

Bodies that Monetize

By

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Abstract

Bodies that Monetize is an exhibition and thesis document that investigates the harms caused to Indigenous bodies and how they address such harms in the Canadian state. The document identifies how the Canadian state perpetrates harms to Indigenous bodies through the TransCanada Mainline. I argue that the Mainline causes boil water advisories and results in the creation of what Mbembe coins, “death-worlds” and what I call “harms” caused to Indigenous bodies. Indigenous bodies resist these violences by utilizing the horror genre for artistic expression, the practice of hauntings and ghosting, and the gendered use of resentment. My own method of resisting this violence includes making memes to utilize their ability to display the intangible and detongue the unspeakable. This includes discussions on mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety. Through the process of creating these memes as a method of resistance, my exhibition highlights the struggles of Indigenous bodies.

Keywords: Memes, Mental-Health, Colonialism, Indigenous, Resistance, Death-worlds, Hauntings, Horror, Pipelines, Harm

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Dedication

To my Family, David, Satianna, Jeremy Andy, and Estelle Simard. Thank you for everything, your endless love and support means the world to me. **In loving memory of Marcella Jourdain and Verna Shabaquay/Simard.....**

Table of Contents

List of Figures	vii
Dedication	viii
Introduction: On Death and Indigenous Bodies as Materials	1
Colonialism	4
Harm(s)	7
Bodies	9
Chapter One: Neoliberalism, Innocence, and Death	11
TransCanada Pipelines Limited	11
Neoliberalism as Assemblage	13
Boil Water Advisories as Death-Worlds	14
Moves to Malice	16
Chapter Two: Horror, Hauntings, Resentment	21
Blood Thirsty Practices	21
Terror	21
Ghosting Colonialism	23
Refusing Colonial Harm	26
Chapter Three: Bodies that Monetize	29
Anishinaabe Art Praxis	29
Continuous Resistance Remix	36
<i>Bodies that Monetize</i> Exhibition	38
Materiality	39
Context	40
Key Memes	42
Heart Knowledge	43
Refusing Silence	48
Mental Health and Land	51
Closing: Futures Without Harm	53
Works Cited	57

List of Figures

Figure 1. TransCanada Corporation Limited, <i>TransCanada Asset Map</i> , 2015.	12
Figure 2. Wounded Knee Massacre, George E. Trager, January 1891, Photograph.	25
Figure 3. Bison Skull Pile, Unknown, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, 1892.	25
Figure 4. Fallon Simard, <i>Cry</i> , 2016, Meme.	27
Figure 5. Fallon Simard, <i>PTSD</i> , 2017, Meme.	28
Figure 6. Bonnie Devine, <i>Letter to William</i> , 2008, National Museum of the American Indian.	29
Figure 7. Fallon Simard, <i>Mercury Poisoning (Still)</i> , 2016, Mp4.	31
Figure 8. Fallon Simard, <i>Self Destruct</i> , 2016, Meme.	32
Figure 9. Dayna Danger, <i>Adrienne</i> , 2016, Photograph.	33
Figure 10. Fallon Simard, <i>Womb (Still)</i> , 2016, Mp4.	35
Figure 11. Fallon Simard, <i>Continuous Resistance Remix (Still)</i> , 2013, Mp4.	36
Figure 12. Fallon Simard, <i>Continuous Resistance Remix (Still)</i> , 2013, Mp4.	37
Figure 13. Fallon Simard, <i>Grief</i> , 2017, Meme.	38
Figure 14. Fallon Simard, <i>Disassociated</i> , 2016, Meme.	44
Figure 15. Fallon Simard, <i>Anxiety</i> , 2017, Meme.	45
Figure 16. Fallon Simard, <i>Calm</i> , 2016, Meme.	47
Figure 17. Fallon Simard, <i>Abandonment</i> , 2016, Meme.	49
Figure 18. Fallon Simard, <i>TerraNullius5000 (Still)</i> , 2016, Mp4.	51
Figure 19. Fallon Simard, <i>Bodies That Monetize (Installation Image)</i> , 2017	52

Introduction **On Death and Indigenous Bodies as Materials**

“Settler-colonial life-ways are already Indigenous death-ways” (Billy-Ray Belcourt, 2015, p. 1).

White-settlers, under the guise of a discourse of civility, decolonization, reconciliation, and sometimes even through their participation in Indigenous activist movements, continue to absolve themselves from participating in systemic anti-Indigenous racism and Canadian-state colonial land occupation. Following this same logic, Canada is presently in an era of Truth and Reconciliation¹ (2015), ironically implying two groups of people are becoming compatible or friendly, when in fact, the present state of colonial harms caused to Indigenous bodies suggests otherwise; harms are not friendly and the harms caused by the Canadian state are tangible and measurable. Further to this irony, there has been an attempt by Beverley McLachlin to bring some type of accountability to the Supreme Court of Canada by offering the term, “cultural-genocide” (Tasker, 2015, para. 8). However, McLachlin bears no legislative power and the Supreme Court has rejected this opportunity. The Canadian state will continue to achieve the goal of evading accountability to the United Nations (1951) Treaty, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. The treaty has 19 articles aimed at “liberating mankind” (p. 278) from genocide. To illustrate the irony of both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the usage of the term Cultural-Genocide, let us consider the first four articles of the United Nations treaty:

¹ In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada finalized its reports. See the TRC website for its reports at, trc.ca, under the “about” section.

Article 1: The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

Article 2: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article 3: The following acts shall be punishable:

- a) Genocide;
- b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- e) Complicity in genocide.

Article 4: Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article 3 shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals. (United Nations, 1951, p. 280)

Stephen Harper articulated this irony best when he stated, “we have no history of colonialism” (O’Keefe, 2009, web) at the Gathering of 20 Summit in 2009. I offer this context to assert that there is nothing about Canada that is post-colonial, decolonial, or reconciled. In fact, Indigenous bodies are presently enduring genocidal colonial conditions and must utilize multiple prevention strategies to continue living.

Colonialism and its harms have been studied extensively by many founding Indigenous, Black, and People of Color scholars (Mbembe, 2003; Tuck and Yang, 2012; Ong, 2007), in a similar manner, Indigenous resistance movements (Smith, 2014; Tuck and Ree, 2013; Flowers, 2015) have been thoroughly documented. My thesis looks to contribute to Indigenous artistic and academic knowledge in the following ways: 1) To

unearth new colonial harms that are activated by neoliberalism, 2) To evoke practices of resistance within the horror genre presently being actuated by Indigenous peoples, and lastly 3) To echo the aforementioned strategies within my own art practice. As a young Anishinaabe artist and scholar, I offer this thesis as an embodied analysis of the colonial present within the Canadian state. The horror of colonialism, death, and the Canadian state-wide perpetuation of daily violence elicits rage and resistance within both my writing and art practice.

Bodies that Monetize is a Masters of Arts thesis comprised of a written document and solo art exhibition. The thesis document consists of three chapters: 1) Neoliberalism, Innocence, and Death, 2) Horror, Hauntings, Resentment, and lastly 3) Bodies that Monetize. Chapter one is concerned with outlining and mapping the present day terrain, that includes the Trans Canada Pipelines Limited (TCPL) Corporation and other extractive resource industries such as mining, nuclear waste storage, and hydro-dams. This chapter also explores “neoliberalism as an assemblage” (Aihwa, 2007, p. 3), boil water advisories as “death-worlds” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40), and the TCPL’s *Corporate Social Responsibility Report* as a “move to innocence” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 10). Chapters two and three examine practices of resistance within the horror genre from an Indigenous art, Indigenous academic, and community activist perspective. Colonialism and genocide are present conventions that my second and third chapter aim to depict. Chapter two examines the following: the horror genre presented by filmmaker Ariel Smith (2015), haunting as part of national consciousness found in media and ideology (Tuck & Ree, 2009), and finally resentment and love as a response to the mass amounts

of daily violence Indigenous women face (Flowers, 2015). Chapter three draws from Anishinaabe art, Indigenous art, media and social realities that threaten Indigenous youth and communities through news articles, and my thesis exhibition, *Bodies that Monetize*. Colonialism, harm(s), and bodies are three key words found throughout this thesis document. The following defines these terms.

Colonialism:

For analysis of colonialism I offer Tuck and Yang's (2012), *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*, Andrea Smith's (2012), *The Colonialism That is Settled and the Colonialism that Never Happened*, and Billy-Ray Belcourt's (2014) *Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re)locating Animality in Decolonial Thought*. The analysis of colonialism and its harms is a widely studied and diverse discourse with many stakeholders. Colonialism is not homogenous, its methods produce diverse affects, and the nation states that utilize colonialism target specific groups of people for their land's resources. For analysis within the context of the United States, Tuck and Yang state the concerns of settler colonialism best,

Within settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand). Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5)

Canada is undoubtedly a settler colonial nation state that works to produce secure settler futurities. Settler longevity is dependent on the wealth extracted from occupied land and the Indigenous bodies that are erased and oppressed. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue,

“the horizons of the settler colonial nation-state are total and require a mode of total appropriation of Indigenous life and land, rather than the selective expropriation of profit producing fragments” (p. 5). Tuck and Yang’s analysis of colonialism is the departure point for my analysis. Settler colonialism fundamentally requires Indigenous land for settler longevity and this thesis is concerned exclusively with how colonialism affects Indigenous bodies within the Canadian state. Settler-colonialism does not only affect Indigenous bodies it concomitantly affects Black bodies. I am compelled by Andrea Smith’s (2012) thesis, *The Colonialism That is Settled and the Colonialism that Never Happened*, to address how settler-colonialism is attached to both Indigenous genocide (as settled colonialism) and anti-Blackness (as the colonialism that never happened). Smith (2012) states, “Anti-Blackness, is not only constitutive of the settler nation of the United States, but is integral to the normalization of its continuance” (Smith, 2012, para. 6). Indeed, illustrating the colonial present requires an analysis of how settler-colonialism does not cause a singular harm, but rather, fundamentally operates as a multiplicity of harms. Movements such as Black Lives Matter have made it clear that the Canadian state utilizes anti-Blackness to ensure white settler longevity. Many Indigenous bodies² have noted that Indigenous and Black communities should come together to stop the harms colonialism continues to cause. On solidarity with communities who do not benefit from settler colonialism, Sherene Razack and Mary Louise Fellows (1998) have noted, “feminist political solidarity has failed because of what we identify as ‘competing

² Indigenous bodies within the Canadian state who publicly advocate against anti-Blackness and against state violence perpetuated on to Black bodies.

marginalities” (p. 1). These marginalities often fracture our abilities to see possibilities of solidarity and affect our communal abilities to see the State as a perpetrator of violence. When considering solidarity, halting the temptation to participate in competing marginalities is imperative for our communities to continue living amidst colonialism and genocide.

Billy-Ray Belcourt (2014) states, “settler-colonial life-ways are already Indigenous death-ways” (p. 2). Belcourt’s (2014) quote signals whose bodies have more value; whose bodies are more worthy of the life that can be offered and protected by the state. Thus, our violence(s) are distinct. Indigenous bodies are not part of the dominant white hegemony, in fact they are state regulated in legislation that is underwritten by the use of the etymological signifier Aboriginal; defined as *without origin, without presence, nonexistent*. Indigenous bodies face distinct colonial crimes based on Indigenous nationhood and land designation (or state sanctioned reserve land). These crimes cannot be quantified through colonial laws or colonial ideas of justice and often the crimes are absolved from being accountable to both a Canadian legal system and Indigenous law. An example of this is how the Canadian State avoids accountability for the genocide it has committed against Indigenous bodies. The harms the Canadian state causes to Indigenous bodies is motivated by wealth and power extracted from the land to ensure settler longevity, a continuing practice of white settlers since 1492. I offer this analysis as a mapping of how Canadian state colonialism perpetuates genocide through resource extraction and as a result causes serious harm to Indigenous bodies.

Harm(s):

This thesis focuses on harm(s) caused to Indigenous bodies. Harm is comprised of death, violence, and power. Death is actuated by settler colonial desires for land, prosperity, wealth, and longevity. Violence is actuated by settler colonial citizens of the Canadian state, who believe that Indigenous bodies “threaten” white settler futurity with their racial difference. Both death and violence comprise harm, and this harm is committed onto Indigenous bodies. The following articulates how harm engenders settler sovereignty within the Canadian state by connecting these three dialogues: 1) Foucault’s (1990) “Biopower”, 2) Mbembe’s (2003) “Necropower”, 3) and Berlant’s (2007) “Slow Death”. Research on death and violence begins with Foucault’s formulation of power. He articulates “Biopower” as “the [singular sovereign’s] right to make live” (p. 143). The regulation of Indigenous bodies is an integral objective of the Canadian state. The state requires harms to be caused to Indigenous bodies for the longevity of settler citizens. On the other hand, Mbembe (2003) articulates the insufficiency of biopower to discuss sovereignty’s multiplicity and asserts that, “the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not” (p. 26) is sovereignty’s primary and absolute objective. He further refutes Foucault’s analysis and adds to the dialogue on power by positing that “necropower” creates a spatial zone called “death-worlds” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40). Within colonial nation states Mbembe (2003) asserts that necropower manifests as necropolitics, described as “a project of autonomy and the achieving of agreement among a collectivity through communication and recognition. This is what differentiates it from war” (p. 13). Agreement among all authority figures (police, politicians, doctors,

educators, corporations³) is what distinguishes necropower from biopower (Foucault, 1990, p. 143).

Where Foucault states that racism is motivated by “protect[ing] the purity of the blood and the triumph of the race” (p. 149), Mbembe asserts the protection of the purity of blood is not only racism, but is death and death-worlds. In a necropolitical nation state such as Canada, the state produces wealth and power to ensure settler longevity by monetizing the fleshly configuration of Indigenous bodies. It does so through the creation of “death-worlds” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40) that confer on Indigenous bodies the status of the “living dead” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40) and creating profit from the bodies within death-worlds. Sovereignty in both Foucault’s and Mbembe’s theses are concerned with power. Berlant’s thesis (2007) follows the works of both Foucault and Mbembe, to examine the autonomy and sovereignty of the subject as an endemic slow death. Comprised within slow death are considerations of individual life and collective living. Berlant (2007) states, “the phrase slow death refers to the physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of people in that population that is very nearly a defining condition of their experience and historical existence” (p. 754). Berlant’s thesis temporally expands on Foucault’s biopower to include not only the regulatory control of subjects within a colonial state, but also their slow death. For subjects whose condition of life includes being depleted daily through regulatory control, Berlant asserts that “interruptive agency” (p. 759) examines the intricacies of “when [subjects] are not acting in a life-building

³ Corporations are treated better than Indigenous bodies as they have the status of “personhood” in the United States and Canada.

way” (p. 759) and how these can disrupt colonial state sovereignty, but these disruptions become irritants to the state and illicit a cycle of discipline and punishment (Foucault, 1990). Interruptive agency looks at “the continuity between pragmatic (life-making) and accretive (life building) gestures [of the settler colonial state] and tracks the relation of that activity to the attrition of the [Indigenous] subject” (p. 757). Berlant’s articulation of interruptive agency explains why Indigenous communities do not leave their sanctioned reserve lands (or ancestral lands). For Indigenous bodies, interruptive agency manifests as a refusal to move away from their lands to ensure the state does not control it, therefore disrupting the state’s ability to be totally sovereign. However, the slow death of remaining on poisoned land still produces power and sovereignty for the colonial state.

Bodies

This thesis argues that the state renders Indigenous bodies as vessels for profit and the production of sovereignty. In contrast, Indigenous communities do not think of themselves in this way. For example, Leanne Simpson’s (2013) song, *Leaks*, sings, “you are not a vessel for white-settler shame, even if I am the housing that failed you” (p. 1), thus signaling how Anishinaabe communities value one another even when the state insists we are valueless. On damage-centered research and the naming of Indigenous bodies as damaged, Eve Tuck (2009) states, “consider the long-term repercussions of *thinking of ourselves as broken*” (p. 409). Tuck’s (2009) thesis *Damage Centered Research*, urges readers and communities to consider the harms of damage-centered research that illustrates *ourselves* as broken, depleted, in deficit, and in perpetual states of pain and loss; Tuck describes this type of research as, “the finger shaped bruises on our

pulse points” (p. 412). Writing Indigenous communities in this way has become a hegemonic practice that has little use value to Indigenous communities in Canada’s settler colonial present. Damage centered research is done without a critical contextual analysis of the present harms of colonialism on the communities being researched. My analysis looks to examine the harms caused to Indigenous bodies, as opposed to studying the bodies as harmed.

While discussions about colonialism and harm focus on the violence settler longevity causes, this thesis is concomitantly concerned with Indigenous futurity. Indigenous futurities must look through the horror that is colonialism and navigate against the colonial genocidal campaigns launched by the state. Indigenous youth effortlessly find future in horror and in violence. Youth have this ability to see through horror as they are already the ancestors of future generations⁴. For Indigenous communities our futures look like they emerge through violence, wreckage, fires, and toxicity. This is a strength-based approach to combating colonial campaigns. To find the futurity in horror, unearthing new colonial-genocidal campaigns of the present is imperative. The following chapter looks to identify the TransCanada Pipelines Limited (TCPL) as a colonial campaign that causes present day genocide to Indigenous communities.

⁴ This knowledge was passed on to me orally by many Indigenous youths.

Chapter 1
Neoliberalism & Innocence & Death

If we view neoliberalism not as a system but a migratory set of practices, we would have to take into account how its flows articulate diverse situations and participate in mutating configurations of possibility.
-Ong Aihwa, 2007, p. 4.

There is a real danger in overemphasising the transformative capacity of Indigenous agency, particularly in the face of neoliberal processes and practices, without a concomitant analysis of the processes and techniques of neoliberalisation, and the negative impacts for Indigenous people.
-Howlett, et al., 2011, p. 320.

We build and operate the energy infrastructure North America needs.
-TransCanada Pipelines Limited, 2016

TransCanada Pipelines Limited

The TransCanada Pipelines Limited (TCPL) is a corporation that carries and delivers natural gas, liquids, and energy through its pipelines that extend like blood vessels all across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The three nation states deploy the TransCanada as a weaponized corporation to ensure that the wealth generated from both the land and Indigenous bodies gets rerouted back to the state. This transcontinental conquest for land (Fig. 1) asserts political, governmental, and cognitive control over the Indigenous people who inhabit North America.

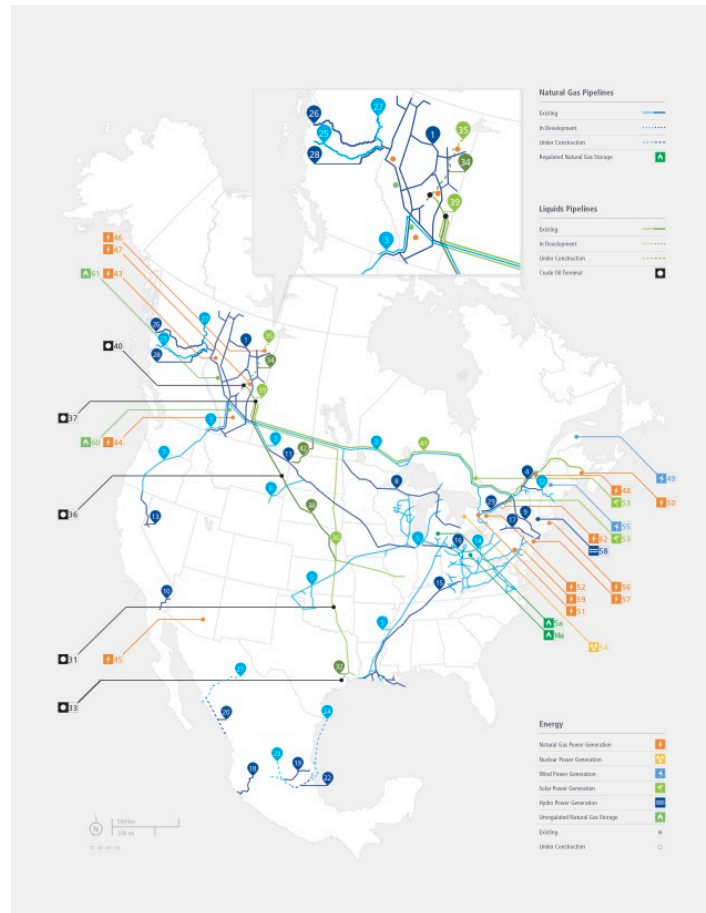


Figure 1. TransCanada Pipelines Limited, *Asset Map*, 2015

I will be examining the TransCanada Pipelines Limited Corporation as a whole, the TCPL mainline pipeline, and the TCPL's corporate social responsibility report. I will follow Ong Aihwa's (2007) analysis of neoliberal assemblage to contextualize the TCPL Corporation. For analysis of the mainline I will follow Mbembe's (2003) thesis to discuss boil water advisories as death-worlds. The social responsibility report compels me to draw from Tuck and Yang's (2012) theorization on moves to innocence. My analysis illustrates the actions the TCPL takes to avoid accountability. Furthermore, my analysis addresses how the TCPL lacks accountability for its leaks and explosions, its disruptions of Indigenous sovereignty, and how the TCPL harms Indigenous bodies.

Neoliberalism as Assemblage

To best illustrate the harms caused by TransCanada Pipelines Limited Corporation, Ong Aihwa's (2007) thesis *Neoliberalism as a Mobile Technology* offers a vital analysis of the "neoliberal assemblage" (p. 3). However, the geography and contexts of analyses differ; where Ong looks to China, I look to North America to illustrate how the TCPL causes harm to bodies through resource extraction. In the context of China, Ong (2007) states, "Neoliberalism's metaphor is knowledge" (p. 5), in the North American context, neoliberalism's metaphor is energy. Ong (2007) illustrates how the state conceptualizes neoliberalism as a "logic of governing that migrates and is selectively taken up in diverse political contexts" (p. 1); the "migratory set of practices" (p. 4) activated by neoliberal corporations engender "global assemblages" (p. 5), or in my analysis, transcontinental assemblages. The assemblages transcend national borders within the same continent in the pursuit of profit. This form of politics works at the level of the subject in a form of self-interest, as opposed to the level of the state, however, the power and capital made from neoliberal entrepreneurship is always rerouted back to the state. The TransCanada Pipelines Limited Corporation, as a neoliberal assemblage manifests as a conduit or extension of the Canadian state to monetize Indigenous land and benefit from Indigenous bodies.

The TransCanada Mainline is working to disrupt sovereignty for over 51 Indigenous communities (Kath, 2015, Will your community be affected, para. 4) out of 358 Indigenous communities across Canada by infiltrating state designated reserve land,

as it extends from Alberta to the East Coast⁵. Some Indigenous communities with distinct political contexts willingly comply with the neoliberal assemblage of the mainline, while others are forced to give consent through a range of coercive tactics. I assert this due to the reality that not all of these communities have given their consent to have pipelines intrude on their land or be placed near their main water sources. The TCPL has proven successful as a weapon against Indigenous sovereignty due to its ability to selectively migrate, be forced upon, and sometimes be taken up by diverse Indigenous nations as a means of capital survival; this is a tactic of the state's neoliberal process. The state reprieves the TCPL's harms because of the capital power the TCPL generates.

Boil Water Advisory as Death-World

The TCPL is not only a continental neoliberal assemblage utilized by the state to enact violence, but is consistently producing what Mbembe (2003) theorizes as “death-worlds” motivated by “necropower” (p. 40). In his thesis *Necropolitics*, Mbembe (2003) defines necropower as a form of violence enacted on Indigenous bodies and agreed upon by those in power to maintain their political and economic authority; in my thesis these take the guise of corporations that have the legal status of personhood for the production of power and execution of sovereignty for the Canadian state. For necropower to operate in the Canadian state, the government and the corporation must communicate to achieve agreement on how they will collaborate to produce Indigenous extinction, death, and harm. Mbembe (2003) defines necropolitics as, “the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not” (p. 26). The Canadian state and the

⁵ There are 617 Indigenous reserves in Canada.

TCPL Corporation agree that Indigenous bodies are disposable and do not matter. The state and the TCPL's biggest concern is the capital generated from their deaths, traumas, and pain caused by the TCPL's pipelines. About death-worlds Mbembe (2003) states:

The notion of necropolitics and necropower account[s] for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40).

The TransCanada Mainline is a weapon that produces death-worlds for Indigenous bodies. It does so through the creation of boil water advisories and contaminated water sources. How can bodies live without water? The commodification of water grants the state and its subjects the privilege of drinking clean water. As a result of this privilege, Indigenous bodies are forced into unlivable conditions – or in Mbembe's (2003) words, they “become the living dead” (p. 40), so that the state and its subjects can profit and live. This is violence and it is a move towards activating harm to Indigenous bodies. This method is part of the Canadian state's larger project to bring about Indigenous extinction and it continues as a process without being categorized as a crime(s).

In *Boiling Point*, Andrea Harden and Holly Levalliant of the Polaris Institute cite the Canadian Medical Association's report from 2008 that found “1,760 boil water advisories across Canada” (p. 6). Further, as of October 31, 2016, Health Canada reports that, “133 drinking water advisories affect 90 First Nations communities across Canada, excluding British Columbia” (Health Canada, 2016, para. 1). Lynne Fernandez, et. al. (2016) argue with respect to the TCPL Mainline's site specificity and the extension of the pipeline into the Energy East Pipeline that, “experts have noted, it is not a matter of

whether the pipeline will leak, but when ... the project has the potential to contaminate drinking water – including Winnipeg’s water source at Shoal Lake 40” (Fernandez, et. al., 2016, para. 7). As the policy critique states, the pipelines will leak and as a result of this leakage, will affect Canada’s drinking water and will make Shoal Lake 40’s water undrinkable. Neoliberalism is connected to the death-worlds in the same way each pipe within the larger pipeline is connected through its bolts and welding. Fernandez, et. al. state again, “if the allure of the pipeline is the prospect of job creation, then there are better ways to achieve this” (Fernandez et. al., 2016, para. 10) without forcing Indigenous bodies to live without access to drinkable water. In the context of Canada, Neoliberalism looks like Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hauling water at Shoal Lake 40 First Nation on the site of proposed Highway construction. CBC, The Canadian Press (2016) writes “Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hauled large jugs of drinking water and spoke with school children Thursday as he was immersed in the daily struggles of an isolated reserve that has been under a boil advisory for 19 years.” (Para. 1). The Canadian Press (2016) continues, “Trudeau spent seven hours on Shoal Lake 40 First Nation — a man-made island near the Manitoba-Ontario boundary, cut off from the mainland a century ago during construction of an aqueduct that carries fresh water to Winnipeg” (Para. 2).

Moves to Malice

When faced with the realities caused to Indigenous bodies by settler-capitalists who work in resource extraction, it is vital to resist making “*moves to innocence*” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3). These moves are defined by Tuck and Yang (2012) as, “attempts to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity” (p. 3). Tuck and Yang

(2012) state that innocence manifests itself through excuses, distractions, and diversions (p. 11) and instead they urge Indigenous communities and allies to “be more impatient with each other, [do not] accept gestures and half-steps, and to press for acts which unsettle innocence” (p. 11). In neoliberal processes, moves to innocence become a behavioural “ideological state apparatus” (ISA) (Althusser, 1970, p.111). Althusser (1970) writes that ISA’s are defined by “the fact that the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by *repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology” (p. 112). Moves to innocence repress Indigenous bodies through their guilt, complicity, and saviour complexes that are founded on the ideology that settlers are entitled to Indigenous land and by extension to Indigenous bodies. Althusser’s (1970) thesis illustrates how ideological state apparatuses are “secured by the exercise of state power” (p. 113). The Canadian state activates sovereign power by harming Indigenous bodies through moves to innocence as a state apparatus. A recent example of Canada’s state-sanctioned move to innocence is Senator Lynn Beyak’s comments about residential schools. Beyak says, “I think, if you go across Canada, there are shining examples from sea to sea of people who owe their lives to the schools” (CBC News Opinion, para. 3). My interest for this thesis is where moves to innocence manifest as an evasion of accountability to genocide committed against Indigenous people, in addition to the manifestations Tuck and Yang identify. As a manifestation of moves to innocence, evasion looks to address the insidious ways that tactics executed by white settlers cannot be seen on a binary scale of good and evil. Instead, evasion is escaping and avoiding accountability. When all of these moves to

innocence amalgamate and become an embodied ideology they become *moves to malice* working to produce harm to bodies.

Moves to innocence can be found throughout the TransCanada's *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)* report for 2015. In their chapter *Our Approach to Indigenous Relations* the TCPL states, "[we recognize] that many of our activities occur on traditional lands. We understand our projects have the potential to affect the lives of Indigenous people in very tangible ways" (CSR report, 2015, p. 41). Yes, the pipelines do in fact affect Indigenous bodies in explicit, direct, and real ways. The real harms to bodies include: undrinkable/contaminated/unusable water, the murder of animals through pipeline spills, harmful air pollutant emissions, higher rates of sexual assault at workman camps, and more. Archiving these harms is not the purpose of this paper, I am not writing this thesis to document every conceivable harm caused to Indigenous bodies. However, some direct examples include the Chippewas of the Thames⁶ and the Aamjiwnaang First Nation⁷, who are respectively resisting Enbridge's Line 9 Pipeline at great cost to the communities' mental and physical wellbeing, and facing high rates of miscarriages due to toxic air and water from the nearby petroleum industries emissions. I have learned about these realities through my embodied experience as an Anishinaabe young person who works in various Indigenous communities across Canada. My work at the Native Youth Sexual Health Network has lead me to become aware of these present harms in

⁶ See Huffington Post article, Mehta, D. "Chippewas of the Thames First Nation Taking Canada to court over Enbridge Line 9 Pipeline", 2016.

⁷ See *Fertile Ground: Exploring Reproduction in Canada* edited by Stephanie Paterson, 2014. Specifically, see chapter 13, "Indigenous Body as Contaminated Site? Examining Struggles for Reproductive Justice in Aamjiwnaang, p. 325-358.

conjunction with my own embodied knowledge and scholarship. In the same chapter under their section *Management Approach* (2015), the TCPL identifies their Indigenous relations group and states that this group oversees TransCanada's Indigenous relations programs. This group is comprised of four pillars that guide TCPL business across the continent. The four pillars include, "engaging communities, community legacy, people and contracting, and project participation" (CSR report, 2015, p. 43). This move to innocence is concerned with rescuing settler futurity by suggesting that they are also saving Indigenous peoples across the continent through engagement, participation, "development", and care. The innocence resides in the hypocrisy of suggesting that they are saving Indigenous bodies, when in fact their main objective as a corporation is the conquest of the land and the conquest of bodies; in other words, the monetizing of the first and the extinction of the second. Following the chapter, under *Project Participation*, the TCPL states, "when we enter into agreements with Indigenous communities the agreements are confidential, which further reflects our commitment to maintaining the trust of communities" (CSR report, 2015, p. 48). The TCPL says they are committed to maintaining the trust of Indigenous communities but how can they maintain trust while forcing communities to be silent about the harmful realities they face as a direct result of corporate dominance? Forced silence when entering into harmful agreements – when there are no other options - is reminiscent of the mass amount of sexual violence, disappearance, and violent murders that Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit, trans, gender nonconforming, and non-binary people (#MMIWG2ST) face on an ongoing present day basis. As Indigenous bodies we are forced to be silent about the systemic

sexual violence that happens to us, and to live through unlawful trials that do not consider us human. This part of the TCPL report is not a move to innocence but, is in fact a move to malice, it is a move towards activating Indigenous extinction, or as Tuck and Yang (2012) state, “This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation” (p. 5). Trust in these dynamics of relationships is nonexistent, better words would be manipulation, gas lighting, or emotional abuse⁸.

The following chapters look to address the second half of my thesis statement: Indigenous bodies must utilize multiple prevention strategies to continue living amidst the normalization of genocide. Chapter one addressed the genocidal colonial campaigns presently being launched by the Canadian state. Chapters two and three examine the prevention strategies Indigenous bodies and communities utilize to continue living amidst harm. Chapter 2, *Horror, Hauntings, and Resentment* addresses how Indigenous bodies resist and address the harms caused by neoliberal processes. The chapter favours theories within the horror genre and identifies how each theory becomes embodied resistance.

⁸ Gas lighting is the process of manipulating someone by psychological means into questioning their own sanity.

Chapter 2 Horror, Hauntings, and Resentment

Blood Thirsty Practices

Indigenous peoples have to undertake systematic approaches to their practices of resistance. For this chapter, I look to resistance practices within the Indigenous horror genre. I also insert memes from my exhibition, *Bodies that Monetize* to illustrate strategies of resistance. These practices include: uncensored expression through utilizing the horror genre (Smith, 2015), hauntings (Tuck and Ree, 2013), and refusal (Flowers, 2015). Ariel Smith (2015) urges Indigenous filmmakers to utilize the horror genre to show a non-Indigenous audience how truly terrifying the harms of colonialism can be. Tuck and Ree (2013) look to the genre of horror films produced by white makers to examine how these works contribute to the erasure of Indigenous bodies. Flower's (2015) take on refusal looks to examine how white settler allies reduce Indigenous women's resistance strategies to movements of "love", and in refusal articulates how resentment is what is actually beneath gestures of decolonial love. I look to these practices of resistance as an appropriate response to the ways in which the Canadian state utilizes resource extractive industries to cause bodily and mental harm, without calling this harm an act of genocide. Using practices of resistance within the horror genre is both an aesthetic decision and a method for my writing and art making.

Terror

In *Indigenous Cinema and the Horrific Reality of Colonial Violence*, Ariel Smith (2015) emphasizes and urges Indigenous artists to utilize the genre of horror. On the genre's impact she states, "by forcing the subconscious fears of audiences to the surface,

horror cinema evokes reactions, psychologically and physically: this is the genre's power" (Smith, 2015, para. 4). When the horror genre is utilized by Indigenous makers it can become a direct way to force white-settlers to acknowledge their guilt and complicity in the violence perpetuated by the nation state. It can become a reverse "profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p. 5) for white-settlers by disrupting their privileges of comfort and innocence as they continue to benefit from stolen Indigenous land. About this disruption, Smith (2015) states, "Indigenous filmmakers [have] the opportunity to unleash dark, gruesome symbolism, and to not censor or sanitize our allegorical representations of the repugnant, violent abomination that is colonization" (para. 4). Smith urges artists and filmmakers to resist the silencing that often happens to their artistic expressions and simultaneously strengthen them. She urges people to go into the depths of what is precisely terrifying about colonization, identify it, and show the terror that is currently imposed on our bodies. This method assists in the creation of an Indigenous horror archive through art making and as a result, assists in reducing an emotional abuse tactic implanted by the colonial government called *gaslighting*. On *gaslighting's* harm, Kate Abramson (2014) states, "gaslighting is aimed at getting another not to take herself seriously as an interlocutor" (p. 2), it is aimed, instead, at making an individual person question their sense of memory, self, and grounding. Smith (2015) states that this is "vicious macabre torture" (para. 5). I concur. This is malice. Smith (2015) states, "the horror, the terror: it's all around us. Terror and violence are in the very foundation that colonial states are built upon and colonial violence continues to manifest today against Indigenous bodies" (para. 5).

Ghosting Colonialism

On Indigenous bodies in films within the horror genre, Tuck and C. Ree (2013) offer their thesis, *A Glossary of Haunting*. It is a common present colonial practice to murder the only Indigenous, Black, and People of Color (IBPOC) characters within a horror film (akin to the reality of violence IBPOC peoples face every single day). On the character development of an IBPOC person and the killing of them Tuck and Ree (2013) borrow a literary term, “making-killable” (p. 649). As such, Eve Tuck and C. Ree state (2013), “making-killable is a way of making sub-human, of transforming beings into masses that can be produced and destroyed, another form of empire’s mass production. Making-killable turns people and animals into always already objects ready for violence, genocide, and slavery” (p. 649). The IBPOC character moves the storyline along in horror films just enough to secure a white-settler futurity and assert that their bodies are killable objects, again similar to present day colonialisms⁹.

Where Smith (2015) is concerned with identifying the horrors of colonialism as a method to resist them, Tuck and Ree are interested in the spaces remaining after the terror has temporarily ended; they are interested in what becomes of these desecrated spaces and butchered bodies. They assert that these spaces and bodies become Hauntings and Ghosts. Haunting is the method through which Indigenous bodies can access the uncensored allegorical representations of their realities whilst living in/through/beyond colonialism. Ghosting is the method through which we can imagine our ancestors still

⁹ One example of Indigenous bodies as killable objects used to secure white-settler futurity is *Suicide Squad*, 2016, Directed by Tim Miller, where Adam Beach dies first.

working to protect our bodies from colonial harms. Further, they state, “The United States is permanently haunted by the slavery, genocide, and violence entwined in its first, present and future days” (Tuck & Ree, 2013, p. 642), illustrating the abundance of both hauntings and ghosts. On haunting’s ability, Tuck and Ree (2013) state, “Haunting is both acute and general’, individuals are haunted, but so are societies” (p. 642), they continue: “haunting lies precisely in its refusal to stop. Alien (to settlers) and generative for (ghosts), this refusal to stop is its own form of resolving. For ghosts, the haunting is the resolving, it is not what needs to be resolved” (Tuck & Ree, 2013, p. 642). Not only does haunting refuse to stop, but settlers refuse to stop making our bodies killable. Thus, the method through which bodies can optimally resist white settler colonialism’s violence is through otherworldly configurations of ghosts and hauntings; terrorizing the white settler subconscious where our bodies and kin can do what they are unable to do within the fleshly configurations of bodies. They can best get revenge, accountability, and justice through haunting spaces of blatant murder and conquest, such as: The Wounded Knee massacre (see Figure 2), the war of 1812, the extinction of the Beothuk, the buffalo slaughter of the 1870s (see Figure 3), and much more. The haunting is a site of resistance and ghosting is its method, Tuck and Ree (2013) state, “Future ghost: I am a future ghost. I am getting ready for my haunting” (p. 648). By writing this thesis and making my art, I am getting ready to join my ancestors in continuously fighting against colonialism and the harms it has and continues to cause my loved ones.



Figure 2. Wounded Knee Massacre, George E. Trager, January 1891, Photograph.



Figure 3. Bison Skull Pile, Unknown, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, 1892.

Refusing Colonial Harm

Rachel Flowers (2015) takes note of divergent practices of Indigenous dissent in her thesis *Refusal to Forgive: indigenous women's love and rage*. She starts her analysis by asserting a gender-based examination of Indigenous women's activism and solidarity movements. She describes how Indigenous resistance movements led by women are archived by white society as movements of *love*, when in fact behind this fierce leadership is resentment, rage, and refusal. Flower's (2015) thesis investigates the complicated kinship between white feminist movements and Indigenous feminist movements and addresses (mis)recognition as, "the settler desire for recognition by the colonized" (p. 33). Flower's (2015) example of this is, "in the city, in the classroom, or at a protest, there is always a settler seeking my recognition. She wants me to recognize that she is distanced from the others. She is innocent. Through her look, the Other wants me to see that she is a good settler, an ally. But my only thought is: *Don't smile at me*" (p. 38). The need for recognition causes harm to potential relationships between Indigenous peoples and everyone else. Flowers (2015) asserts that one part of the problem is the divergent discourses within feminism and a second part is the "continuous failure to name white male violence as a root cause" (p. 39) of the systemic harms caused to Indigenous women's bodies. She continues, "this public discourse reinforces the idea that indigenous women and girls simply need to stop engaging in risky behaviour rather than address the structural and ideological conditions that allow and depoliticize violence against indigenous women" (Flowers, 2015, p. 39). Misnaming Indigenous women's movements as discourses of love depoliticizes the rampantly high rates of violence Indigenous

women face. Instead, she urges Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, Trans, queer peoples to utilize their resentment to access spaces of “limitless love” (Flowers, 2015, p. 40).

Flowers (2015) states, “make no mistake, we are angry. Our resistance is written in both rage and love ... we affirm our love for self as a technique of collective self-recognition. However, our love often does not extend into the colonial sector; our love is reserved for one another” (Flowers, 2015, p. 40). For Flowers, the love must extend inward and individuals must refuse to let love extend into colonial bodies and discourses. Flowers (2015) continues, “Indigenous women’s love is not a given; it is the result of tremendous desire to survive...it is because of our profound love for one another and our lands that we are full or rage. Anger and Love are not always mutually exclusive emotions” (p. 40).

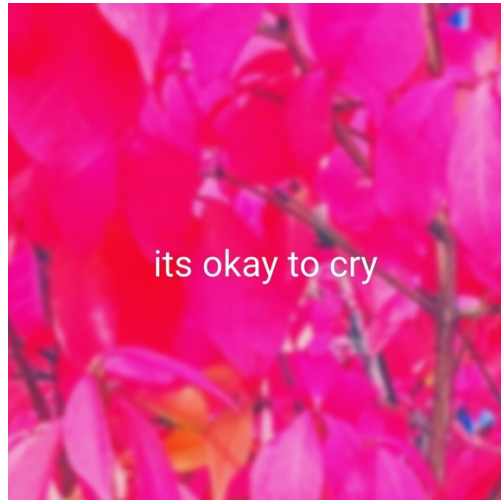


Figure 4. Fallon Simard, *Cry*, 2016, Meme.

The polarizing momentum behind binaries of anger and love provide Indigenous women with the energy (Fig. 4) to start movements such as Idle No More, March for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, *Kimiwaan* magazine, and *Red Rising* magazine.

Indigenous women use anger fully attached to love as a method to fiercely combat the

daily harms caused to their bodies by reclaiming and inventing new spaces to reconfigure how and where their bodies can exist. It operates as a form of *insurgent* research, what Adam Gaundry (2011) describes as, “community-based action that targets the demise of colonial interference within our lives and communities” (p. 114). Love and Rage operate as two polarizing elements to become a singular method with which to combat colonial interference.



Figure 5. Fallon Simard, *PTSD*, 2017, Meme.

In examining a select few resistance practices within the horror genre that work to address the harms of colonialism, my next chapter looks to echo how as an artist I can also address these harms (Fig. 5). Chapter three focuses on art-based approaches to address the horrors and harms of colonialism. It examines Anishinaabe art praxis, my past work as an Anishinaabe artist, my thesis exhibition, *Bodies that Monetize*, and futures without harm.

Chapter 3 “Bodies that Monetize”

Anishinaabe Art Praxis

In the Anishinaabe art anthology *Before and After the Horizon: Anishinaabe Artists of the Great Lakes*, curators Gerald McMaster and David Penney (2013) ask the question, “how can [Anishinaabe artists] reveal to us not only the extent of their country but also Anishinaabe perspectives on and experiences of it?” (p. 7). Penney and McMaster contextualize this question within Samuel de Champlain’s 1615 arrival on the eastern shore of Lake Huron’s Georgian Bay, where he asks a similar question of the Anishinaabe peoples who greeted him on his arrival (Penney and McMaster, 2013, p. 7). Following McMaster and Penney’s curatorial question, chapters one and two answer the ‘extent’ and ‘perspective’ portion of the question by illustrating the colonial present and giving explicit examples of the current harms Anishinaabe peoples are facing. This chapter answers the experiences of Anishinaabe country through the use of artistic praxis.



Figure 6. Bonnie Devine, *Letter to William*, 2008, National Museum of the American Indian.

Following the anthology, Gerald McMaster's (2013) chapter titled, *The Anishinaabe Artistic Consciousness* gives historical context to the generations of Anishinaabe artists emerging from the early 1960s. His chapter examines each generation highlighting canonical Anishinaabe work and consciousness. McMaster cites Bonnie Devine's work and states that her practice like many Anishinaabe artists, "draws inspiration from traditional principles and sees the question of land, in a contemporary sense, as central to their practice" (McMaster, 2013, p. 93). However, Devine uniquely "asks new questions so that others may be encouraged to remember, or to shake off the mental cobwebs that provide the keys to this new (old) understanding" (McMaster, 2013, p. 94). Her diptych *Letter to William*, 2008 (Fig. 4) reads, "I have come to listen, believing the rock is filled with stories. I have come to read, believing the rock is a text" (McMaster, 2013, p. 94). For Devine the art must illustrate how the land is text, thus breaking down the colonial idea that the written word is the only text worthy of reading, archiving, and protecting. *Letter to William*, asks the viewer to consider the land as pedagogy, as a theoretical point of departure for asking deeper questions. Asking deeper questions includes asking about the Land's health and wellbeing. My still from *Mercury Poisoning* (Fig. 7), illustrates how a pristine beachline is polluted with mercury.



Figure 7. Fallon Simard, *Mercury Poisoning* (Still), 2016, Mp4.

Anishinaabe consciousness is a broader field of knowledge with many stakeholders adding to the conversation; in *Land as Pedagogy* Leanne Simpson (2013) similarly asks to, “learn *from* the land and *with* the land” (p. 7). Further, Simpson states, “the land, aki, is both context and process” (Simpson, 2013, p. 7), it produces Anishinaabe citizens. In Devine’s work, we learn both Anishinaabe context and process, and we learn the land as both text and story; the land as living. While land is central to Anishinaabe art, my work begins with the understanding that many Indigenous peoples have been dislocated from their lands and have been forcefully relocated to territories that are not their own.

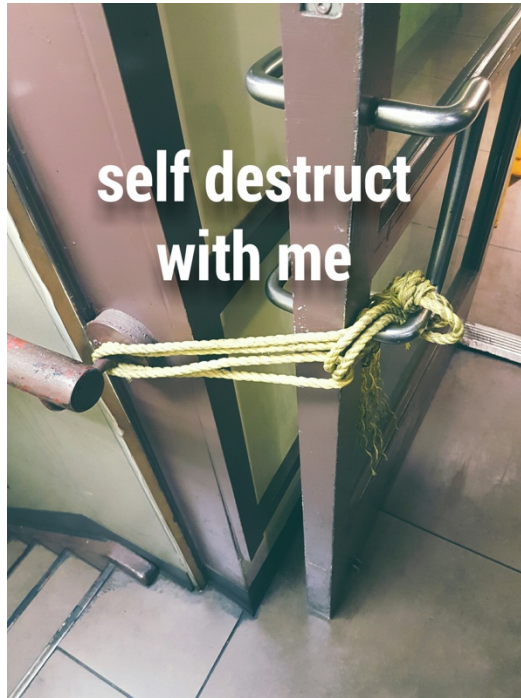


Figure 8. Fallon Simard, *Self Destruct*, 2016, Meme.

As a 25-year-old Anishinaabe growing up in rural areas, I have been hyper-aware of the ways in which colonialism motivates racism, sexism, and violence. While I did not have the vocabulary or understanding to describe these complex processes, I could feel their affects on my body. Undeniably there is an explicit relationship between poor mental health and a disconnection to land. Anishinaabe consciousness in 2017 will continue to ask questions of land, but differ in its artistic execution and perspective. It will also differ in the understandings of how land, colonialism, and capitalism affect our relationships to land. I posit that each Indigenous artist's work is always situated within contexts and discussions of land, regardless of how (in)directly the work engages with landscape itself. An example of this is Dayna Danger's photography, specifically her work titled, *Adrienne* from her *Disrupt Archive* series.



Figure 9. Dayna Danger, *Adrienne*, 2016, Photograph.

Danger's photograph references land through the large bold black line. The black line visually and metaphorically illustrates shapes like tar sands, oil spills, and defiled rivers. The black colour in the BDSM leather fetish mask and hair takes the shape of a river basin. Dayna's work further references land through the use of intricate beadwork on a BDSM leather fetish mask. Indigenous beadwork draws its principal inspiration from the land and plants¹⁰. Danger's work is also explicitly about Indigenous sexuality and a

¹⁰ See *Native North American Art* by Janet Catherine Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips for further information on Indigenous beadwork and the way in which beadwork is a signal of connection to land.

sovereign erotic, as noted by Lindsay Nixon (2016) in *Visual Cultures of Indigenous Futurisms*. Nixon states,

Indigenous peoples' sexualities are frequently equated to histories of sexual violence, commodified and institutionalized by settlers seeking to dominate, discipline, and control Indigenous bodies. Danger's use of the leather BDSM mask references the kink community as a space to explore complicated dynamics to sexuality, gender, and power in a consensual and feminist manner. Danger engages with her own medicine, beading, in order to mark kink as a space for healing colonial trauma (Nixon, 2016, para. 21).

Danger's photography work utilizes the BDSM community and non-conforming sexualities as a mode of healing sexual violence induced by colonial ideologies of conquest and terra nullius¹¹. Her work is inherently referring back to the land by addressing the sexual violence motivated by the colonization of land.

Since birth my mother ensured I had numerous attachments to Anishinaabe cosmology, spirituality, and culture; this was a difficult task considering the assimilatory attempts made by the Canadian state through regulatory actions such as the Indian Act¹² and Residential Schools. As a result of my mother's prompt, I was actively aware of the violence that is attached to keeping Anishinaabe culture alive and the violence that comes with simply being Anishinaabe (or Indigenous). I saw and continue to see many of the ways colonialism directly harms bodies; what I saw in my daily reality, I rarely saw reflected in education or media. The systemic violence of colonialism, erasure, and bribed silence is what informs my art practice, this violence would not be here if the land was not colonized, occupied, and extracted from. These motivating forces inspired my works

¹¹ Terra Nullius is defined as, "nobody's land".

¹² The Indian Act, 1876, is comprised of both the Gradual Civilization Act, 1857, and the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869.

Continuous Resistance Remix 2013 and my thesis exhibition, *Bodies that Monetize 2016*; the materiality of these works are to be discussed in the forthcoming sections.



Figure 10. Fallon Simard, *Womb* (Still), 2016, Mp4.

Hito Steyerl's (2009), *In Defense of the Poor Image* offers an important framework for the motivating forces that inspire my work, and contextualizes my art practice within a digital realm of poorness and poor images. On defining the poor image, Steyerl states, "poor images show the rare, the obvious, and the unbelievable – that is, if we can still manage to decipher it" (Steyerl, 2009, p. 1). Steyerl compartmentalizes the qualities of the poor image into: low resolutions, resurrection, privatization and piracy, imperfect cinema, and further demands that the artist reveal their position with respect to the commodification of cinema. About video works Steyerl states, "these works have become travelers in a digital no-man's land, constantly shifting their resolution and format, speed and media, sometimes even losing names and credits along the way" (Steyerl, 2009, p. 8). This is useful for my practice, as my video-work asks people to challenge their ideas of history, justice, accountability, and complicity in the violence that

happens to Indigenous bodies. In the Canadian state the white-washed media portrayal of Indigenous bodies is one of deficit, stereotype, and vanishing. The media prioritizes reports on these ideologies to contribute to erasing Indigenous bodies. My work does the opposite by unearthing and reproducing media and images that depict resistance, matriarchy, and the history of Canada as it is told by Indigenous bodies, not the Canadian media.

Continuous Resistance Remix

In my five-minute video *Continuous Resistance Remix* (see Fig. 6 and Fig. 7) I use over thirty YouTube videos on topics of Idle No More, residential schools, forest fires caused by pipeline spills, and Indigenous youth-led resistance to Fracking in Elsipogtog, a Mi'kmaq First Nation. I first created an archive of videos on these issues, then I extracted from the YouTube site itself, saved the reduced file size Mp4 videos, and remixed the audio and video components.



Figure 11. Fallon Simard, *Continuous Resistance Remix* (Still), 2013, Mp4.

The videos themselves reveal the rare and intangible by showing police/military brutality at every moment of the activist marches, real life interviews of residential school

survivors through the audio, and the violence enacted on the land through fires. While the video shows realities of Indigenous people's everyday lives (police brutality etc.) it also reveals a new type of solidarity within the diversity of Indigenous communities across Canada. The Idle No More movement was uniquely started and led by many Indigenous women¹³. My Grandmother led, organized, and continued the Idle No More roundtables in my community. Thankfully, I found her image in some footage uploaded to YouTube by my Couchiching¹⁴ community members where she stands on a trailer next to a drum. Her image in this video is very important to me, as it speaks to larger erased histories of matriarchy, and functions as a way to recognize women's labour.



Fig 12. Fallon Simard, *Continuous Resistance Remix* (Still), 2013, Mp4.

¹³ For more information on the Idle No More movements that happened across Canada see, *The Winter We Danced*, by the Kino-Nda-Niimii Collective (editor), published in March 2014.

¹⁴ Couchiching translates in Anishinaabe to where the sandbars in the lake are located.

Bodies that Monetize Exhibition

My thesis exhibition, *Bodies that Monetize* illustrates how the harms identified in Chapter one affect bodies in cognitive ways without directly referencing how these harms are explicitly connected to the body. Rather than seeing how the harms of resource extraction, settler-colonialism, and neoliberalism are imprinted on the body, my images reveal a distance from these systems. I call these images memes because they transmit information on the cognitive realities of living with colonial harms everyday, while not directly having contact or being closely connected to them. The still images or memes illustrate how bodies are disconnected and removed from the land due to the insidious methods of settler-colonialism, but, infer how in their distance, the systems of harm still cause cognitive injury in contrast to the proximity of the pipelines.



Figure 13. Fallon Simard, *Grief*, 2017, Meme.

The exhibition is filled with eight large-scale still memes and two videos with no audio. The works were presented at Blank Canvas Gallery in Toronto. Some key works in

the exhibition include: *Disassociated*, *Anxiety*, *Calm*, *Mercury Poisoning*, and *TerraNullius5000*. Before analyzing the works, I will discuss the materiality, context, key memes, and heart knowledge as Anishinaabe theory. I will elaborate on the memes first and the video works second (Fig. 14-19).

Materiality

The memes function within Steyerl's idea of the poor image due to their low resolutions and out of focus post-production editions. The series of images are taken from my phone, edited on my phone, the Jpegs are extracted from my phone and transferred into Photoshop for print. About low resolutions and focus, Steyerl (2009) states, "Focus is identified as a class position, a position of ease and privilege, while being out of focus lowers one's value as an image" (p. 1). The images also function within the broad internet phenomenon of Memes defined by UrbanDictionary as, "2: a pervasive thought or thought pattern that replicates itself via cultural means" (2003, para. 2.). The pervasive thought pattern within my exhibition is poor mental health in Indigenous communities and how this is produced by settler colonial violence. My exhibition is concerned with bringing these issues to the surface and creating dialogue about them. In *Goth Shakira: Montreal's High Priestess of Dank Feminist Memery*, Merray Gerges (2016) describes Instagram author Goth Shakira's memes as a "majority of image macros [that] use a concise, pithy caption that purports to be applicable to anyone regardless of their race/class/gender" (Gerges, 2016, para. 2). My memes access the macros of Indigenous consciousness by creating dialogue on mental health through the didactics and the texts within the memes themselves. The texts on my printed memes are applicable to anyone

regardless of their race/class/gender. The work in my exhibition functions as both meme and image; accessing Anishinaabe consciousness and issues of mental health.

Context

To this day there remain 71 long-term¹⁵ (over a year long) drinking water advisories in Indigenous reserve communities. Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett pledged to have all long-term advisories lifted within five years, stating that it is the government's "hard target" (McDiramid, 2017, para. 6). As I have illustrated in Chapter one, boil water advisories create death-worlds and slowly activate Indigenous extinction. In addition to these realities, young Indigenous people are in a constant state of suicide crisis, and are not receiving the care or support they need at the communal, provincial, or federal level. I had the privilege of realizing how a disconnection from land causes cognitive and bodily harm through my own embodied knowledge and labour in Indigenous youth communities¹⁶. I noticed that many of the Indigenous youth I worked with wanted to participate in land-based activities to remedy their mental health afflictions. This knowledge was solidified by my work at the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN). As an Indigenous youth organization NYSHN's values include:

¹⁵ See CBC article, *Indigenous Water Solutions: 2 steps forward, 1 step backward*, February 15, 2017 by Margo McDiramid. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/first-nations-drinking-water-advisories-1.3982999?cmp=abfb>

¹⁶ This is privilege because it is information not accessible within academic institutions. It is privilege because most Indigenous folks do not have the ability to access this knowledge without participating in Indigenous youth communities with access to rigorously intelligent matriarchs. It differs from 'class privilege' by asserting that knowledge and information is also privilege.

cultural safety, reproductive justice, media arts justice, being more than “at risk” and “vulnerable”, self-determination, support not stigma, and support not shame (The Native Youth Sexual Health Network, para. 1-6). To illustrate the connection between boil water advisories and poor mental health NYSHN states, “Connected to Body, Connected to Land; meaning what happens to the land and the environment(s) around us (good, bad and everything) also happens to our bodies and communities” (The Native Youth Sexual Health Network, para. 6). This means that when boil water advisories happen to a community, they happen to the bodies in the community. When a lake is poisoned by mercury, that poisoning happens to the bodies that depend on the lake as a main water source.

The Canadian state can support Indigenous youth mental health in a way that restores Indigenous autonomy and doesn't promote dependence. Member of Parliament, Charlie Angus states, “just because you don't know how many kids are falling through the cracks, doesn't mean you're not responsible for them falling through the cracks” (Chin, 2017, para. 8)¹⁷. This context demands that my work function outside positions of ease and privilege; my work must be accessible to young people as a way to empower them with language around their mental health issues. This can function as my own method with which to combat and harm-reduce the violence that happens to my community and myself. A recommendation I have to remedy these realities is for the

¹⁷ See Huffington Post article, *Indigenous Youth Suicide Crisis Solution is 'Not Rocket Science': Angus*, January 13, 2017 by Jessica Chin. Retrieved from: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/01/13/first-nations-suicide-crisis_n_14155122.html

Canadian state to give Indigenous youth a connection to land by giving Indigenous youth their land back.

Key Memes

I have selected the memes, *Disassociated*, *Anxiety*, and *Calm* out of eight images within my exhibition because they articulate the macros of mental health for Indigenous bodies. I think many Indigenous people who have mental health afflictions caused by sexual assault and suicide attempts experience the symptoms of disassociation and anxiety on a daily basis. The selection of these images contributes to reducing the stigma of these symptoms as they are responses to traumas, including assault and suicide attempts. According to a study completed by the Globe and Mail, police in Ontario find one in five sexual assault reports to be unfounded; meaning the police believe the assault did not happen (Robyn Doolittle, *Unfounded*, para. 20). While my memes do not directly reference sexual assault, they do offer language to access the macros of symptoms of trauma. Making my memes unspecific to which trauma they access is part of the healing capacity of memes, this makes my work accessible to anyone regardless of their race/class/gender.

Disassociation and anxiety are very real and natural physical responses to trauma: these symptoms do not need to be pathologized or stigmatized. The more people who recognize, acknowledge, and accept disassociation and anxiety in their peers and themselves the easier it will be to remedy these intense feelings. *Calm*, suggests that there are places of comfort and safety that people with trauma can turn to, to create, to find, and in which to make a home. Places of calm only need support. Support encapsulates safety

and respect. I have learned how to navigate these mental health afflictions with the care of my colleagues at NYSHN, who state, “support not stigma; means that we address issues from places of support and meeting people where they are at, instead of approaches that may blame/shame people based on what happens with their bodies or for harms that may come to their lives” (Native Youth Sexual Health Network, para. 6) The matriarchs at NYSHN cared for me in ways that no one else ever took the time to.

Heart Knowledge

At *Cutting Copper: Indigenous Resurgent Practice*, Wanda Nanibush (2016) gave a lecture on Indigenous performance. Her framework for contextualizing performative case studies was the Anishinaabe-specific theory of heart knowledge. On the post-Cartesian split offered by Rene Descartes, Nanibush (2016) states, “The heart knowledge is what connects mind, body, and spirit. Trauma breaks those relationships but builds new pathways. Art is very much a process of heart knowledge” (14:00). My memes work to convey the heart knowledge I have as an Anishinaabe young person, it functions in places of trauma, and suggests that there are pathways of hope that come out of mental health afflictions. For Nanibush, good art is “work [that comes] from a place of intuition, a place not so conscious, and that comes from the body. The body in ceremony to the relationship to the body in politics, to relationship of the body in artistic creation” (15:07). Nanibush (2016) indicates that “places not so conscious” (15:07), or in my interpretation, places of mental health afflictions such as disassociation, anxiety, panic, and destructive behaviours inform good art works. I concur. These “places [are] not so conscious” (Nanibush, 2016, 15:07) and are a separate form of consciousness from that of settler visions. Settler

consciousness functions in the fantasy that the harms caused to Indigenous bodies are justified because of how these harms secure white settler futurity. Indigenous consciousness functions within the horrible violence of colonialism as a lived reality. As Nanibush (2016) indicates “a place not so conscious” (15:07) is the crucible within which disassociation, anxiety, panic, and suicidal thoughts amalgamate. My memes offer language to identify these symptoms through their didactics and layered text. All of them are pictures I have taken while experiencing anxiety, disassociation, self-destructive behaviours, and suicidal thoughts. The memes are archives of my survival.



Figure 14. Fallon Simard, *Disassociated*, 2016, Meme.

Disassociated suggests that there is not a homogenous state of being disassociated; this state does not have to look like heavy breathing and hair pulls; it can look like doing basic

self-care practices such as eating while still being disassociated. The meme itself is a picture I took from my phone while eating McDonalds. The degraded colours of the food and singular bite of the McChicken is reflective of the poorness of care most people with mental health afflictions receive. As Berlant (2007) states, resistance can be an act of maintenance, meaning that the maintenance of eating good food just needs to be done whether you are disassociated or not (p. 759). Similarly, disassociation itself can be an act of maintenance and self-protection, as when one disassociates from present harms.



Figure 15. Fallon Simard, Anxiety, 2017, Meme.

Anxiety indicates that shortness of breath or lack of breath is a symptom of panic. While the text reads, "I cant breathe", it also reminds viewers that breathing can be a beneficial treatment, which is important because people forget to breathe when they are panicking.

The text in *Anxiety* also makes reference to the Black Lives Matter movement¹⁸ and suggests the insidious ways that the state suffocates both Indigenous and Black bodies. The image itself is a crumpled up McDonalds take out bag. I took this image on my phone while visiting my family and driving around my home in Fort Frances, Ontario. The meme references the rural Indigenous tradition of getting McDonalds drive thru meals. After I finished eating the food all the while driving my Mom's boyfriend's Honda, I took a picture of the bag on top of the steering wheel. Both *Anxiety* and *Disassociated* document acts of ineffective maintenance while tracking the activity of my body to the attrition of my body through the memes post-production out of focus editions (Berlant, 2007, p. 759). Corporations such as the TransCanada Pipelines Limited and McDonalds do not care about the Indigenous bodies they harm. Most mental health afflictions are brought on by varying kinds of trauma; through this thesis project I hope I have highlighted a few of these traumas while still maintaining a sense of hope for the future. I have evoked hope through hauntings and horror as a means through which the strength and courage of our ancestors can emerge and by accessing haunting as a practice of resistance to create permanent homes for our ancestors. There is hope in horror. Another example of hope is in my meme *Calm*, the hand-written text reads, "a place for you to be calm".

¹⁸ "I can't Breathe" is what Eric Garner said eleven times while Police held him down and eventually murdered him.

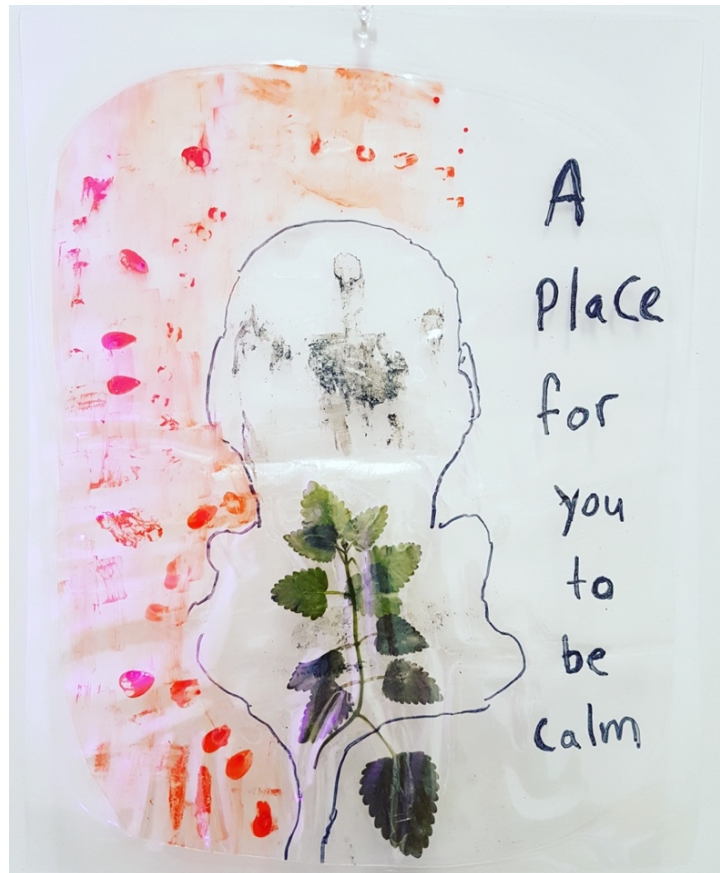


Figure 16. Fallon Simard, *Calm*, 2016, Meme.

I created the image by first laminating a mint leaf, cutting out a shape of it, laminating the mint leaf sheet again, and adding black, orange, and purple color forms with marker. The double clear laminated sheets evoke a material metaphor of layered mental health afflictions, with the leaf – a connection to land - being held tightly in the middle of the meme. This material metaphor suggests that a place for you to be calm can be evoked within the self, beneath the layers of cognitive afflictions. *Calm* suggests that there are places for people who experience symptoms of mental health afflictions where they can feel safe and free from the traumas that haunt them, even if it is just for a few minutes.

These spaces can take on multiple forms including the physical, cognitive, relational, and spiritual. These spaces can be accessed through art and a connection to land.

Refusing Silence

Language and text is imperative to this exhibition. Text is a focal point to each meme within the exhibition space. The mental health language disseminated through text offers another method for bodies to claim their voice(s) back through the creation of memes, which are meant to address the ways in which settler-colonialism forces Indigenous bodies to be silent. Dylan Miner (2013) notes, “since having our tongues literally or figuratively removed is only one of the many scars that Native people must perpetually bear, Anishinaabe citizens often internalize the blame for this systematic linguicide, disregarding the practicality of both telling *stories* and speaking *the language* in the process” (Miner, 2013, p. 319). While making memes may seem trivial, it is a step towards addressing the harms caused by colonialism so as to get a native tongue back, or in other words to institute an Indigenous voice. The memes are acts of maintenance but also activations of my own voice. For future exhibitions, I hope to use Indigenous languages as a more beneficial communicator. Using the text in memes as a dissemination device is also reminiscent of what Miner (2013) identifies as “Stories as Mshkiki”¹⁹ (p. 320) and what many Indigenous academics and activists identify as Story Telling; Miner describes storytelling as, “the craft of conversation and dialogue, which operates within a storytelling tradition to heal the wound of historic, contemporary, and future de-tongueings” (Miner, 2013, p. 320). The language utilized in my memes functions as a

¹⁹ Mshkiki in Anishinaabemowin is defined as medicine.

form of re-tongueing; telling stories and sharing experiences of how I have navigated various mental health afflictions. An example of storytelling in my exhibition is my meme, *Abandonment*, 2016.



Figure 17. Fallon Simard, *Abandonment*, 2016, Meme.

The text on this image reads, “dont leave me”. This meme speaks to abandonment as it relates to trauma and systemic issues of Indigenous child welfare. Indigenous children make up 48% of the population of children in the child welfare system or foster care (Yukselir & Annett, 2016, para. 2). *Abandonment* looks to address and offer language to the systemic abandonment Indigenous children have had to and continue to face. Miner (2013) states, “by reclaiming our own stories and locating them within our own sovereignty, these narratives are the mshkiki we so intimately long for and so desperately need” (p. 334). Through identifying abandonment as a current issue facing Indigenous

children, my meme offers a pathway to locate how language can identify abandonment and speak to it as a method of healing.

My memes also function not just as methods of storytelling but also as glyphs. Karyn Recollet emphasizes decolonial love and *glyphing* as gestures that propel Indigenous peoples into the future. She states, that “glyphing” (p. 129) – as an active archiving or imprinting on space, can be a way to align the past with the present and holding that space into the future. About the gestural effectiveness of glyphing Recollet states,

the glyph can be a useful as a way to kiss the urban space, imprinting a form of radical decolonial love that presents itself in all of its flaws, inconsistencies, imperfections, ruptures, and pauses. This is a form of love that is unfinished and indeterminate ... in its surfaces and surges it finds strengths and solitude with in its own impermanence. The spatial tag’s impermanent nature strengthens an Indigenous futurity through radically asserting that our past is in our future. (Recollet, 2015, p. 141)

My memes act as a useful way to kiss the spaces that are around me by imprinting text on to the spaces. The glyph offers Indigenous futurities by resurging the Indigenous past into the present. The memes can be thought of as glyphs because of how the memes function in impermanent spaces of social media and gallery exhibitions. These glyphs (memes) are impermanent in two ways: 1) Indigenous mental health might not always be this poor into the future, 2) the changing nature of the digital and physical spaces memes can occupy. Recollet states that glyphs are an embodied form of decolonial love carrying us into the future, and that, “decolonial love requires a shift from conceiving of love as a holding space of permanence, or a vehicle of containment; towards an embrace of it’s molten lava-like properties, as it flows within and through our bodies to connect with others” (p.

141). As we continue to glyph as Indigenous bodies, we continue to offer decolonial love to the spaces we inhabit and the people who pass these spaces. Indigenous futures without harm suggest looking to impermanent spaces of love and embodying the experiences they tell.

Mental Health and Land



Figure 18. Fallon Simard, *TerraNullius5000* (Still), 2016, Mp4.

My videos in the exhibition are *TerraNullius5000* (Fig. 11) and *Mercury Poisoning*. Both of these videos function within the realm of poorness through the images' low resolution. The videos are single still images that my mother took on her cell phone and uploaded to Facebook. She captured these still images in northwestern Ontario in the Treaty #3 area. I saved the still image from her Facebook page. In a similar process to my memes the videos were put through post-production editions with color and focus changes. The videos are meant to create a link to mental health afflictions and land and to draw attention to how disconnection from land creates poor mental health.



Figure 19. Fallon Simard, *Bodies that Monetize*, Installation Image, 2017.

The videos assert that Indigenous bodies need their land back in order to be healthy. TerraNullius5000 illustrates how the land was considered nobody's land available for unlimited resource extraction throughout time. It is meant to allow the land to tell its own story. 'Mercury Poisoning' directly discusses how paper mills and hydro dams cause the water to become toxic. The mercury-poisoned lake illustrated in my video illustrates how the poisoning in the lake affects the air and Indigenous bodies.

Closing: Futures without Harm

Futures without harm are important to speak, nurture, and imagine. These futures offer Indigenous communities both a cognitive and dreamy space to be free from harms, to exist without punishment, and to live without terror. There is no singular future without harm; the futurities must be as diverse as Indigenous nations are. For example, I will offer two pathways that Indigenous artists, activists, and academics have paved for upcoming generations. These are not the only two pathways for Indigenous futurity, however, they are my favourites because of how they address disconnection from land as the harm and the point of departure for imagining Indigenous futures. Tuck and Yang's pathway to futurity includes addressing the academic institutions that appropriate Indigenous survival strategies and offer contexts for decolonization. Leanne Simpson and Edna Maniwabi offer a pathway that directly engages with Indigenous youth with traditional Anishinaabe culture and language; they speak to Anishinaabe creation stories and futurities.

For Tuck and Yang, decolonization is inherent and essential for Indigenous futurities. Tuck and Yang's (2012) article raises vital concerns for Indigenous futurity by asking, 'what does decolonization want?' (p. 2). They accurately describe how decolonization is not a metaphor, but rather, decolonization is "the native futures, the lives to be lived once the settler nation is gone – [they] are the unwritten possibilities made possible by an ethic of incommensurability ... decolonization is not an "and". It is an elsewhere" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p. 36). For Tuck and Yang, decolonization is where Indigenous futurities lay because these futures are not housed in buildings or spaces that terrorize, harm, or punish Indigenous bodies. Instead, these futures are envisioned without

settler harm. Tuck and Yang identify the harms the settler nation causes as an appropriation of decolonization, as the taking of our Indigenous futures for settler use, or settler futurity. They state,

decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot be easily grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks. The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonization is yet another form of settler appropriation. When we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3)

Decolonization – and futurities from an Indigenous perspective will always be about unsettling the land and abolishing the structures that govern it – not “decolonizing” them. This pathway illuminates how the removal of the settler nation is a requisite of Indigenous futurities. Tuck and Yang’s audience comprises academics within the institution, meaning that their idea of futurity remains in that space and only reaches that audience. Although the decolonization website is open-source, it still only allows a certain audience to access this thought.

Leanne Simpson and Edna Manitowabi offer a contrasting take on Indigenous futurity. Simpson and Manitowabi (2013) are both Anishinaabe and work directly with Anishinaabe youth. Simpson is concerned with cognitive imperialism and its detrimental affects on Indigenous youth. To address this harm she asks what if our collective focus could be “dismantling colonialism while simultaneously building a renaissance of *mino bimaadiziwin*²⁰?” (p. 280). To do this, Simpson invited Edna Manitowabi to retell the

²⁰ Mino Bimaadiziwin in Anishinaabe is translated as, “the good life”.

Seven Fires of Ojibway Creation story through a lens of Grandmother Teachings. Manitowabi's processes include teaching young girls about the Seven Fires of Creation and stating what she has learned from her experience, "through these teachings, [young Anishinaabe women] will come to understand the Earth as themselves" (p. 284). While Manitowabi told Simpson the Seven Fires story, she also explained how there is an opportunity to "insert ourselves into these stories" (p. 288). Simpson states, "we assume responsibilities that are not necessarily bestowed upon us by the collective, but that we take on according to our own gifts, abilities, and affiliations" (p. 288). For Simpson, when this story is told to Indigenous youth and the youth are told to insert themselves into the story, they are placed "in the absence of want" (p. 288). When Indigenous youth are inserted into these stories it becomes their own creation story and tells them that, "another world is possible, and that [they] have the tools to vision it and bring it into reality" (p. 289). This futurity addresses harm at a young age by instituting Mino Bimaadiziwin as a life way and giving young people their own creation stories to become a part of the land. For Indigenous youth this is a necessary remedy for mental and physical harms by giving them a connection to land at an early age. This future realizes how "it is personal [and] we were created out of love" (p. 288).

This thesis does not look to suggest that the state should be fixing or saving Indigenous youth through monetary values – although this would address the basic human rights of Indigenous peoples, such as housing, clean water, access to land and food. Instead, my thesis looks to address how the Canadian state continues to use Indigenous bodies as materials for neoliberal processes to gain wealth. I have identified how the

TransCanada Pipelines Limited Corporation is a major perpetrator of colonial violence to Indigenous bodies through its mainline pipeline and corporate social responsibility report. These harms are the colonial tactics of the Canadian state. To address these harms I have utilized Indigenous methodologies within the horror genre. Lastly, I have illustrated how using memes can address these harms, and how memes can function as a dissemination tool of remedies for mental health afflictions. I hope this illustrates the complexities of both anger and hope that my art illustrates. To fully address the harms of colonialism is to put an end to capitalist structures that believe Indigenous bodies threaten their futurity. The future is scary. But it is less scary when Indigenous youth make art, poetry, and love.

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