your foodbasket and my foodbasket, the visitors will be well: Combining Postcolonial and Indigenous Theory in Approaching Māori Literature," she articulates the limitations of both theoretical strands, convinced that combined

together responsibly "they can mutually enhance one another through critical and candid conversation" (170). Even in her optimism John appreciates her need as a visitor to follow Indigenous protocols and admits the difficulties of her proposal. John's analysis is striking for her determination not to hide the critical disagreements within each framework but to emphasize the points of difference and then continue to listen, even as she cautions others that her method, based on being a *manuhiri*, is neither universally applicable nor a cure-all.

The third essay in Part Two is "Re-Settling Australia? Indigeneity, Indigenous Sovereignty, and the Postcolonial Nation in Kim Scott's *Taboo*" by Lukas Klik. Klik is confident that the dual approach of "post-colonial and critical Indigenous studies can be valuable in order to identify, describe, and criticize colonialist images of Indigeneity" (179). Klik agrees with other journal contributors—like Macklin, John, and Purewal—that Indigenous and postcolonial theories need not work at loggerheads but can work in tandem.

The theme of critiquing colonial images of Indigeneity continues with Métis poet Samantha Nock's "kiwetinohk ohci," a lyrical meditation on land, memory, and home—both her home territories in Northern Saskatchewan and her home "in this city" in the south (203–204). In this poem, the speaker's northern homeland is much more than the "wasteland" or "bountiful opportunity" as perceived by "southerners from the city." Indeed, land is a direction home, a record of time that extends much longer than contact with Europeans, "since before nicâpân set / one foot in front of the other." Nock's poem resists the forces of "extraction" and invokes the power of "reclamation," a dialectic that frames the third section of the special issue.

III. Part Three: Extraction and Reclamation

Part Three begins with Taylor's article, "Gathering Knowledges to Inform Best Practices in Indigenous Publishing." She has picked up the mantle that belonged to her mentor, Younging, who passed away unexpectedly in April 2019. While Taylor sets out to talk about "[the] lack of access" to publishing for Indigenous writers, she realizes that the real difficulty is "a lack of knowledge . . . about Canada's ongoing colonial history and about

Indigenous experiences and rights" (207). Publishing needs to change so that Indigenous stories can be better understood and appreciated. Stories are often undervalued even though they reflect Indigenous intellectual traditions, enactments of sovereignty, and intergenerational legacies. If publishing was revamped to include "proper acknowledgment" and attention to Indigenous protocols (206), Indigenous scholars could unveil connections to each other, ancestors, and descendants.

In "Empty Spaces," Abel bravely names his experiences as an intergenerational survivor of residential schools and grapples with the pieces of his own story to which he has limited or no access. There are multiple resonances of "empty spaces" in Abel's piece, from settler-colonial representations of empty land in Euro-American literature, to the missing pieces of his family history, to the limitations of scholarly norms that reinscribe absences they purport to address. Abel's aim is to transform these empty spaces into a space of dialogue by "reorganizing, reframing, and repositioning research questions outside of the 'normative frameworks for modes of presentation'" (235). His piece, a collage that deliberately leaves traces of its suturing, brings together a recorded academic talk, his father's powerful designs, his uncanny transformations of descriptions of land and nature from James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), and his own torn relationship with Nisga'a territory, knowledge, language, family, and community. These fragments are "part of an impossible whole" (255), each with "empty spaces" right at their centres. Above all, this piece is Abel's wrestling with the absence of his father and his attempt to initiate a conversation, even a physical closeness, with his father on the page, through the intermingling of their respective creative practices in haunting, layered images.

Okot Bitek's poem "gauntlet" resonates beautifully with Abel's piece in its playful contestation of academic norms through hyperbolic and lyrical reappropriation of footnotes. Instead of carefully documenting the writer's debts to others, footnote 1 declares that this poem is "for Our own self." Though the "body" of the seven-line poem "marks" terror, nightmare, discipline, and canon, the penultimate footnote insists: "i'm no blank sheet" (269n33), while the very last footnote resounds: "i am the song" (269n34). This declaration of presence, expression, beauty,

and survivance is exactly the (foot)note we wish to leave our readers with, as they engage with and contemplate this special issue.

What we have enjoyed most in working on this project are the opportunities we have had for conversation: conversing with each other and the writers and scholars who have generously shared their time with us about the issues that matter most in this moment. Together, the unique contributions to this special issue demonstrate the struggle for the next generation in both postcolonial and Indigenous studies to emerge and define their respective fields in ways that are attuned to the shifting critical debates and needs of a range of communities (both academic and grassroots). We are grateful for this opportunity to work closely with these writers and scholars who have so powerfully reframed the theory and practice of scholarship in ways that better address their sense of responsibility to ethical research in their respective fields. What we took as powerful common ground was relationality and listening across differences. In Crey's words, "the act of listening is the greatest step for overcoming the kinds of partitions that artificially separate us" (78). What matters are not the scholarly categorizations or labels that we use—it is the relationships that we build *in spite of* the often excluding and delegitimizing language and frameworks within the academy. Many of the contributors underline this point in their call to create more inclusive disciplines, more nimble theoretical frameworks, and more welcoming institutional contexts—in ways that are more accountable and responsible to our own communities or those we are in relationship with.

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Notes

1 Since we wrote this Introduction, Kent Monkman has unveiled a new painting that has prompted strong criticism for what many see as its disrespectful engagement with the issue of sexual violence against Indigenous women, particularly its use of a symbol associated with the Canadian movement demanding investigation of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2-spirit people, typically referred to as MMIWG2S. For a critique of his other works including *mistikôsiwak*, see essays by de Loggans and Steele. For further information on MMIWG2S, see Stumblingbear-Riddle.

2 Monkman's *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* has been touring Canadian art galleries since 2017, Canada's sesquicentennial.

3 Indigenous resurgence is a diverse set of Indigenous-led theories, ethics, and practices that emphasize the renewal of Indigenous languages, social justice models, and systems of governance. Some of its most prominent theorists and practitioners are L. Simpson (Anishinaabe), Coulthard (Dene), and A. Simpson (Mohawk); however, many other writers and scholars use resurgence as a way of describing their political and ethical commitments.

4 Even in the twenty-fifth anniversary issue of *ARIEL*, subtitled *Critical Visions: Contemporary North American Native Writing*, five of the ten essayists are Indigenous, yet none of them engages with postcolonial theory.

5 Erdrich won the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction in 2015 and the National Book Critics Circle Award in 2016; Harjo was named US Poet Laureate in 2019; Orange won an American Book Award and a PEN/Hemingway Award for his novel, *There There*; and Long Soldier won the PEN/Jean Stein Book Award and a Whiting Award for her book of poetry, *WHEREAS*.

6 In recent years, to name only a few, Robinson won a Writers' Trust Fellowship; King won the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction; Vermette won the Amazon.ca First Novel Award; Dimaline won the Governor General's Literary Award for Young People's Literature; Howard, Abel, and Belcourt won the Griffin Poetry Prize in consecutive years; and Halfe won the Latner Writers' Trust Poetry Prize.

7 The Indigenous Voices Awards support Indigenous literary art in its diversity and complexity and uphold Indigenous sovereignty over stories while rejecting cultural appropriation. See *Carrying the Fire*, the special section of *The Alaska Quarterly Review*, for a discussion of the genesis of the awards and the publication of several of those shortlisted in the first year of the award.

8 In our correspondence with Margery Fee, Professor Emeritus at the University of British Columbia, she reflects that "[l]ots of English professors did not want to do this, in part because they had never heard of Indigenous writing—remember that the FIRST course [in Indigenous literature] at UBC was in 1995."

9 The Editor's Note from *Looking at the Words of our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature* (1993) is reprinted in Reder and Morra, pp. 229–30.

10 King also deserves credit for the 1987 anthology that he co-edited with Hoy and Calver, *The Native in Literature*. Despite the point he makes in the introduction, that scholarship of that day has "generally ignored the presence of Native literature" (13), the collection is generally by non-Indigenous scholars on the topic of the Indian.

11 Even as recently as 2015, Archibald-Barber reflects on an essay written by King in 1990 that "[t]he scholarly idea that has had the greatest impact on English studies in Canada is Thomas King's argument that Native literature is not postcolonial ('Godzilla vs Post-Colonial')." Notwithstanding its impact, King's essay "Godzilla vs Post-Colonial" has not aged well given his discussion of *Indian School Days*, published in 1987, by Anishinaabe writer Basil Johnston. King praises the residential school memoir for its lack of complaint against the colonizers: "The boys are not portrayed as hapless victims, and the Jesuits are not cast as uncaring jailers. Particularly telling are the concerted efforts made by the clerics and the [older] students to care for the young students, 'babies' as Johnston calls them" (188). This is in contrast to Johnston's frank discussion of his experiences that he writes in the 2005 prologue to Sam McKegney's *Magic Weapons*. Here Johnston charts his growing realization in the 1990s that "the sexual degradation of students was far more widespread than [he] had imagined" (x). It was only during the class action lawsuit against the clergy by survivors that Johnston learned that he "was not the only one who had been befouled and desecrated, but that we all had been damaged in some way" (x).

12 Also in 2006, Warrior, along with Weaver and Womack, co-wrote *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (see Weaver, Womack, and Warrior).

13 Both Episkenew and Eigenbrod are credited with bringing together postcolonial studies and Indigenous studies when they established the annual Aboriginal Roundtable at the Canadian Association of Commonwealth Language and Literatures in Edmonton in 2000. Both became founding members of the Indigenous Literary Studies Association (see *Indigenous Literary Studies Association*).

14 Even Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin themselves have participated in this critique of *The Empire Writes Back* (see their General Introduction and co-edited collection, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*). In Canadian contexts, especially in literary studies, vibrant critical debates concerning postcolonial theory have been longstanding; we would like to point out in particular work by Mukherjee, Bannerji, Chariandy, Sugars (editor), Fee, Andrews ("Rethinking Canadian" and Davidson, Walton, and Andrews), Findlay, and Brydon. See also the discussion of the provocative question, "Is Canada Postcolonial?" in the 2003 collection of the same name, edited by Moss.

15 See Spivak's "Translator's Preface" for a modeling of how to bridge Indigenous and postcolonial studies through a close, personal engagement with fiction writer and activist Mahasweta Devi; Byrd and Rothberg for possible exchanges yet ongoing tensions between postcolonial and Indigenous studies; and Limbale and Yengde for critical debates on how to approach Dalit Literatures in India.

For a related discussion of the different vocabulary of Indigenous theories and diasporic studies, see Coleman and Kim, McCall, and Singer.

16 See Sekyi-Otu; Scott; Lorde; Brand; Spivak; Said.

17 However, it is notable that Coulthard does not discuss postcolonial theory in his engagement with Fanon's work.

18 See Manuel and Posluns' *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*, first published in 1974 and reprinted in 2018 with an important introduction by Glen Coulthard.

19 For a discussion of Vancouver as the Black Pacific in Compton's *The Outer Harbour*, see Smyth.

20 The names of Indigenous nations are not standardized; this spelling follows Coleman.

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