

**WRITING BETWEEN WORLDS: AN AUDIENCING OF
LEANNE SIMPSON'S STORIES AS THEORY FOR
DECOLONISING ACADEMIC WRITING PRACTICES**

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School of Geographical Sciences

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Abstract:

Leanne Simpson (2017a) is a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg independent scholar, writer and activist who demands the decolonisation of Turtle Island (North America) through her storytelling. In this paper, I respond to calls for academic decolonisation that goes beyond metaphor to enact practical change. To do so, I employ 'pluritopic hermeneutics' (Mignolo, 2013) and 'expanded listening' (Gallagher, et al., 2017) to audience four stories in Leanne Simpson's (2013) collection, *Islands of Decolonial Love*. My audiencing seeks to investigate whether seminal theorisations of (de)coloniality resonate with Simpson's decolonial perspective, and by considering her stories as theory, I explore how academics can decolonise their writing practices. Through a sustained engagement with Blaser's (2013a; 2013b) reconfiguration of ontologies as the enactment of worlding practices, I argue that Simpson's stories portray coloniality as an ontological project which attempts to destroy conflicting worldings. Through her writing, Simpson regenerates worlds in which Indigenous resurgence gains strength. The presence of this pluriversality demands academics to be attentive to their writing practices such that they do not contribute to colonial enclosure, and instead make space for the flourishing of divergent worlds. Through my own poetic exploration of writing between worlds, I conclude that decolonising academic writing practices requires continual dialogue with those who embody decolonial perspectives, such that the worlds written into being enact structural changes beyond the page.

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1. Introduction

“Why do we listen to the stories of others, if not to hear? And having heard, would we not desire to respond? Simply to listen is to be drawn into a world of ethical encounter, to hear is to witness; to witness is to become entangled.” – Rose (2004, p. 213)

‘Coloniality’, ‘decoloniality’ and ‘decolonisation’ were not words in my vocabulary before I took Michelle Daigle and Juanita Sundberg’s (2017) class, comprising an effort to decolonise the University of British Columbia’s Geography department. I was encouraged to consider how, as a white, female, British student, I am entangled in institutional power relations which place me in a position of relative privilege. I recall feeling uneasy when I considered how for me, and many of my Canadian classmates, the presence of settler colonialism in the country had become naturalised and depoliticised. Daigle and Sundberg’s (*ibid.*) course focused on decolonial movements which de-centre coloniality and Eurocentricity to achieve precisely that: to unsettle the academy.

Coloniality encapsulates the webs of power founded upon racial constructions of difference that have become objectified; such differential categories continue to dictate social relations extending beyond race to justify “Eurocentered capitalist colonial/modern world power” (Quijano, 2007, p. 171). Postcolonial scholarship endeavours to analyse the heterogeneity of coloniality by understanding its historical configurations, contemporary continuation, as well as efforts to resist it (Bhabha, 1994; Quijano, 2007; Gregory, 2004; Mbembe, 2008). However, much postcolonial scholarship maintains coloniality as the defining point of analysis, remains predominately theoretical, and retains the privilege of Western intellectuals who continue to exclude Indigenous¹ peoples from research (Braun, 2002; Legg, 2007; Smith, 1999). Decolonial theorist Walter D. Mignolo (2014) argues that the prefix ‘post’ suggests a current moment that surpasses coloniality; whereas, the ‘de’ of decoloniality recognises a multitude of temporalities that defy the hegemony of coloniality. Mignolo (*ibid.*, p. 21) asserts that “there is no outside of coloniality from where coloniality can be observed.” However, I will show that Leanne Simpson’s storytelling creates decolonial worlds which invoke non-linear temporalities to reinvigorate indigeneity as that which exceeds the colonial present (Simpson, 2011; Martineau, 2015).

Simpson (2017a) is a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg writer, storyteller, activist and independent scholar residing in Peterborough, Ontario. Her writing emerges from within her indigeneity as

¹ I refer to Indigenous peoples and indigeneity, similarly with the West and Europe, to be succinct rather than deny complexity and heterogeneity.

Nishnaabeg, but she lives on the landmass Turtle Island² which has been occupied by settler colonialism for over four hundred years (Simpson, 2011; Coulthard, 2014). Simpson's (2017a) Radical Resurgence Project (RRP) rejects how the dispossession of settler colonialism pervades the present disguised as the politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2014). These politics are dedicated to absolving state responsibility for the past, and create a present seemingly devoid of coloniality by absorbing Indigenous peoples and their rights into pre-existing juridical-political frameworks (*ibid.*; Simpson, 2011). Simpson and Coulthard (2014) recognise that refusing state recognition may impede gaining political rights and consequently, many Indigenous peoples may not condone their refusal. However, Coulthard and Simpson (2016) claim that co-existence defined by coloniality amounts to 'auto-genocide' because their indigeneity is simplified to a "quaint cultural difference" (Simpson, 2017a, p. 25). The RRP exposes the inability of coloniality to enclose Indigenous ways of living by cultivating indigeneity as that which exceeds colonial assimilation, and regenerating this excess as "a disruptive site of decolonial potentiality" (Simpson 2017a; Martineau, 2015, p. 68). Simpson (2013; 2017a) tells stories grounded in Nishnaabeg intelligence to invigorate this potentiality, to dismantle the notion that there is one world saturated with coloniality, and to create a present that would be recognised by her Ancestors.

In this paper, I attend to Sium and Ritskes' (2013, p. VIII) provocation: "How might we read [Indigenous] stories as instructional, or as informing our own decolonizing practices?" I chose this focus because British postcolonial geographers have been criticised for deflecting from the coloniality of their institutional locations, and directing their postcolonial critique elsewhere (Gilmartin & Berg, 2007). This silences the voices of those who embody the Indigenous and decolonial scholarship that demands praxical attention to academic coloniality (Todd, 2016; Esson, et al., 2017).

I focus my study on Simpson's (2013) collection of short stories, *Islands of Decolonial Love*, which has been poignantly reviewed by Lee Maracle, author of *I am woman: A native perspective on sociology and feminism*, as having the potential to provoke such change:

"[This] is the sort of book I have been looking for all my life – the kind of book that is going to make me a good writer, a good listener, a good citizen – it is going to wake up everything that is brilliant in everyone that reads it." – Maracle (2013, n.p.)

I audience³ four of Simpson's (2013) stories to explore whether theorisations of (de)coloniality resonate with her work; and following this, I approach her stories as theory for how geographers can decolonise their writing practices. To embark on this, my audiencing mobilises two methods: pluritopic

² The term Simpson (2011) uses to refer to North America.

³ This term encapsulates my methods of analysis.

hermeneutics to address the plurality of cosmological perspectives involved in reading decolonial texts (Mignolo, 2013); and ‘expanded listening’ to engage with the elements of song interwoven in Simpson’s stories (Gallagher, et al., 2017). These methods will be elaborated upon in Chapter 3.

Mignolo (2009) defines cosmology as a ‘super-frame’ within which knowledge production occurs; I extend it to encapsulate Blaser’s (2013a) theorisation of ontologies⁴ as stories that continually enact co-emergent and divergent worlds into existence. I situate my audiencing within political ontology: “a problem space” in which worlds are enacted; a space of multiplicity which defies notions of *universality* and demonstrates *pluriversality* (Blaser, 2013a, p. 24; 2013b). My audiencing delineates how Simpson’s (2013) stories refuse coloniality by regenerating worlds in which she reclaims Indigenous bodies, ancestral land, and indigeneity within academia. Simpson’s (2013) re-worlding demonstrates that coloniality is an ontological project that attempts to destroy her cosmological worldings; to which she responds by mobilising writing as a material practice to create “little islands of decolonial space” (Simpson, 2017b, n.p.). These worlds implicate the audience beyond what is written on the page: Indigenous peoples are encouraged to reclaim indigeneity on their own terms, which I argue has implications within academia. I claim that Simpson’s stories command academics, especially geographers as ‘earth-writers’ or, as I suggest ‘world-writers’, to write worlds into being that make space for pluriversality, rather than reinforcing coloniality.

Simpson’s demands shape my research trajectory such that I respond by presenting my own poetic exploration of writing between worlds in Chapter 5. My poetry self-critically considers the limitations of my audiencing as points of departure for future research. I conclude that writing is a material practice that is highly significant because, by writing words on the page, scholars perform storied worlds into being that reverberate past the walls of the university. Nevertheless, I have found that this argument risks perpetuating metaphorical decolonisation (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Thus, decolonising academic writing practices, and engaging in plurality, requires active connections between worlds that are embodied beyond the page.

⁴ I use the terms cosmology and ontology interchangeably.

2. Literature Review

I begin by delineating the theoretical framework of (de)coloniality, which I extend through political ontology before discussing engagements with these theorisations within Geography. This is followed by a review of geographical and postcolonial literary scholarship, from which I turn towards literature addressing Geography as 'earth-writing'.

2.1 (De)Coloniality and the Production of Knowledge

Scholars are acutely aware that knowledge production does not occur in a vacuum; an awareness which originates from the critique of the chasm between subjects and objects constructed to claim that knowledge is ahistorical and objective (Rose, 2004; Quijano, 2007). Knowledge production has been reframed as involving inter-subjective and historically contingent processes (Quijano, 2007). Most notably, Foucault (1977) theorises relations of knowledge production as inextricably connected to power; legitimate knowledge is determined by the powerful and the production of knowledge exerts power, either by reinforcing hegemony or resisting it. A plethora of literature addresses power-knowledge relations, for example Donna Haraway's (1988) 'situated knowledges' within feminist scholarship, and Edward Said's (1979) postcolonial analysis of 'Orientalism'.

I will focus on knowledge production within (de)coloniality. Mignolo (2002; 2009) conceptualises 'colonial difference' as the illusion of objective difference between the Self and Other that operates through coloniality. However, colonial difference is not absolute because it inter-subjectively constructs the Self as the norm from which the Other deviates and is deficient (Mignolo, 2002). Colonial difference, through its body- and geo-politics, attempts to eliminate the Other from legitimate knowledge production (Mignolo, 2009; Rose, 2004). Body-politics class certain bodies as 'less human' and of 'inferior' intelligence in comparison to the Western 'rational', Self (Mignolo, 2009). The geo-politics of knowledge dictate legitimacy according to where knowledge is created and by whom; thus, Western knowledge is portrayed as universal which naturalises colonial difference (Mignolo, 2002). The resultant subjectification can be internalised by those classed as Other, who in doing so reinforce their subjugated position within coloniality (Fanon, 1991; Coulthard, 2014).

Mignolo, in an interview with Gaztambide-Fernandez (2014), argues that previous scholarship critiquing knowledge production assumes the existence of a world that can be represented. Whereas, employing decoloniality is to think with 'enunciations' through which the world is continually reinvented (*ibid.*). Thus, decoloniality aims to unbind legitimate knowledge production from solely the

Western 'locus of enunciation' (Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2009). This involves 'epistemic disobedience', similar to Quijano's (2007) 'de-linking', which occurs when a previously constructed Other assumes authority over a locus of enunciation. For example, 'border epistemologies' are disobedient in that they refuse to reconcile with the colonial demands of the Self by legitimising knowledge on their own terms (Mignolo, 2011). This de-universalises the Western locus of enunciation from which colonial difference is derived (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009). Decoloniality shifts the geo-politics of knowledge to other loci of enunciation, and is enacted by the bodies of those who refuse to be Othered by colonial difference (Mignolo, 2009). This reveals 'epistemic pluri-versality': epistemologies from different loci of enunciation which have previously been silenced by their entanglement in the "coloniality of power" (Mignolo, 2002, p. 96; 2013). Mignolo implicitly suggests the need to think beyond epistemology to ontology, this extension will be explored in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

2.2 (De)Coloniality, Modernity and Nature

Rose (2004) explains how coloniality is rooted in teleological temporalities which elevate current and future temporal moments as transcendent of the past; an imaginary which is spatialised by portraying the West as the modern future to which all those outside of those spaces aspire to (Quijano, 2007). Modernity's foundations are concretised in the "triumphal narrative of civilization, progress, and development", a paradigm which is dependent upon, and sustained by, coloniality (Mignolo, 2014, p. 27). Quijano (2007) demonstrates the relationship between coloniality and modernity by explaining how those discriminated against within modernity are those who were typically, or continue to be, categorised as Other by coloniality. Modernity is a state of development which, through the incentive of power and wealth, its proponents have attempted to construe as a universal, rational condition to aim for (*ibid.*; Soudien, 2013). Vázquez (2012) argues modernity is dependent on a 'double negation': the hegemony of coloniality encloses other ways of living and denies this exclusion through universalisation (Mignolo, 2002).

Modernity is also dependent upon dividing nature and culture which facilitates the externalisation of nature for cultural use (Braun, 2002). Plumwood (2008, p. 69) argues that the prioritisation of humans over nature objectifies the nonhuman, reducing it "to a passive neutral surface for the inscription of human projects." This distinction is critiqued by posthumanist scholarship: Latour (1996) argues that humans are not autonomously acting on an external nature because the materiality of the social is constituted through relations with nonhumans. Whatmore (2002) and Haraway (2006) draw upon Latour's work to demonstrate that humans are embedded within entanglements of 'more-than-human' relations. Sundberg (2014) notices how posthumanist scholarship claims that the dichotomy between nature and culture needs to be universally

deconstructed; a claim that both Sundberg (*ibid.*) and Jackson (2014) argue does not resonate with many Indigenous cosmologies. This is demonstrated by Viveiros de Castro's (1998, p. 471) work which contrasts the nature-culture dichotomy with Amerindian perspectivism - the notion "of an original state of undifferentiation between humans and animals." Thus, cosmologies designate ontological significance to existents heterogeneously (Povinelli, et al., 2017). Those which diverge from modernity's narrative are 'trans-modern' histories: "the space of the borderlands, the space where exteriority becomes visible" (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009, p. 19). According to Mignolo (2014), decoloniality and 'trans-modernity' negotiate the plurality of temporalities which defy modernity's teleological, universal narrative.

2.3 Political Ontology, Cosmopolitics and the Pluriverse

The theoretical framework delineated leads to the following discussion of plurality which moves beyond epistemology to ontology. I focus on Blaser's (2013a, p. 23) reconfiguration of ontology as "a way of worlding" which I consider to be an extension of Mignolo's epistemological enunciations. Blaser (*ibid.*, p.24) refers to ontologies as the performative storying of worlds that are always in a state of material becoming, stories which go beyond discourse to embody "the reality that they narrate."

Escobar (2007) identifies a contemporary 'ontological turn' in the social sciences which has arisen due to the crisis of, what Blaser (2013b, p. 554) calls, "the modern myth". Blaser's (2013a) argument builds upon Latour (1999) who demonstrates that the nature-culture dichotomy exists within the divide between 'modern' and 'nonmodern' cultures. Modern cultures have epistemologies that place nature as subordinate to culture, whilst the nonmodern are denied epistemological authority such that they solely have cultural beliefs (Blaser, 2013a). This myth depends upon teleological temporalities which dictate that nature and the nonmodern are superseded by culture and the modern (*ibid.*). Epistemology and politics are also separated within this temporal continuum, a division which constructs nature and the nonmodern as the "object of policies of improvement" (De la Cadena, 2010, p. 345). This hegemonic story is plausible due to divorcing epistemology from ontology: scientific epistemology claims to know, and attempts to master, a singular, objective reality (Grosz, et al., 2017; Blaser, 2013b). For the modern story to hold, ontologies which contradict modernity's universality are absorbed as cultures that have diverged from an external reality (Blaser, 2013b, p. 555). Povinelli (2016, p. 27) demonstrates how this absorption manifests as the politics of recognition, a tactic to govern ontological difference which relegates divergent "analytics of existents" to cultural, mythical spaces (Blaser, 2013a).

Blaser (2013b) and De la Cadena (2010) argue that the hegemony of the modern story is partially cracking due to the faltering of technological control over nature as evidenced by ecological

crises, and the advancement of Indigenous movements that defy the governance of ontological alterity. Blaser (2013b, p. 549) argues that claiming nothing exists outside of modernity takes colonial encounters as “the single most important constitutive factor” in shaping worlds. This argument reveals a contradiction in Mignolo’s (2014) work: he simultaneously claims that coloniality saturates the present such that there is nothing external to it, yet border epistemologies and ‘trans-modern’ spaces exist. Blaser (2013b) argues that whilst coloniality and modernity cannot be ignored, political ontology focuses on that which exceeds those encounters: the other ways of worlding which modernity cannot contain (De la Cadena, 2014).

Political ontology addresses how ontological plurality cannot be confined within the politics of modernity, and instead necessitates cosmopolitics: “the terrain where multiple and diverging worlds encounter each other and the possibility...of composing mutually enlivening rather than destructive relations” (Blaser, 2013a, p. 21; Stengers, 2005). Blaser (2013a) invokes the pluriverse as the space of cosmopolitics, in which worlds are entangled and co-emergent without a universal principle to dictate multiplicity. Thus, political ontology does not tell a story of an external reality in which there are multiple worlds; rather, it investigates the cosmopolitical connections between worlds: who is storying, how stories are told, and taking seriously conflicts that emerge (*ibid.*). Conflicts between worlds are ontological when they disagree about that which exists; such conflicts arise when people either do not wish to live in or with existing worlds (*ibid.*; Blaser, 2013b). Worldings should not be declared as inherently right or wrong (De la Cadena, 2014; 2010); rather, alliances between worlds can be used to assess conflicting worldings (Collard, et al., 2015). De la Cadena (2010, p. 360) acknowledges that cosmopolitics are utopian, an “idiotic project” which does not necessitate action but is politically provocative. However, I suggest that considering decoloniality in tandem with political ontology necessitates that pluriversality does not remain a thought-project, and is instead actively embodied.

2.4 Plurality and Decoloniality in Geography

My review focuses on literature which necessitates thinking with pluriversal ontologies to decolonise Geography, and academia more broadly. However, plurality is not limited to this, as is demonstrated by the essays in *Contested Ecologies: Dialogues in the South on Nature and Knowledge*, which cover the cosmopolitical spaces of environmental management, climate change and ecological conservation (Green, 2013).

Radcliffe (2017a) argues that the coloniality of Geography as a Western academic discipline is starkly apparent: from the demographic of students and pedagogical methods employed, to the reading lists distributed and the content of journal publications. However, geographers are asking:

“How do we come to know that which is rendered outside the knowable world?”: where the ‘knowable world’ has previously been situated within one locus of enunciation (Hunt, 2014, p. 31; Mignolo, 2002). Chakrabarty (2000, p. 43) also calls for the provincialisation of Western knowledges because whilst Enlightenment rationality is not “unreasonable in itself”, attention needs to be paid to how its universalisation has contributed to “the history of modernity”. Robinson (2003) argues similarly, to challenge parochial geographical knowledge necessitates moving beyond location as defining valuable knowledge in order to make space for the plurality of knowledges. This requires listening to, and learning with, other cosmologies to decolonise the discipline (Shaw, et al., 2006). Hunt and Holmes (2015) argue that Indigenous cosmologies provide a fertile starting point because, as Armstrong (2005, p. 13) claims, they offer “a complex holistic view of interconnectedness that demands our responsibility to everything we are connected to.” However, incorporating Indigenous knowledges does not necessarily decolonise research. Previous scholarly engagement has constructed indigeneity as being closer to nature, as valuable in its timelessness, and as cultural beliefs to support scientific enquiry (Radcliffe, 2017b; Soudien, 2013; Simpson, 2004). Hunt (2014) denotes this ‘epistemic violence’, because it divorces epistemology from ontology, which Todd (2016) argues silences the living embodiment and practice of Indigenous cosmologies.

Todd (*ibid.*) asserts that for the ontological turn to avoid perpetuating coloniality, ontologies must be addressed from the perspectives of those who embody them, on their own terms. Mignolo (2014, p. 22) clarifies decoloniality as ontological because ‘trans-modern’ decolonial thinking is praxical, necessarily involving “the decolonization of the idea of being”. However, he continues to assert that decoloniality is not a physical process; contrary to Todd (2016), who argues that decoloniality requires academic decolonisation to exceed theory and enact structural changes that have material manifestations. Audre Lorde’s (2003) metaphor, paraphrased by Jazeel (2017, p. 335), explains how radical this de-linking must be: “the dismantling of modernity’s power structures, will never be achieved from within its own theoretical orthodoxies and infrastructures.” Thus, Todd (2016) argues that decolonising academia involves citational, methodological, and pedagogical practices which involve Indigenous scholarship on their own terms, in such a way that compliance in coloniality is not denied but confronted. In line with Donald’s (2009, p. 6) ‘ethical relationality’, Todd (2016, p. 19) advocates openness to incommensurable difference by heeding those “speaking alongside us”. Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 31) reiterate the necessity of incommensurability as it contests the hegemony of the colonial present; arguably, it requires thinking with political ontology and cosmopolitics. Radcliffe (2017a, p. 330) asserts that decolonial geographies must approach “diverse knowledges on a horizontal relation” to investigate the resultant juxtapositions. I argue, in accordance with Sundberg (2014), that such engagements must occur on the terms of Indigenous peoples to begin to enact a

pluriverse where cosmologies are not ordered within hierarchical webs of power. It is important that pluriversality does not remain metaphorical, rather it is led by those who embody decolonial perspectives to practically dismantle academic coloniality (Esson, et al., 2017; Noxolo, 2017a; 2017b).

2.5 Literary Geographies

Decolonial geographies are diverse in their engagements with Indigenous ontologies; my dissertation focuses on Indigenous storytelling and thus, a grounding in literary geographies is necessary.

Literary geographies take two general approaches: “texts in space and place, and place and space in literary texts” (Noxolo & Preziuso, 2013, p. 166). The former understands texts as materially and dynamically situated in cultural contexts, and geographers use the latter to analyse the textual portrayal of landscapes and people (*ibid.*). Literary geographers understand writing to be an embodied practice which is brought to life through ‘text events’: the unique interaction between the author, reader, text and context of reception (Noxolo, 2009; Hones, 2008). The ‘cultural turn’ transformed Geography’s treatment of stories into sites “of thinking through the workings of power, knowledge, and geographical formations” (Cameron, 2012, p. 574). Lorimer (2003) focuses on ‘small stories’ to generate thicker historical geographies; Barnes (2011) invokes life stories to highlight the value of contextualising events with narratives; whilst Gibson-Graham (2008) argue that the creativity of stories can bring about new, ‘alternative worlds’ (Cameron, 2012).

Postcolonial scholars have critiqued literature infused with coloniality, including texts residing in colonial archives, as well as literature written by those deemed ‘postcolonial’ (McLeod, 2013; Noxolo & Preziuso, 2013). This scholarship has been critiqued because it benefits from popularising postcolonial literature and can take for granted how, for some, writing is a mode of survival that exerts the author’s “power to signify” (McLeod, 2013; Lorde, 2012; Haraway, 2006, p. 111). However, Spivak’s (1999) ‘transnational literacy’ is a useful point of departure for considering transformative postcolonial readings. In *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak (2003) argues that academic disciplines should allow themselves to be subject to the Other’s gaze through ‘attentive readings’ of texts written by non-Western authors. This is not a multicultural literacy practice which fetishises Others; rather, it involves a decentralisation of the reader’s knowledge; recognising one’s complicity in coloniality; and thus, epistemic privilege becomes the reader’s loss (Kruk, 2004; Spivak, 1999; 1988). Noxolo and Preziuso (2013, p. 173) argue, through a close engagement with Spivak, that postcolonial fiction explores future possibilities whilst “voicing a range of different perspectives”; thus, ‘text events’ are multivocal with the potential to disrupt normative disciplinary frameworks (*ibid.*; Phillips, 2011). Arguably, Spivak retains distinctions between the Self and Other. I will elaborate upon pluritopic

hermeneutic readings of decolonial texts which avoid remaining within articulations of colonial difference in the following chapter (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009).

Storytelling is a core component of many Indigenous cosmologies and manifests as a highly nuanced practice due to being grounded in place-based practices (Sium & Ritskes, 2013). These stories have often been relegated to mythical spaces due to articulating ontological assertions which conflict with modernity's assumed universality (Lee, 2013; Watson & Huntington, 2008; Martineau & Ritskes, 2014). Indigenous storytelling does not simply involve historical accounts of sacred stories, but constitutes intergenerational memory; meaning is generated cyclically through the re-telling and re-formulation of stories that interweave past, present and future temporalities (Rintoul, 1993; Smith, 1999). Stories are embodied theory that sustain indigeneity and can disrupt coloniality when mobilised as decolonial theory (Sium & Ritskes, 2013; Smith, 1999). Simpson (2017a; 2011) demonstrates that storytelling has been employed to resist oppression throughout Canadian colonial occupation. Indigenous peoples represent themselves on their own terms through storytelling, and by doing so, create "spaces of resistance and hope" (Smith, 1999, p. 4). Povinelli (2011, p. 191) illuminates the articulation of 'not this' within Indigenous storytelling: a refusal of the colonial present to imagine new realities into existence. When storytelling is orientated towards decolonisation, indigeneity is detached "from its colonial limits by weaving past and future Indigenous worlds into new currents of present struggle" (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014, p. X). Thus, for Simpson (2011, p. 33) "storytelling is at its core decolonizing, because it is a process of remembering, visioning and creating a reality where Nishnaabeg live as both *Nishnaabeg* and *peoples*." Addressing Indigenous storytelling within specific cosmologies highlights the active potential of stories to disrupt coloniality in their creation of alternative worlds (Sium & Ritskes, 2013; Martineau, 2015).

Geographical scholarship has employed Indigenous oratory storytelling in collaborative research projects (see Cameron, 2009; Wright, et al., 2012), and Indigenous scholarship has also invoked sacred stories within research (see Simpson 2011; 2017a; Doerfler, et al., 2013). I explore a gap in the literature by approaching stories that intertwine fiction, non-fiction, poetry and song, written from a decolonial perspective, as theory for decolonising academic writing practices.

2.6 Geography as Earth-Writing

In response to Todd (2016) who argues that decolonising academia requires action, I suggest that Geography as earth-writing is an appropriate starting point. Earth-writing "speaks to how we both represent and create our place on the Earth" (Magrane, 2015, p. 87). Noxolo (2009, p. 60) argues that negotiating the division between the world, matter, practice and word, text, theory in material and textual geographies involves "a false dichotomy" due their simultaneous constitution. Similarly, Friess

and Jazeel (2017, p. 18) argue that writing is not purely descriptive, it is productive; writing tells a story that “helps constitute that which we describe.” Thus, following Noxolo’s (2009) argument that writing is an embodied practice, the context of writing, the form it takes and its content shapes, and is shaped by, the materiality of worlds.

Eshun and Madge (2012; 2016) invoke poetic expression as a postcolonial method of earth-writing in response to Jazeel’s (2007, p. 287) call for “more cosmopolitan theoretical projects.” Madge (2014, p. 179) argues that Geographers’ previous engagements with poetry have primarily involved “well-known classical (male) poets and rural landscapes”. Magrane (2015) notes that the use of poetry as geographical method, as seen in Eshun and Madge’s (2012; 2016) studies, is uncommon. Eshun and Madge (2012) also mobilise geopoetics within their earth-writing. Geopoetics emerged out of concern for the future of the planet and critiques how humans have become separated “from the rest of the natural world” (White, 1989, n.p.). The use of geopoetics can reverse the world’s ‘denarrativization’ which constructed it as an object of rational study that can be broken down and categorised (Jay, 1993 in Rose, 2004; Springer, 2017). Springer (2017) and Magrane (2015, p. 98) argue that geopoetics reattach writing to the earth by enabling geographers to exceed thought founded within divisions between subjectivity and objectivity, and art and science, to imagine “other ways of inhabiting the world”. Eshun and Madge (2016, p. 779) claim that such writing can foster a “pluriversal creative world” which recognises “that creative knowledges everywhere are partial, emerging and situated”. I suggest that, to invoke decolonial earth-writing and geopoetics, writing practices must not assume that there is a singular world to be written in order to perform, through writing, decolonial and pluriversal worlds.

2.7 Summation

Having reviewed this literature, I suggest that mobilising stories told from decolonial perspectives could elucidate how to employ writing practices that make space for pluriversality.

3. Methodology

3.1 Decolonial Approach

The previously outlined theoretical literature concerning (de)coloniality and political ontology necessitates praxical research methodologies (Mignolo, 2014; Blaser, 2013b). Decolonial engagements are experimental and subject to alteration as they consist of “unthought potentialities: future anteriorities that have yet to emerge, but that must...be imagined and brought into being” (Rose, 2004; Martineau, 2015, p. 288). I situate this decolonial outlook within Geography’s ‘cultural turn’ which marks a heightened attentiveness to the politics of research methodologies, and an embrace of “performative, processual, and assemblage approaches” (Shaw, et al., 2015, p. 212). Experimental research moves beyond critique to “experiment with creating new spaces, [and] new ways of being” (*ibid.*; Paglen, 2008. P. 32). Magrane (2015) argues that creative geographies enliven imaginations, allowing geographers to think beyond conceptual constraints. However, Cresswell (2014) warns that geographers cannot suddenly become ‘creative’, and ignoring the aesthetic skill required “can reflect racist and patriarchal positions of power” (Magrane, 2015, p. 92). Thus, invoking creativity does not ensure decoloniality; rather, geographers must engage critically with creative practices and continually assess how they are tied into coloniality (Madge, 2014).

Smith (1999) identifies twenty-five decolonial Indigenous projects and methodologies; my approach has drawn upon two: storytelling and intervening. As previously demonstrated, Indigenous storytelling has a history that exceeds colonial subjectification (Simpson, 2011). However, Simpson (2017a) argues that these stories can be told as interventions that refuse coloniality and regenerate indigeneity on their own terms – a form of ‘decolonial healing’ (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2014). Mignolo has argued that attention to ‘decolonial healing’ is important for all those caught up in coloniality’s asymmetrical power relations (*ibid.*). This is not a romanticising turn to indigeneity, but an engagement in learning *with* indigeneity as a “source of significant political possibility” which pays attention to the plurality of voices (Rose, 2004; Cupples, 2012, p. 25; Wright, et al., 2012). I have centred Simpson’s (2013) decolonial stories as practical theory to bring her cosmology into perspective such that she maintains power over her knowledge, whilst demanding the audience to decolonise (Simpson, 2011; Dion & Salamanca, 2014; Smith, 1999; Sium & Ritskes, 2013). Thus, I approached decolonial stories as interventions that can invoke institutional change, rather than change “Indigenous peoples to fit the structures” (Simpson, 2017a; Smith, 1999, p. 147).

3.2 Selection of Texts

I focused on one author: Leanne Simpson, to avoid making generalisations that would obscure the heterogeneity of indigeneity and complexity of decoloniality. I read Simpson's (2013) collection, *Islands of Decolonial Love*, several times before choosing four stories to focus on: 'smallpox, anyone', 'pipty', 'buffalo on', and 'nogojiwanong' (see Appendices 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 for full texts). 'smallpox, anyone' and the final section of 'nogojiwanong' are also recorded as songs (visit www.arpbooks.org/islands to listen). These stories were chosen because they explore the lived experiences of coloniality and modernity from a position of power, which lovingly guides Indigenous resurgence and demands accountability for coloniality (Simpson, 2017a). I chose four stories to ensure my study had breadth, whilst also maintaining a specific focus. This allowed me to spend time getting to know the stories and their complexities in depth.

3.3 Audiencing

The hermeneutics of Western philosophy encompasses the interpretation of texts to uncover "hidden meanings" by addressing how interpretation is contingent upon "sociocultural and historic influences" (Byrne, 2001, p. 968). Mignolo (2013) argues that this hermeneutic practice remains within Western cosmology which, when applied to texts originating from other cosmologies, allows the Self to maintain control of what counts as legitimate knowledge, excluding the Other. Whereas, pluritopic hermeneutics diverge from the Self/Other distinction through pluriversality. Pluritopic hermeneutics recognise that colonial difference is located within a singular locus of enunciation and instead, "stresses the constant realization that other truths also exist and have the right to exist" (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009, p. 18). Thus, the audiencing of decolonial texts requires an awareness of the cosmology from which the text is produced, and how cosmologies interact throughout the reading process (Mignolo, 2013).

A pluritopic hermeneutic method was necessary to address Simpson's (2013) stories because they require attention to pluriversality (Mignolo, 2013); her stories occupy pluriversal spaces entangled in coloniality, yet also exceed this entanglement. I deployed this method to address cosmological differences and interactions between my context and Simpson's. I attempted to de-centre my authority as the researcher by approaching the stories as situated within Simpson's cosmology and thus, allowed her stories to guide my audiencing organically (Jazeel, 2014). This avoided a 'gazing' analysis which would have reduced Simpson and her stories to 'passive objects' as opposed to myself as the audience - an 'active subject' (Kaplan, 1997). My audiencing also involved 'expanded listening' to the songs intertwined in Simpson's stories; where 'expanded listening' is an embodied practice that requires being actively attentive to sounds generated by both humans and

nonhumans, and their “capacity to produce knowledge of events and processes” (Gallagher, et al., 2017, pp. 621-2).

I repeatedly audienced Simpson’s stories because they are multi-layered and complex, often invoking unusual writing styles which required multiple readings to begin the process of understanding (Simpson, 2017a; Madge, 2014). My audiencing detected moments where the stories create worlds which ‘de-link’ from coloniality and modernity. I recorded these moments in a research journal which I used to trace the trajectory of my thinking in a cyclical and generative manner (Appendix 8.5). I then tied these moments together into dynamically interconnected ‘knots’ of common de-linking which I address in Chapter 4 (Appendix 8.6).

My analysis is written in a reflexive, narrative tone to address the ‘text events’ which arose throughout my audiencing (Hones, 2008; 2010). Hunt (2014) argues that this is necessary to responsibly address the process of understanding Indigenous ontologies, and to remain aware of the power relations involved. Simpson (2017a) argues similarly, first person narration means that you are responsible for your thoughts and recognise that others may think differently.

3.4 Authoring

Whilst reflexivity is important, Noxolo (2009) argues that the Self can become re-centred by attempting to absolve oneself of compliance in coloniality without practically addressing it. I extended my analysis into the practical by writing an interpretative poem in response to Simpson’s decolonial demands. Eshun and Madge (2012) employ interpretative poetry to creatively analyse qualitative interview data in their postcolonial research; de-centre their knowledges from authoritative positions; and to account for the multiple voices in their research. In accordance with their method, my free-verse poem draws upon notes in my research journal, Simpson’s work, and the literature discussed in my research to explore the nuances and complexities of writing between worlds (*ibid.*; Eshun & Madge, 2016).

I employed poetry because of its dynamism and potential for pluriversality (Eshun & Madge, 2016). Poetry can express the personal experiences of the author, which can simultaneously have an embodied impact on the audience; thus, poetic inquiry is an act of becoming that can be transformative for both the author and audience (Madge, 2014; Gibbs, 2007). Therefore, I justified poetry as an effective decolonial method to explore writing between worlds because it can instigate action beyond the page.

I was aware that as a geographer, rather than a literary scholar, delving into the realms of poetic expression had to be a critical practice (Neilson, 2004). Eshun and Madge (2012, p. 1413)

acknowledge that poetry continues to be political as it writes worlds into being that are situated within historical contexts which must be critically addressed. However, they encourage the embrace of creativity to attempt writing a more responsible, decolonised and pluriversal geography (Madge, 2014; Eshun & Madge, 2016). Thus, I reflect upon my poem's effectiveness and its implications in my discussion in Chapter 5.

3.5 Limitations

My research is limited because I do not engage directly in conversation with Leanne Simpson. I decided that an effective engagement would require meeting Simpson in person, spending time learning about and engaging in her cosmology; this was regrettably beyond the scope of my dissertation. Participatory and collaborative research has been identified as a key aspect of decolonial research because the work produced is empowering, rather than "[validating] only one perspective of the assemblage" (Gibson, 2006; Watson & Huntington, 2008, p. 276). Todd (2016) argues that ideally Indigenous stories would be mobilised in research led by those who tell the stories; however, she goes on to assert that not addressing Indigenous ontologies at all also perpetuates the silencing of Indigenous knowledges within academia. Thus, I deemed my research to still be valuable despite the lack of dialogue, and attempted to mitigate this limitation by mobilising Simpson's stories as theory to maintain her power over her work, and to remove myself from a position of authority (Smith, 1999).

My understanding of Simpson's (2013) work was limited because her stories are specifically grounded in her Nishnaabeg cosmology, which she argues cannot be understood unless one embodies its teachings (Simpson, 2017a). Thus, in my research I have honestly accepted my "partiality of knowledge" which arose from addressing Simpson's stories outside of their context of generation (Hunt, 2014, p. 31). Consequentially, I focused on the implications of Indigenous resurgence on academic writing practices, rather than Simpson's success at invigorating Indigenous resurgence.

Attempting to develop a decolonial method from a non-Indigenous positionality was likely to encounter pitfalls because my efforts were situated within systems infused with coloniality (Eshun & Madge, 2012). However, Rose (2004) argues that, as those who are aware of the violence that our privilege is built upon, we have a responsibility to act. Similarly, Jackson (2016, p. 15) advises: "not to wallow in passivity, but the opposite: to impel acting toward possibility through self-criticality."

4. Audiencing

4.1 Leanne Simpson's Understanding of Nishnaabeg Cosmology

“My consciousness as a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg woman, a storyteller and a writer comes from the land because I am the land.” – Simpson (2011, p. 95)

The Nishnaabeg have three core values: “love, compassion and understanding” which they embody to foster life in all domains of existence (Simpson, 2014, p. 6; 2017a). This is encapsulated in Nishnaabeg relationality which involves the internal relations between an individual’s mind, spirit and body, and the external relations of Nishnaabeg internationalism: “a series of radiating relationships with plant nations, animal nations, insects, bodies of water, air, soil, and spiritual beings in addition to the Indigenous with whom [they] share parts of [their] territory” (Simpson, 2017a, p. 57). Knowledge is primarily derived from consensual relations with the spiritual domain, in which the spirits of all existents reside. These spirits are not past, mythical entities but present, active beings that offer divergent perspectives in the process of knowledge generation (*ibid.*). Epistemology and ontology are blurred because *being* Nishnaabeg necessitates the embodiment of knowledge derived from relationality (Simpson, 2011). This embodiment can be diverse, such that there is no defined Nishnaabeg identity; rather, relationality operates through Aki (ancestral land⁵) which is the crux of Nishnaabeg intelligence and ontological being (Simpson, 2014; 2017a).

For the Nishnaabeg, storytelling constitutes practical and embodied theory for knowledge production (Simpson, 2011). Sacred stories originate from the spiritual world and offer guidance for living a Nishnaabeg life. Personal stories divulge individual experiences and encounters with sacred stories (Simpson, 2017a). Simpson’s (*ibid.*) storytelling mobilises aesthetic principles⁶ which are grounded in her cosmology. Articulating Nishnaabeg intelligence requires *rhythmic repetition* as their ways of life are cyclical and regenerative; consequently, her writing operates within *multidimensional* temporalities. Simpson’s use of *layering* and *abstraction* influences the decipherable meaning of her stories depending on the context of reception. Her stories incorporate *duality* as a necessary part of her dynamic holism which does not reject contradiction or contention. Finally, her “*reenactment* and *presencing*” aims to disrupt the assumption of colonial permanence by embodying indigeneity on her own terms (*ibid.*, pp. 200-203). Simpson (*ibid.*) mobilises these aesthetic principles to refuse

⁵ I refer to ancestral land as Aki in this chapter.

⁶ I indicate Simpson’s use of these principles by italicising them.

coloniality; a 'not this' which concurrently generates a decolonial world in a state of becoming beyond the page (Povinelli, 2011, p. 191; Martineau & Ritskes, 2014).

I approached Simpson's decolonial stories with an awareness of her cosmology and aesthetics to avoid perpetuating the dichotomous assumptions of aesthetics derived from Enlightenment cosmologies (Jackson, 2016; Coulthard, 2014). This enabled me to engage in a pluritopic hermeneutic audiencing of her stories, which demonstrates that contrary to Mignolo (2014, p. 35), who argues that de-linking "is not a physical activity", within Simpson's cosmology it is a necessarily embodied, active process. Simpson's stories also necessitate the extension of Mignolo's (2009) body- and geo-politics of epistemological coloniality to ontology, where ontologies are embodied worlding practices (Blaser, 2013a). Considering these politics with Nishnaabeg cosmology illuminates how the separation of the 'body' and 'geo' perpetuates coloniality as Simpson (2011, p. 95) states: "I am the land." The geo-politics of epistemology are necessarily ontological and have bodily implications as, for Simpson, the colonial occupation of Aki inhibits the embodiment of indigeneity. These clarifications demonstrate that coloniality employs politics which attempt to destroy cosmological worlds, and are necessary to consider the extent of Simpson's (2013) decolonial academic demands.

I will briefly set the scene for each story⁷ I have audienced, according to my interpretation, before exploring three intertwined 'knots' with a core strand that de-links from coloniality: the reclamation of Indigenous bodies; the reclamation of Aki and the reclamation of indigeneity in academia.

4.2 Setting the Scene

'smallpox, anyone'

Simpson's (2013, pp. 33-36) spoken-word poetry, over a syncopated beat, intermingles her personal academic experiences with fragmented capsules of events that coalesce both fiction and non-fiction: a woman is wrapped in a blanket and rolled down a hill; the narrator toboggans down the hill; a dress is made for a royal attendance; and an art gallery is visited. These capsules are *multidimensional* temporal moments interspersed in the linear trajectory of her academic experiences. Simpson's narration requires the audience to delve between the lines to see beyond the text and consider the importance of what goes unspoken.

⁷ After setting the scene for each story I will refer to them by italicising their titles.

‘pipty’

Simpson (2013, pp. 45-47) places Aki at the centre of this story which revolves around the shooting of Dudley George in 1995 in the Ipperwash Provincial Park, Ontario during a land rights dispute (Hedican, 2008). The audience is taken on a journey through the events of the day that the shooting occurred, and is intertwined with Simpson’s personal observations. Nestled within this storyline are two definitions which seem out of place until the end of the story, at which point it becomes clear that the vulnerability of Indigenous bodies is geo-political.

‘buffalo on’

‘buffalo on’ is split into four ‘rounds’ which I interpret as rounds of bullets targeting Indigenous bodies (Simpson, 2013, pp. 85-93). Simpson ceases their fire by refusing colonial subjectification. “round 1”: a monologue addressed to Indigenous peoples encouraging their refusal of assimilation and instead, urging them to foster love for indigeneity. “round 2”: a peaceful land rights protest demonstrates that the violence inflicted upon Aki has repercussions for all who inhabit it. “round 3”: a ceremony at a burial ground interrupted by the narrator’s memory of being confused by the label: ‘indian’. “round 4”: the final conversation between two individuals before one passes away, a conversation which demonstrates that Nishnaabeg spirituality exceeds the physical confines of the body.

‘nogojiwanong’

Simpson (2013, pp.113-126) addresses the construction of Lift Lock 21 on the Trent-Severn Waterway that runs through Peterborough (nogojiwanong), Ontario – the ancestral land of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg (Parks Canada, 2017; Simpson, 2017a). The story comprises four interlinking narratives with titles centring ‘she’ which I imagine to be the river flowing through the story, taking the audience on a temporally *multidimensional* journey. “she is the only doorway into this world”: the audience witnesses the Mississauga rejecting planning permission for the lock in 1830. “she asked why”: time is fast forwarded to a fictitious scenario that justifies blowing up the lock. “she asked them for help”: temporally back-tracking, the narrative demonstrates the disastrous impact of the lock which, in the end, is destroyed by an underwater lynx. “she sang them home”: the audience is transported to the future by the sound of Simpson’s voice embodying a salmon sung home by the river.

4.3 Reclamation of Indigenous Bodies

The word 'blanket' conjures the sensation of soft fabric against my skin, a comfort that Simpson jolts me out of in *smallpox, anyone*; she reminds the audience that smallpox-ridden blankets were used to target those who posed a threat to the expansion of settler colonialism on Turtle Island. The story pulls this targeting into the present, speaking to how coloniality involves racialised body-politics that continue to class some bodies as inferior to others (Mignolo, 2009). *pipty* reiterates how these politics place Indigenous bodies in vulnerable positions: "*dudley george is the first aboriginal person to be killed in a land rights dispute in canada since the 19th century*" (p. 46)⁸. Simpson argues that this statement obscures Indigenous "deaths from poverty, deaths from coping and deaths from being a woman" (p.46). I suggest that Dudley George's death is an 'event': a tragedy widely acknowledged as having objectively occurred; whilst other Indigenous deaths and suffering are 'quasi-events' that do not reach the 'event' threshold, their eventfulness remains disputed and undetermined (Povinelli, 2011; Povinelli, et al., 2017). Thus, Simpson unveils how Indigenous suffering has become normalised as 'quasi-events', absolving the Canadian government of responsibility. This story also speaks to how this normalisation of the characters' physical vulnerability inhibits emotive engagement in loving, reciprocal relations:

"abaab: a key, to open with something, unlock,

release, loosen

aabaabika'ige: s/he unlocks

and we never get to

aabawe wendamoowin: to forgive, to warm up to or to

loosen one's mind, to loosen or unlock one's feelings" (p. 47).

This is also evident in *buffalo on*: "if you waste your time feeling, you're not going to be ready and in the ring for the next blow" (p. 87). Simpson (2013; 2017a) ties the body- and geo-politics of coloniality together by demonstrating how generations of the colonial extraction of Aki disconnects Indigenous peoples from their ontological sustenance, which is exacerbated by the physical targeting of their bodies, hindering their embodiment of relationality.

Simpson reveals the internalisation of this ontological violence in *smallpox, anyone*. The subtitle: "*rising to the occasion*" (p. 33) refers to an upcoming visit of British royalty, for which a girl makes "a dress with saucers for nipples and / a beaver lodge for a bustle" (p. 33). The narrator then *repeatedly* wears similar outfits in other contexts. I understand this to represent the internalisation of

⁸ I refer to the page from which a quote is taken in *Islands of Decolonial Love* at the end of the quote.

colonial difference which arises from the 'politics of distraction' mobilised by the Canadian government; a politics that 'recognises' and rewards indigeneity as 'authentic' when performed according to the state's prescription (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Coulthard, 2014). This 'recognition' can produce 'colonised subjects' who embody the subjectivity designated to them such that they contribute to their own colonisation (Fanon, 1991; Coulthard, 2014). This politics attempts assimilation which extends beyond the eradication of Indigenous bodies, to their erasure "as *peoples*" through cognitive imperialism and the dispossession of Aki (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 598; Simpson, 2011). In "round 2" of *buffalo on* Simpson refuses the gifting of partial land rights by placing her characters in a treaty area with signs that read: "first we'll kill your animals and fish, then we'll fuck your wives (with their consent, of course)" (p. 87). This ironic role-reversal unveils the combined attacks on Indigenous bodies and Aki, which are evidently normalised: "you cannot protest for *no reason*...you're making your people look bad" (emphasis added, p. 88). Simpson fuses the body- and geo-politics together to demonstrate how 'recognition' attempts to destroy cosmological worlding practices by firstly, limiting relationality with Aki and secondly, provoking the internalisation of negative perceptions of indigeneity when it is embodied according to their cosmologies (Coulthard, 2014). Thus, the 'politics of distraction' normalise the disappearance of indigeneity within a cycle of coloniality which, in *smallpox, anyone*, Simpson analogises as a fountain: an "endless goddamn loop / and nobody gives a shit" (p. 34).

In *buffalo on* Simpson reveals how difficult it is to extricate oneself from the cycle: "we're all hunting around for acceptance, intimacy, connection and love, but we don't know what those particular med'cines even look like" (p. 85). Simpson writes from a position of decolonial love to break this cycle and regenerate the strength of indigeneity: "i know we're going to fight like hell to escape" (p. 85). In "round 1" Simpson fiercely asserts that being "fucked up" (p. 85) is not an innate characteristic of Indigenous bodies, but has arisen from centuries of colonial dispossession which prevents them "from connecting to [their] love ones, learning [their] languages and being on the land" (Simpson, 2017a, p. 86). She denounces colonial subjectification again in "round 3" by recounting a memory in which an inebriated grandma sings "ten little indians" whilst performing "the rain dance" (p. 89-90). Later, dialogue between mother and child reveals the 'indian' that grandma enacts does not reflect their indigeneity, rather the label has encased their bodies in the "skin of *someone else's* shame" (emphasis added, p. 91). These narratives denaturalise the shame which arises from victim-blaming and cognitive imperialism, by re-situating the responsibility for Indigenous suffering and shame onto those compliant in coloniality (Simpson, 2011; 2017a).

Simpson combines the removal of shame with the resurgence of indigeneity: "light your inner fire. keep it lit. blow on the embers. fan the flames. fire needs breath. life needs fire. breath feeds

shkode” (p. 87). The imagery of light as resembling indigeneity is *repeated* throughout Simpson’s stories, particularly in the form of shkode (fire). Nishnaabeg intelligence depicts the light from stars as carrying the original knowledge of the Creator; this light is inter-generational as encountering it involves “looking from the present back into time and space” (Simpson, 2017a, p. 212). Thus, to live as Nishnaabeg requires the light of indigeneity which, in turn, requires life. The harnessing of this light involves inter-generational relations through which a love for indigeneity regenerates Indigenous strength: biiskaboyang (“the process of returning to ourselves”) (*ibid.*, p. 17). This is not just survival, but ‘survivance’ – “an active sense of presence” (Vizenor, 1999, p. vii; Simpson, 2017a). The physical *presence* of Indigenous bodies living *as* Indigenous through Aki defies the permanence of settler colonialism - “our presence is our weapon” (Simpson, 2017a, p. 6). Simpson (*ibid.*, p. 203; 2017b) writes her stories to have implications beyond the page; she actively embodies her indigeneity in her daily life, and through her stories encourages Indigenous audiences to take responsibility for recuperating indigeneity through their own “*reenactment* and *presencing*”. Writing in the context of ‘decolonial love’, Simpson’s stories confront the harsh reality of coloniality and exude the confidence in indigeneity to “envision life beyond the state” (Corntassel, 2012, p. 89). She paints moments where indigeneity thrives and is loved which is vital for, and creates, resurgent decolonial worlds (Simpson, 2013; 2017a).

4.4 Reclamation of Aki

“I AM WORTH MORE
THAN 1 MILLION
DOLLARS
TO MY PEOPLE”
(p. 36).

This is gitchidaakwe’s (holy woman) sign that appears at the end of *smallpox, anyone*; the holy woman refuses to reduce Aki to capital, bind it to property rights and thus, align with modernity’s externalisation of nature from culture (Braun, 2002). A divide that denies the ontological significance of land and results in its ‘denarrativisation’ (Jay, 1993 in Rose, 2004, p. 183). Instead, Simpson’s stories centralise Aki as integral to indigeneity; an ontological assertion which is ignored by divorcing the body- and geo-politics of coloniality from each other. The ontological significance of this is demonstrated in *pipty*, when kinomagewapkong (teaching rocks) are enclosed within a provincial park and encased in a concrete structure that prevents communication with the characters’ Ancestors. Consequently, the characters are unable to live through Aki which, as established previously, results in violence towards Indigenous bodies. Simpson refuses the dispossession of Aki later in the story

when the fencing of the provincial park, physically demarcating the enclosure of Aki, is clearly of little significance to one of her characters who “walks right up to the chain link with her bolt cutters and...cuts that chain in half” (p. 46). These scenarios denaturalise the enclosure of Aki, making it seem nonsensical whilst demonstrating the simultaneous body- and geo-politics of coloniality. “round 3” of *buffalo on* speaks to how Aki continues to hold stories that cannot be contained nor denied: “land giving up truths” (p. 91). Simpson’s storytelling makes it clear that whilst colonial occupation has made it difficult to hear their Ancestors, they have not stopped talking; thus, *reenacting* resurgent worlds is possible.

nogojiwanong refuses the colonial occupation of Aki involved in the construction of ‘national’ parks; a ‘nationalism’ which represents colonial violence towards both Aki and Indigenous bodies from Simpson’s perspective. The story begins with a letter written by the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg and surrounding nations, rejecting the planning permission for the Trent Severn Waterway on a number of counts, one of which is quoted below:

“iv. it is with great regret that we are writing on behalf of the michi saagiig anishinaabeg to inform you that you will not be permitted to build your lift locks, canals and hydro dams because the fish, eels, birds, insects, plants, turtles, and reptiles do not consent to the damage your project will cause” (p. 114).

Simpson affirmatively places the Nishnaabeg in a position of power to refuse planning permission by *repeating* their prioritisation of relationality. This highlights how sociality and respect extends beyond the human, rejecting modernity’s narrative of humans as divorced from, and triumphing over, nature (Viveiros de Castro, 1998; Blaser, 2013a). The Nishnaabeg’s relationality is placed in contrast with the neighbours (colonisers) in the story, who “just keep making more” (p. 118). Simpson does not portray a romanticised scene of perfect harmony before the arrival of the neighbours; however, she does overtly demonstrate the disruption caused by their arrival. The neighbours’ actions, as in *pipty*, “hurt the veins of mother earth” (p. 118); degradation that goes beyond the construction of the lock: “eating everything out of the Mississauga’s garden...cutting down trees for no reason” (p.117). Simpson demonstrates that this is explicitly both body- and geo-political: “the fish and the mississauga are sad and...maybe even most of them, are dead” (p. 118); the exploitation of Aki inhibits relationality which disrupts ecosystems in their totality. This scene of mourning is juxtaposed with the neighbours who are celebrating the anniversary of their lock, revealing *abstraction* within the story as the same scenario is perceived differently according to divergent worlding practices. Simpson tells *nogojiwanong* from a ‘trans-modernity’ perspective, which denaturalises the hegemony of modernity

by bringing into visibility the cosmological worlds modernity attempts to destroy (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009).

Coulthard (2004), who draws similar conclusions to Quijano (2007) and Mignolo (2002; 2014), demonstrates that capitalist modernity and colonial expansion depend upon dispossessing Indigenous peoples from the sustenance of their indigeneity – Aki. Living in accordance with indigeneity is perceived as a barrier to modernity’s development, a relic from the past which modernity progresses beyond (Simpson, 2004; Rose, 2004; Mendoza, 2013). The normalisation of this dispossession is evident when the neighbours say to the Mississauga: “we can’t stop riding our elevator machine or our economy will fall apart” (p. 119). The neighbours construct their technology as vital to their way of life, such that they absolve themselves of responsibility for the degradation caused in the present, and ignore how modernity necessarily inhibits the embodiment of indigeneity: “you’re making a big deal out of nothing” (p. 199). Simpson criticises this lack of accountability by depicting the settlers going “bowling at bowl-a-rama” instead of dealing with the consequences of their actions: “i don’t know where you’re going to fucking skate in the winter and i don’t care. oh wait, skate on the lake. oh wait, it doesn’t freeze anymore because you wrecked the weather” (p.116). Simpson disrupts the naturalisation of modernity by highlighting the failure of “the modern myth” and demanding accountability for its dependence upon the degradation of other worlds (Blaser, 2013b, p. 554; De la Cadena, 2015).

Povinelli (2016) figures capitalism as a Virus that infects everything it encounters to propagate itself; Simpson’s stories generate decolonial worlds which are immune to this pandemic. For Simpson (2017a, p. 43), “the opposite of dispossession is not possession, it is deep, reciprocal, consensual *attachment*.” Her spoken-word poetry ends *nogojiwanong* by *presencing* a salmon returning to the river: the audience dives into the river, the musical beat pulsing through the water, building a momentum that brings the salmon home. Simpson (2017a, p. 3) states that: “Michi saagiig Nishinaabeg are salmon people”; thus, I see the salmon as also resembling Nishnaabeg resurgence. The song emphasises the importance of the regeneration of relations between Aki and everything within it, encapsulated in the word *kobade* (“a link in a chain”), for the resurgence of indigeneity (Simpson, 2017a, p. 7). The song envisions this future not as speculation, but as a decolonial reality – “there *is* more of us waiting to be born” (emphasis added, p. 126). Thus, whilst the story begins with scenes saturated with coloniality, Simpson ends by defying Mignolo’s (2014, p. 21) claim that “from a decolonial perspective there is no outside of coloniality from where coloniality can be observed”; she writes a world devoid of coloniality into being.

4.5 Reclamation of Indigeneity in Academia

In *smallpox, anyone*, Simpson recounts a conversation with a teacher who encourages her to be proud of her “cultural heritage” (p. 33). In previous work, Simpson (2014) has shown that she cannot embody this ‘pride’ within an education system that divorces her from Nishnaabeg intelligence without her consent, and occupies ancestral land. In *buffalo on*, Simpson describes settler colonialism as “a war that the other side invests millions in convincing people it doesn’t exist” (p. 87); academia is implicated in this. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, Indigenous cosmologies are routinely either ignored entirely or absorbed into the pre-existing academic frameworks which reduce their knowledges to cultural understandings, rather than “analytics of existents” in their own right (Hunt, 2014; Todd, 2016; Povinelli, 2016, p. 27). Simpson speaks to this when she recounts another conversation in *smallpox, anyone*:

“if you would just read more post colonial theory, you’d understand that your anger is part of the binary of colonialism and therefore colonial and if you just take some of the things from settlers and some of the things from your ancestors, you’ll find you can weave them into a really nice tapestry, which will make the colonizers feel ambivalent and then you’ve altered the power structure” (p. 33-4).

I interpret this as referring to postcolonial theorisations of hybridity which claim that cultural difference is created through intersubjective encounters between cultures, of which there are no ‘original’ cultural formations, only ‘hybrid’ cultures; thus, taking colonial encounters as the derivative of difference (Rutherford & Bhabha, 1990; Ashcroft, et al., 2013). Some scholars argue that hybridity is unavoidable, and in the context of indigeneity, does not equate to a lack of authenticity nor lessen the validity of Indigenous knowledges (see Braun, 2002; Hunt, 2014). However, Blaser (2012) argues that discussing ‘culture’ obscures how the term originates from a Western ontological understanding that attempts to construct a singular narrative of reality. Furthermore, cultural hybridity implies that nothing exists outside of coloniality and modernity, which naturalises colonial encounters and denies ontological alterity (*ibid.*; Blaser, 2013b). Simpson (2017a, p. 50) rejects theorisations of hybridity; she argues that reducing indigeneity to culture to fit “with an inclusive narrative of Canada as a multicultural society” denies indigeneity its cosmological significance (Simpson, 2017a, p. 50). Thus, Simpson reveals hybridity as embodied violence:

“when i cut my back like that
can you sew me up
the same way with
the fringe and the beads?” (p. 35).

Hybridity entertains a colonial future that ontologically restricts the embodiment of indigeneity through assimilation. By using 'when' Simpson acknowledges the difficulty of resisting becoming involved in coloniality. For example, Simpson makes a conscious sacrifice by utilising the internet, which is tied into modernity, to aid the dissemination of her work (Simpson, 2017a; 2017b). However, Simpson (2017a) deems this sacrifice necessary as Indigenous scholarship is notoriously marginalised: "*if you could re-write the tone of this article to avoid shaming Canadians...we could move forward with the publication of your article*" (p. 34). This demonstrates how Simpson's academic experiences have required her hybridisation by enforcing academic frameworks that naturalise colonial presence, and detach her scholarship from its cosmological foundation (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Simpson, 2017a). By revealing the coloniality of academia, Simpson reclaims indigeneity as that which disrupts the hegemony of academic knowledge production.

Todd (2016) argues that the geographical distance between Simpson's academic context and mine obscures how British academic institutions are propped up by coloniality which continues to silence Indigenous voices. Rose (2004) and Povinelli (2013) urge those in privileged positions to explicitly address how their privilege is dependent on coloniality, rather than remaining silent. Simpson acknowledges her academic privilege in *pipty* when she recounts how events, such as the shooting of Dudley George, provide material for scholars to write about. I suggest that whilst postcolonial studies depend upon coloniality for source material, Indigenous studies address this material but are not defined by it. In *nogajiwanoong* I interpret the neighbours' empty promises as making demands on postcolonial academics who critique coloniality such that decolonisation remains metaphorical, rather than altering academic practices (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Nevertheless, the work of postcolonial scholars is not unimportant, as Kaplan (1997, p. 5) argues: "it is only when a paradigm is nearing its end that its structures come clearly into view. Yet it is vital to understand the structures of a paradigm just passing because its shapes will impact on the new one." Rather, as Todd (2016, p. 15) suggests: "to dismantle those legacies, we must face our complicity head on"; in the following chapter I address both the need to address continual coloniality, and Simpson's demands on academic practice more thoroughly.

4.6 Tying the Knots Together

My audiencing has demonstrated that Simpson's stories portray coloniality as employing politics that go beyond Mignolo's (2009) body- and geo-politics. For Simpson, coloniality does not stop at the body's epidermal boundary, nor is it defined by terrestrial spatialities, because the Nishnaabeg

world that coloniality attempts to destroy exceeds these boundaries through relationality and spirituality.

Simpson's stories de-link from coloniality by writing resurgent worlds into being in which she reclaims Indigenous bodies and Aki. It is important to acknowledge that whilst Simpson tells her stories from a specific cosmology and thus brings into visibility specific worlds, her cosmology welcomes *duality*. Consequently, I do not read her work as advocating an ideal homogenous world for all to occupy; rather, she commands her audiences to take responsibility for dismantling the hegemony of coloniality to enable the flourishing of multiple divergent worlds occupying cosmopolitical, pluriversal spaces (De la Cadena, 2010).

I cannot speak for the success of Simpson's re-worlding for an Indigenous audience; however, I can address how her re-worlding makes demands on academic practice. Simpson's stories are not written to be included into academic structures that limit indigeneity; instead, they demand the amplification of academic silences on the terms of those who have been placed out of earshot (Todd, 2016). By generating resurgent worlds through storytelling, Simpson demands academic practice to stop writing worlds that contribute to the colonial enclosure of others; rather, to embody writing practices that make space for pluriversal worlds of living knowledges.

5. Authoring

“To be claimed is to be called into connection; to respond is to start to actualise that connection.” – Rose (2004, p. 3)

I wrote the following poem in response to Simpson’s decolonial demands by critically reflecting upon the limitations and possibilities of my audiencing. By doing so, it serves as an intervention, an exploration into writing between worlds.

5.1 The Page

Your voice erupts from the page

Arrangements of letters that refuse to be silenced

Defiance.

I am a witness

Your words captivate my senses

And yet,

A distance.

I, on this side of the page

And you, on the other.

The significance?

Paper thin

Translucent

Impenetrable

Bound into systems greater than I.

The significance?

The binding holds

All I have are your pages

I get lost in the meaning of your words

Words that can be rearranged

Erased

Re-written

The significance.

~

Is that all?

What if the page has another part to play?

You write to refuse a world that denies you a voice

The page as passage

Possibility becomes reality

The page as possibility

Letters, your tools

Arranged into wordly configurations

Writing worlds into being.

~

Can I try?

My page

Made from paper crafted here

Yours, over there

My words

Inscribed on the page here

Yours, over there

Performing worlds apart.

Yet,

Could our pages be re-bound?

Binding in alliance

Our pages

Words crossing worlds

The pluriversal possibility of the page.

~

Will you try?

~

5.2 Discussion

Writing the ‘The Page’ allowed me to intertwine both my small scale, personal experience of audiencing Simpson’s stories with the broader, political context of this research; a complexity of relations which poetic expression, “rich in paradox, symbolism and metaphor,” helped to articulate (Eshun & Madge, 2016; 2012, p. 1401). The first section of my poem speaks to Simpson’s (2017a, p. 31) argument that the privileged foundations of Western academia limit its ability to understand “colonialism as a process...[and] Indigenous resurgence.” Simpson’s (2013) decolonial stories are *layered* such that their significance is partially enclosed to those who do not embody Indigenous cosmologies (Simpson, 2017a; Martineau & Ritskes, 2014). This is key to Simpson’s ‘affirmative refusal’ (Martineau, 2015); her work is visible to those who occupy colonial positions of power, yet disrupt their authority by resisting “the finality of enclosure” in order to remain partially incomprehensible to an audience such as myself (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014, p. IV). Therefore, there are likely to be gaps in my understanding of Simpson’s storied worlds, and I am uncertain as to whether my audiencing remains true to Simpson’s intent; an uncertainty which makes me vulnerable as a researcher (Jazeel, 2014). However, as Simpson demonstrates in *smallpox, anyone*, this ambivalence does not make my work decolonial, and as she establishes in *buffalo on* and *pipty*, vulnerability is experienced by those in positions of relative power. Recognising my compliance in these power relations defamiliarises the usually familiar and comfortable space of academia, which has forced me to attempt to ‘unlearn’ my authority as a researcher, and question the positions I occupy (Jazeel, 2014; Spivak, 1988;). My poem addresses how, in moments where I did not fully understand Simpson’s stories, I regained authority by constructing ideas based upon assumptions I made concerning Simpson’s intent. Garroutte and Westcott (2013, pp. 61-62) argue that this obscures Indigenous voices “or [includes] them in ways that strip their authority.” An important part of an embodied writing practice is being attentive to the conditions which have led to being in a position to dictate who writes about whom (Noxolo, 2009).

Thus, in the first section of my poem I address how being able to fill in the gaps in my understanding resulted from the privilege of remaining on this side of the page.

In *pipty* Simpson writes: “every time those zhaganosh [white people] find something special they can’t leave it alone” (p. 46). I am directly implicated in this as I have studied Simpson’s stories and cosmology as ‘special’ because they are different to my own. Simpson also writes in *buffalo on*: “there are some things that you can escape and there are some things you cannot” (p. 85). I cannot escape how my interest in Simpson’s work emerged from being nestled within colonial webs of power that have facilitated this research by placing me on this side of the page. This position has shaped my research trajectory: due to the spatial and temporal constraints of my dissertation, I have silenced some of the demands in Simpson’s work (for example, concerning gender dynamics and political sovereignty) to prioritise those that align with my aims. At this stage of my research, I cannot escape how my audiencing of Simpson’s stories has occurred on my own terms, and whilst I may be uncertain in some of my analysis, I have maintained a position of authority. ‘The Page’ deploys geopoetics to address this spatiality. My poetic expression attaches me to my situatedness physically, institutionally and personally (Last, 2017; Eshun & Madge, 2012); this accountability to place, and the resultant power relations, necessitates the consideration of how my encounters with Simpson’s decoloniality occurred outside of her cosmological worlding. Thinking through these limitations of the content of my writing, in conjunction with its context, has made me question whether I am contributing to indigenising the academy by mobilising Simpson’s stories in a context which divorces them from their place-based generation (Noxolo, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Todd, 2016). The ‘text events’ within my audiencing have emerged within a British academic context which, as Todd (2016) argues, has a tendency to either ignore the voices of those who demand decolonisation or absorb them into pre-existing frameworks to absolve responsibility for enacting change. I have attempted to mitigate this by directly confronting the complexities of my entanglement in coloniality, which Eshun and Madge (2012, p. 1420) argue is part of the “disconcerting, demanding and continuous process” of decolonisation.

In the second section of my poem I move beyond dwelling in negative critique to consider the possibilities of my audiencing. The knots of my audiencing are ‘text events’ which involve a complex web of power relations involving Simpson, her stories, myself, and the context of my research. According to Noxolo and Preziuso (2013, p. 173-4), such events within postcolonial fiction (and I extend to Simpson’s stories) provide “a fertile starting point for reimagining the world from multiple locations and with multiple voices.” My audiencing has demonstrated that Simpson’s stories create worlds in which coloniality is dismantled, and consequently, generate space for Indigenous resurgence. Povinelli (2011, p. 192) argues that those who immerse themselves in alternative social

worlds produce research that has been imprinted by those worlds; their work contains traces of those worlds which “are the prehistory of a new positive form of life even as they are the conditions for ‘not this’.” Thus, whilst my research is limited due to being caught up in coloniality, it exists as an effort to respond to the demands of Simpson’s resurgent worlds by engaging in my own self-critical writing practice, which reflects upon the possibilities of writing with plurality. In accordance with Blaser’s (2013b, p. 566) political ontology, and Noxolo’s (2009) emphasis on the form writing takes, this is my attempt at “finding the way to tell stories that perform a world with...openness.”

This marks the point of departure for the third section of my poem which responds to Simpson’s re-worlding from a position of positive possibility (Povinelli, 2011). *nogojiwanong* imagines an alternative reality that is without colonisation; a vision with many political implications and complexities that far exceed this dissertation. I consider how this re-worlding demands academic writing practices to open up to pluriversal worlds, such that difference is not incorporated by the “coloniality of power” (Mignolo, 2002, p. 96). Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 36) argue that decolonisation requires being open to incommensurability. In an academic context, this requires allowing incommensurate cosmologies to disrupt the current ordering of knowledges within hierarchies of legitimacy, to produce cosmopolitical spaces in which those performing divergent ontologies can negotiate on their own terms (Blaser, 2013a; 2013b). Within these spaces, alliances can be made across divergent worlds through partial connections of interests in common (De la Cadena, 2014). My poem attempts to write into being a passage of alliance between mine and Simpson’s worlds in response to the decolonial demands articulated in her stories, with the common interest of decolonising the worlds that academic practice writes into existence.

However, cosmopolitics also necessitate continued attention to contesting voices and conflicting worldings (Blaser 2013b). I have addressed how my audiencing encountered such contestation on my own terms. Noxolo (2009, p. 62) asserts that an “embodied politics of writing” requires physical dialogue and engagement; in this context such dialogue would allow demands to be articulated on the terms of those who embody decolonial perspectives (Noxolo, 2017a; 2017b). Therefore, I am aware that whilst writing can contribute to the material constitution of worlds through its embodied practice, my poetic exploration remains partially within the realms of the metaphorical. Thus, my poetry is not an exhaustive decolonial writing practice and is by no means a ‘solution’, rather it serves as an important exploration that leads to future avenues of research (Jazeel, 2014; Noxolo, 2009). Such research would engage in dialogue with Simpson, for example, to negotiate the cosmopolitical relations between divergent worlds, with the intention to build alliances, and work together to write decolonial worlds into being. These worlds would depend upon, rather than deny, the heterogeneity of cosmologies. The passage of connection I attempt to generate in ‘The Page’ is

not perfectly carved out, nor has it reached its final destination; hence, 'The Page' ends with a provocation. Madge (2014) argues that poetry commands its audience to consider the implications of what they have witnessed. 'The Page' speaks to how decolonising academic writing practices through plurality involves long-term, collaborative engagements that build passages between worlds to write decolonial worlds into being (Noxolo, 2017a).

6. Conclusion

Through a novel audiencing of Leanne Simpson's decolonial stories, engaging in pluritopic hermeneutics and expanded listening, I have argued that seminal theorisations of (de)coloniality need to be rethought through political ontology. Simpson's (2013) stories demonstrate that coloniality is ontological in its efforts to enclose Nishnaabeg cosmological worlds; the politics mobilised to achieve enclosure involves the simultaneous dispossession of Indigenous bodies and land, severing relationships between the two that sustain Nishnaabeg worldings. Thus, decoloniality must be praxical in its engagements with ontological worldings.

Simpson (2017a) argues that Indigenous resurgence requires turning away from seeking legitimacy from anyone, except those who embody indigeneity. Thus, I cannot determine whether Simpson's stories succeed in regenerating resurgent worlds in practice, because such decolonial efforts "are accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 35). However, I suggest that the proliferation of Indigenous resurgence envisioned by Simpson may be challenging when confronted by the tantalising politics of recognition. My work has shown that witnessing Simpson's stories demands those compliant in coloniality to attempt to dismantle its structures beyond epistemological decoloniality, whilst resurgence occurs on the terms of those who embody it. The call for resurgence can be heard beyond the Nishnaabeg nation and ultimately, demands the reclamation of Indigenous political sovereignty and land (Simpson, 2017a; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Tackling such demands exceeded my capabilities within this dissertation. However, I have argued that academia provides a fertile space in which to begin to enact decoloniality, because the academy plays a vital role in producing knowledge that informs and shapes the worlds in which we live (Smith, 1999).

By exploring the potential of literary geographies to engage with decolonial texts, in tandem with theorisations of political ontology, I have explored writing as a worlding practice. I have established the importance of being attentive to academic writing practices as they have material implications beyond the page, due to contributing to the performance and embodiment of worlds. Thus, Simpson's decolonial worlds demand academics to engage in writing practices that do not contribute to coloniality, but rather, make space for the resurgence of pluriversal worlds. Whilst this task exceeds the disciplinary confines of Geography, I propose that geographers, as world-writers, are in a prime position to take up this task; especially considering the discipline's 'cultural' and 'creative' turns towards practical and embodied geographies.

I employed poetry to address the limitations and possibilities of my ability to write between worlds, and to express the nuances and complexities of performing pluriversal and decolonial worlds.

I do not suggest that poetic expression is the only form of writing attentive to plurality, nor is it a flawless method; rather, the cosmopolitical space of pluriversality is such that divergent writing practices can exist. What is important is that we are attentive to the material significance of the words we place on the page, such that our pages do not contribute to the colonial enclosure of other worlds. I confront my compliance in coloniality within this research through poetic expression to consider how decolonial worlds can be written into being. Consequently, my discussion of 'The Page' highlighted that whilst the words we write are highly important, as is attention to the context and form of academic writing, *who* is writing is also key (Noxolo, 2009). Drawing similar conclusions to Noxolo (*ibid.*), decolonial writing must be an embodied practice that involves dialogue between worlds within cosmopolitical spaces. The lack of such dialogue in my research has left stones unturned: firstly, would Simpson support my mobilisation of her stories? Considering my location in a British academic institution, does mobilising her stories rule out the possibility of decolonisation due to divorcing the texts from their place-based generation? If so, how can British academics effectively decolonise writing practices and engage in pluriversality *without* the hybridity that Simpson rejects? I have emphasised that such conversations are necessary for academic decolonisation to occur on the terms of those voicing decolonial perspectives, and would begin to dismantle the hegemony of coloniality which denies the legitimacy of pluriversal voices.

This paper has followed the cosmological perspective of one individual which means that I cannot generalise Simpson's decolonial perspective as resonating with all Indigenous peoples, nor is her perspective the sole valuable source of praxical decolonial theory. Rather, my paper is the necessary exploratory foregrounding for a more embodied engagement with plurality which would further praxical decoloniality within academia. For geographers to decolonise the worlds they write into being, they must tread beyond their disciplinary confines and collaboratively build alliances between co-emergent worlds, to write worlds into being that will have decolonial implications beyond the page.

7. References

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8. Appendix

8.1 'smallpox, anyone'

The following is an excerpt from *Islands of Decolonial Love* (Simpson, 2013, pp.33-36):

“

i. the blanket

she wrapped a woman up
in a blanket from the bay
and rolled her down a hill
to remind everyone
that blankets are for swaddling
and not for smallpox.

i went down the very same hill
with wet mittens and soggy boots
on a plastic toboggan,
a foodland bag,
a cardboard box
and my raincoat.

the teacher is telling me I should feel proud because toboggan is an indian word. i am telling the teacher that out of everything, this is a strange thing to feel proud about, but she's disagrees: "i think your cultural heritage is a mighty fine thing to feel proud about leanne and i think it will lead to great success in your studies"

ii. rising to the occasion

the duke and duchess were coming to visit
and all she had to wear
were ripped jeans and black t-shirts
so she made a dress with saucers for nipples and
a beaver lodge for a bustle.

if you would just read more post colonial theory, you'd understand that your anger is part of the binary of colonialism and therefore colonial and if you just take some of the things from settlers and some of the things from your ancestors, you'll find you can weave them into a really nice tapestry, which will make the colonizers feel ambivalent and then you've altered the power structure.

i liked the saucers for nipples idea so much that i start
wearing dinner plates around the house
over t-shirts

i liked the idea of wearing dinner plates
over t-shirts
so much that i start wearing dinner plates
over t-shirts and
under plaid shirts

mom starts shouting
into the phone
“she’s wearing those dinner plates again”
starting off low and slow,
accelerating into a crescendo
of “plates again!”

iii. fountain

after the dress,
she made a fountain
but not the kind you throw money into
and wish to fall in love or win the lottery

the kind that says
hey, anishinaabekwewag are stuck in this
endless goddam loop
and nobody gives a shit.

*your work is polemic. if you could re-write the tone of this article to avoid shaming canadians
into a paralysis of guilt and inaction we could move forward with the publication of your
article.*

iv. fringe

it’s montreal
and i think it’s spring
because i remember
garbage on the sidewalk.

you start the sentence with
“the reclining figure in white people art...”
and everyone stops listening.

he’s mad because
he dropped his bagel
on the ground
and no other kids
have to go to

fucking art galleries.

she thinks the woman
in the light box looks cold
and starts talking about
growing up and
making hamster houses
out of old computers
for her job.

i'm wondering:
when i cut my back like that
can you sew me up
the same way with
the fringe and the beads?

v. gitichidaakwe's sign said:

I AM WORTH MORE
THAN 1 MILLION
DOLLARS
TO MY PEOPLE

”

nishnaabemowin: gitichidaakwe means holy woman.

8.2 'pipty'

The following is an excerpt from *Islands of Decolonial Love* (Simpson, 2013, pp. 45-47):

“

i.

mike harris built a big concrete building on top of kinomagewapkong because he wanted to protect those teaching rocks from the rain. at least that's what his people said, but that can't be true because mike harris hates ndns, so why would he want to protect our teaching rocks? see. i told you. doesn't make sense.

“i want those fucking indians out of the park.”

while he was building his big concrete building to protect the tourists from the rain, he blocked the creek and now we can't hear our ancestors talking to us, and some people say the spirits got stuck outside the building and some people say the spirits can move in and out of the building because after all, they are spirits. once those zhaganosh found out about those teaching rocks there was no way to project them because every time those zhaganosh find something special they can't leave it alone. they just can't.

dudley george is the first aboriginal person to be killed in a land rights dispute in canada since the 19th century.

i guess that's right, if you don't count suicide, cop killings, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, violent deaths, deaths from poverty, deaths from coping and deaths from being a woman.

abaab: a key, to open with something, unlock,
release, loosen

i'm standing on the dirt road outside of the park gate with everyone else waiting for someone to bring the key from the rez. this old woman gets out of her truck and she goes into the back because she keeps all kinds of stuff in the back and she comes out in her rubber boots and she walks right up to the chain link with her bolt cutters and she cuts that chain in half and moves it out of the way. then she doesn't even say anything, she just walks back to her truck and puts the bolt cutters in the back and drives back to the rez.

aabaabika'ige: s/he unlocks

the profs from the native studies department are just silent because although we enjoy writing papers about this kind of thing, and although we like to discuss this sort of thing at conferences in casinos, while we complain there is no fair trade dark roast coffee, we do not actually enjoy being in the middle of events when they unfold.

ii.

"is there still a lot of press down there?"

"no, there's no one down there. just a great big fat fuck indian."

the night after dudley george got shot you came and picked me up and we drove to the ocean.

"the camera's rolling, eh?"

"yeah."

you were angry. you knew i'd know why. you knew i'd let you be angry, you knew that i'd know it wasn't really angry anyway. it was cover for hurt and sad.

"we had this plan, you know. we thought if we could get five or six cases of labatt's 50, we could bait them."

"yeah."

i think we fucked, and maybe i should say make love, but maybe not because we didn't actually make love. it was sadder than that. we were sadder than that. but it wasn't bad and it wasn't wrong. it wasn't desperate. i think it was salvation.

"then we'd have this big net at a pit."

"creative thinking."

"works in the [u.s.] south with watermelon."

you cried in my arms. when you were done crying, you handed me a 50, and i told you about how the old guys on the reserve called it "pipty" because there are no f's in ojibwe.

iii.

abaab: a key, to open with something, unlock,
release, loosen

aabaabika'ige: s/he unlocks

and we never get to

aabawe wendamowin: to forgive, to warm up to or to
loosen one's mind, to loosen or unlock one's feelings

nishnaabemowin: kinomagewapkong means teaching rocks and is the original name of the site at the petroglyphs provincial parks, zhaganosh is a white person.

”

8.3 'buffalo on'

The following is an excerpt from *Islands of Decolonial Love* (Simpson, 2013, pp. 85-93):

“

round 1

right off the bat, let's just admit we're both from places that have been fucked up through no fault of our own in a thousand different ways for seven different generations and that takes a toll on how we treat each other. it just does.

we're all hunting around for acceptance, intimacy, connection and love, but we don't know what those particular med'cines even look like so we're just hunting anyway with vague ideas from dreams and hope and intention, at the same time dragging around blockades full of reminders that being vulnerable has never ended well for any of us, not even one single time.

there are some things you can escape and there are some things you cannot.

still, i know us, and i know we're going to fight like hell to escape, and sometimes we will and sometimes we won't and at some point we won't know what we've lost or what we're trying to gain, but that's why i'm here to remind you: it's acceptance, intimacy, connection and love. that's it. that's all we're looking for. and you can't have a single one of those things even for a second if your dead. so that is item number one: make sure you're alive. make sure you survive. make sure you are not dead.

second of all, the skill set you need to survive is not the same skill set you need to love and be loved. and while all those white mothers were holding their babies and stroking their heads and singing them songs, i'd like to say all our brown mamas were doing the same but they weren't often afforded the luxury. yes. luxury. they were targeted and they knew we'd be targeted.

thirdly, they are going to berate you, attack you, shame you and worse. they are going to rape you and beat you and no one's going to be there to save you. so you better know how to save yourself. you better know how to get the fuck up. you better know how to pick up pieces and move on. you better know how to quit feeling sorry for yourself and pull up your own socks.

chin up.
buck up.
shut up.

you better not whine and cry and act like the world is going to end because it isn't. you're not the first person to go through this. it was way worse for the kids locked in the basement of that residential school with no food and no water for days on end. it was way worse for those kids when those priests invented their own makeshift electric chair. remember that. it was worse for those kids whose parents were kidnapped and locked away in iron lungs until it didn't matter anymore. you don't even know how lucky you are.

it's the way it is. it is what it is. it's bound to happen and when it does you are going to *buffalo* on.

when you come out, come out swinging.

that's how kwe's mom raised her. that's how my mom raised me. that's how all the mom's raised all the hers. when you're raising someone to survive a war that the other side invests millions in convincing people it doesn't exist, you raise your army to be tough. you teach them not to make a big fuss. you teach them to not feel. if you waste time feeling, you're not going to be ready and in the ring for the next blow. you're going to be crying and feeling sorry for yourself in the corner and you're not going to see him coming. because that's the lesson: you never see them coming.

kwe's mom taught her how to do everything because she'd need to know how to do everything. chop wood. light a fire. light your inner fire. keep it lit. blow on the embers. fan the flames. fire needs breath. life needs fire. breath feeds shkode.

her mom did not teach her how to accept a lover's caress, a kind word or a helping hand. so instead we did shots of jameson and fucked every friday night in a bathroom stall in bar down the road by a lake, not too far from here.

that's how we were gentle.

round 2

after 89 years of eating squirrel, muskrat, groundhog and tomato macaroni wiener soup, my hunting and fishing rights have arrived back at the pleasure of the crown. the letter said as of october 29, you can hunt and fish the 1818 treaty area and please do not flaunt your rights in front of the ontario federation of hunters and anglers.

so me and my best kwe drove down to the ofha headquarters, set up our lawn chairs, built a bit of a shkode and nailed two signs into the ground that read: first we'll kill your animals and fish, then we'll fuck your wives (with their consent, of course). we stayed there for two days, until the cops came and told us we were trespassing and no one knew what our signs meant anyway. you cannot apparently write "fuck" on a sign in public and then just sit beside it smoking electronic cigarettes because we're trying to quit and eating sandwiches out of the cooler. you cannot just protest for no reason, you have to have some reason and come on, you're making your people look bad. they didn't send the regular cops though. they drove out and got the rez cop, and sent him over to talk us down. which i guess is

an improvement because sometimes they just shoot. so garry comes over and is all “what’s all this?” acting cop-like, and we’re biting the insides of our cheeks saying “aaniin gookoosh,” and garry’s biting the insides of his cheeks too because we just learned that particular farm animal all together in language class on wednesday. then kwe says, “what the fuck took you so long? we’ve been here for two days, we’re starting to run out of goddam sandwiches,” garry says we have to be gone by tomorrow or there’s going to be charges.

so i leave ofha headquarters early, and i therefore get home early and i open the bedroom door and there’s garry all missionary, pumping his shit stick into some 25-year-old college zhaganashi-kwe. i feel embarrassed for garry when our eyes meet. and yes, i feel contempt when my eyes meet hers imagining how impressive garry must seem when you can’t see through his veneer and when you don’t know enough to see he stopped self-actualizing in 1998. when you can only see wild exotic savage lover.

his weakness is all splayed out before me in a lake and i can see 15m to the bottom. it burns – the idea that me and her and her vacuous 25-year-old mind are equivalent.

“sorry.”

“sorry for what?”

“i’m sorry you had to see that.”

“me too.”

“it doesn’t mean anything.”

“fuck who you want.”

“you don’t understand.”

“i understand. i don’t care who you fuck.”

“you’re just saying that because you’re mad.”

“i’m saying that because i love you but i don’t care who else you fuck.”

“now what?”

“now what, what?”

“well i don’t know what happens next.”

“of course you don’t.”

“of course i don’t?”

“of course you don’t.”

“you’re sitting there, expecting me to freak, expecting me to be mad and cry and throw random objects at you and call you a loser and selfish and a cheater. and you’re all ready to defend yourself and tell me it means nothing and tell me she means nothing and that it will never happen again. and that’s all bullshit. you’re trying to fill the gaping hole. white pussy filled it for ten minutes. now you’re in the exact same position you were in this morning with your gaping hole. nothing’s changed.”

“no nothing’s changed.”

“fine.”

round 3

kwe and i are at the burial mounds because we decided to start using them as graves again and her kookum gets to the sharing part of the ceremony and she tells the person to her left to share some words and then it will be the next person’s turn, and at the end we will do the double hug circle and everyone will go home. so my turn is coming down the path faster than i’d like and just before it’s my turn, i remember this:

auntie and uncle were fighting over whose turn it is to wear the big gold elephant necklace and auntie’s wearing white pants and stiletto heels even though we’re camping in a white people park and her heels keep sinking in the muddy grass but it doesn’t stop her from looking classy on her lawn chair by the shkode.

there were burial mounds just past those cedars over there and i hope those dead ones can’t hear us. it’s may 24th weekend and you say it two-four, not twenty-four. there isn’t supposed to be any drinking in the park, so the bottles have to be hidden in the tent. there isn’t supposed to be any indians in the park either, but don’t worry, we don’t even know we are indians yet.

the old man is at the fire and it’s getting dark and he’s too tired to get up and get his own drink so he sends me into the tent and he tells me to mix one for the old lady too. i’m eight. i don’t know too much about mixing drinks, but i know that you get into shit if you make them too weak. so i pour mostly rye into the plastic yellow cup and only a little bit of ginger ale, just to be on the safe side.

that’ll put hair on your chest.

holay shit. she mixes drinks like the old lady.

they’ve been drinking all day and with that last drink he’s drunk, but he’s a happy drunk, and now she’s drunk too and she’s happy now, but she’ll turn. just wait, she’ll turn.

she turns. one minute she’s sitting on her lawn chair, the next, she’s sitting cross legged by the fire. she’s war whooping. she’s drumming her hands on the ground in war beats. she’s singing ten little indians and doing the rain dance. then she’s powwow dancing with maniacal speed and screaming we’re indians! we’re indians! we’re all indians! over and over. and the finally, after the bloody crescendo finally runs out, a simple “the reserve is right over there.”

mom takes me to the tent, and she gets me ready for bed. i brush my teeth without water and spit onto the ground. i change into damp pyjamas. i change into skin dripping dirty drops of shame and fear.

"is it true, we're indians?"

"no. grandma's just drunk."

memory searing skin.
ancestors marking warriors.
land giving up truths.
skins made of someone else's shame.

only drunks and children and ancestors tell the truth.

that's it.

round 4

she's telling me tomorrow is the day she is going to die and i believe her. her eighty-four-year-old body has twenty-four more hours of breath left inside and that's it. i always think that old people are different than me, and looking into her land-coloured eyes right now, i know that's crap. she and i are exactly the same. i'm going to be eighty-four and i'm not going to feel any different than i do right now. i'm not going to be wise or brave or all-knowing. i'm just going to be old inhabiting a body on the precipice of betraying me forever. the suicide of everything.

"what do you want to do old woman?"

"i want to go swimming."

"in the lake?"

"in the lake."

"at night."

"tonight?"

"it's the only night left."

"it is."

"i can't believe it's over."

"yeah, this part is almost over. it sucks."

"i want to do something fun."

"fun, hey?"

"nanabush, i want to kiss you."

“ha. no, you don’t.”

“yes i do.”

“fifty years ago, maybe.”

“no, now.”

“it’s because you pity me.”

“it’s because i love you.”

“not like that.”

“not like what?”

“i don’t want to die a dirty old man.”

“you’re dying a dirty old man already, or i guess right now, you’re a dirty old woman.”

“ha.”

“ha.”

“if we’d been born the same year, we’d have already kissed.”

“and more.”

“and more.”

“so fuck time.”

“i don’t know.”

“i think you’ve got skills.”

“i think you’ve got standards.”

“i don’t want to die a fool.”

“we all die as fools.”

“death as humility.”

“death as humiliation.”

“death as transformation.”

“death as transportation.”

“it will be the only thing you’ll remember about me.”

“if you’re good.”

“i’m good.”

“it’s not all i’ll remember.”

“we shouldn’t have talked about it.”

“no, we shouldn’t have talked about it.”

“shut up. i’m doing it.”

kwe picks me up the next day after the family’s been called. it’s just starting to snow but i can’t tell if it is serious yet. the brown of the land has been covered with light. kwe doesn’t talk, knowing there is nothing she can say that will make a bit of difference.

my bones, a heap in the passenger seat.

”

8.4 ‘nogojiwanong’

The following is an excerpt from *Islands of Decolonial Love* (Simpson, 2013, pp. 113-126):

“

she is the only doorway into this world

i. it is with great regret that we are writing on behalf of the michi saagiig anishinaabeg to inform you that you will not be permitted to build your lift locks, canals and hydro dams here because this is the place where we come to sit and talk with our annikoobijiganag.

ii. it is with great regret that we are writing on behalf of the michi saagiig anishinaabeg to inform you that you will not be permitted to build your lift locks, canals and hydro dams here because there are the rivers we use to travel from chi’nibiish to waasegamaa. these routes are vital to the health and well-being of our relatives, pimiziwag and maajaamegosag.

iii. it is with great regret that we are writing on behalf of the michi saagiig anishinaabeg to inform you that you will not be permitted to build your lift locks, canals and hydro dams here because we cannot permit concrete shackles on our mother, she needs to be free to move around in order to cleanse and give birth.

iv. it is with great regret that we are writing on behalf of the michi saagiig anishinaabeg to inform you that you will not be permitted to build your lift locks, canals and hydro dams here because the fish, eels, birds, insects, plants, turtles, and reptiles do not consent to the damage your project will cause.

v. it is with great regret that we are writing on behalf of the michi saagiig anishinaabeg to inform you that you will not be permitted to build your lift locks, canals and hydro dams here because the caribou, elk, deer, bison, lynxes, foxes, wolves, wolverines, martens, otters, muskrats, bears, skunks, raccoons, beavers, squirrels and chipmunks do not consent to the damage your project will cause.

vi. it is with great regret that we are writing on behalf of the michi saagiig anishinaabeg to inform you that you will not be permitted to build your lift locks, canals and hydro dams here because of the

damage it will cause our sugar beds and minomiin beds, and our relatives the ducks and geese that depend on those beds for food.

vii. it is with great regret that we are writing on behalf of the michi saagiig anishinaabeg to inform you that you will not be permitted to build your lift locks, canals and hydro dams here because this is the place where we give birth and breastfeed, and we like to drink the water while doing so. the clean water in our wombs and breasts is the same clean water in the rivers and lakes.

this is the place where we come to sit and talk with our aanikoobijiganag.

signed this 21st day of june, eighteen hundred and thirty, nogojiwanong, kina gichi anishinaabeg-ogaming.

kaniganaa,

wenona x

gizhiikokwe x

niimkii binetikwe x

nokomis x

ogichidaakwe, jijaak doodem x

ogichidaakwe, migizi dooem x

ogichidaakwe, adik doodem x

nishnaabemowin: nogojiwanong is the mississauga name for peterborough and means the place at the foot of the rapids, michi saagiig nishnaabeg is the name for mississauga nishnaabeg people and means lives at the mouth of rivers, aanikobijiganag means ancestors, great-grandmothers, great-grandfathers, and great-grandchildren, literally "the links that bind us together" or a chain, chi'nibiish is the mississauga name for lake ontario, waasegamaa is the nishnaabeg name for georgian bay, maajaamegosag is the name for salmon, pimiziwig is a name for eels, minomiin is wild rice, kina gchi anishinaabeg-ogaming means the place where we all live and work together, wenona is a spirit-being whose name means "the first breast feeder," gizhiigokwe means holy woman, nokomis is grandmother, nimkii binetikwe means thunderbird woman, ogichidaakwe is a holy woman, jijaak is crane, doodem is clan, migizi is bald eagle, adik is caribou, bald eagle and crane are clans associated with mississauga territory, kaniganaa is a word often spoken at the end of prayer or scared songs.

she asked why

yeah, it was me. i blew the fucking lift lock up in downtown peterborough and then tara wrote a song about it. so what. sue me. arrest me. i hated that thing and you should have hated it too, if you'd ever stopped to think about it critically, like even for a second, and so now parks canada has one less nationalism park in its collection of family jewels. big deal.

you know what? i tried something more reasonable. i fucking tried to paint it into the landscape like that artist dude in green grass, running water ... or was it truth and bright water. i can't remember. ali knows. ask her. i tried to paint it into the landscape, but big surprise, it didn't work.

i don't know where you're going to fucking skate in the winter and i don't care. oh wait, skate on the lake. oh wait, it doesn't freeze anymore because you wrecked the weather. i don't know where the optimist club is going to hold its fishing derby and i don't care. oh wait, fish in the lake. oh wait, your

cottages wrecked all the fish in the lake. i don't know where those big shots from toronto are going to drive their drunken yachts this summer, scoping out waterfront lots of their monster cottages.

maybe they can go bowling at bowl-a-rama instead.

she asked them for help

howah. when them binesiwag strike, it is with precision. they don't mess around those ones. no way. they strike and boom. the job is done.

oh but they full of it those young ones. can't be helped. so much energy flying up so high, darting back down. this one mama, they called her aanjibines. transformer that one, changer, renewer. she live high up on that mountain over there, and she taking care of two young ones. the boy's name was echo-maker. the girl's name was overseer. overseer just watched and listened while echo-maker flapped around, squawked and whined. she was strong footed, that one.

they lived up there, in a big, big nest, so they could watch over everything. nahow, when this story happen, things not so good for those mississauga. things not so good.

most people had enough food, so that wasn't it. not this time.

most people had houses, so that wasn't it. not this time.

most people were practicing their ways, that wasn't it. not this time.

this time it was with their neighbours. those ones that moved in beside them. they partying all the time. loud all the time. never taking care. tramping all over those plants mississauga use to heal. eating everything out of the mississauga's garden. building a big wooden deck fence all around the mississauga's house so nobody can get in and out no more. cutting down trees for no reason. peeing in the water.

that's right. they were peeing in the water.

i know.

can you imagine? what kinda people pee in the water?

but it was more than just pee. they cut down all kinds of trees, put them into special machines and out comes birch bark. long, beautiful sheets of birch bark. but they don't make no canoes. no siree. they put lines on it and then throw it away. that's what they did with most of the stuff they made. they throwed it away.

then they build a concrete river and a big elevator machine that lifts boats so they don't have to carry them over portages. i know. kinda magic eh? imagine. never having to portage around no more rough water.

well that big elevator machine, turns out it not so special after all. it not so magic. while all those white people just sailing down the concrete river riding up and down on that elevator machine, those shackles start to hurt the veins of mother earth. she starting to feel the pain. she starting to feel all locked up. can't move. things not flowing, getting everything all backed up. salmon and eels getting all traffic jammed up at those elevator machines, can't get to where they're going. everybody getting sick, even those animals and them fish, everybody. slow kinda sickness that one, sneaks up on you. those neighbours don't notice though, just keep riding that elevator machine. just keep making more.

hundred years go by, maybe more. the fish and the mississauga are sad and lonely and tough and mad a lot of them, maybe even most of them, are dead. those neighbours have a big party to celebrate the elevator machine's birthday. cake. balloons. even invite those mississauga to sing, get kinda mad when no mississauga show up, but anyway, party must go on.

and these mississauga, they tried everything. they had them neighbours over for dessert, try and be friends. rhubarb pie. that's what they all had. homemade. good stuff that biindigen wushk. the neighbours, they nice and they say,

"oh yes, yes yes. you are soooooo right. it will never happen again. you can trust us."

then, whoops, it happen again.

so those mississauga had those neighbours over for dinner, try and come up with some ground rules. the neighbours, they nice and they say,

"oh yes, yes yes, you are soooooo right. it will never happen again. you can trust us."

then, whoops, it happen again.

so the mississauga invite them over one more time for a serious discussion with no pie. just tea this time. this time those neighbours say,

"whoa whoa ... what you people getting your panties in a knot for? what you people doing being so uptight all the time? we just living our lives. doing our things. we can't stop riding our elevator machine or our economy will fall apart and we have no health care and we get sick. you don't want us to get sick, do you, indians?"

mississauga don't want any ones to get sick. sick is no fun.

"everything is going to be ok, mississauga," those neighbours say.

"we do better. your river, she not so trampled. it's already coming back. see? you're making a big deal about nothing. we'll be more careful. it won't happen again." then those neighbours plant lawn and geraniums where mississauga medicine supposed to be.

whoops, it happen again.

mississauga starting to get mad. starting to think those neighbours not honourable. maybe trying to pull the wool over those mississauga eyes. so they have a big meeting and they don't invite neighbours this time. binesiwag watching from above. everybody has ideas on what to do. but which idea going to work? that always the problem. somebody say,

"this idea going to work, this is the way to go, i'm sure of it."

then a woman say,

"what about this. you forgot about this. this is going to be a problem."

it goes around like that for a long time.

every time they get close to deciding, echo-maker fly over, booming and crashing, saying no, no, no. don't decide when you're all mad. don't decide too quick. take your time on this one. be smart. be strategic. sleep on it. go get massages first. then decide. everybody act nice after massages. clears the head and heart.

so those mississauga go and get massages. real nice kind with dim lights and new age wave music and flannel sheets.

in the meantime though, she, who is just a young one gets all frustrated with all the patience, massaging and talking. she, who is just a young one, decides to take things into her hands. she's heard those old ladies pray. she's seen them walk around those lakes. but this time, she puts her semaa down and she sings a different kind of prayer, and she don't say it to nibi, not this time. nope, she say it to binesiwag.

and those binesiwag heard that prayer and they had their own meeting. they know that elevator machine has got to go and they know who they got to talk with. except she is kinda snippy sometimes, that one. she do good work, but sometimes binesiwag maybe get a little jealous or offended or maybe that one that lives in the water maybe gets a little snippy and then next thing you know someone throws a rock or then maybe binesiwag calls her a monster and then maybe fight gets on.

so binesiwag gots to be careful. gots to go carefully down to that beach and give her name a call, all sweet like. maybe put out an offering. maybe sing that song she like, 'bout the time first striker didn't duck fast enough and lost a tail feather. maybe sing that one just to get her in a cushy mood.

but while binesiwag are deciding, taking their time, maybe going to get massages, echo-maker is flying around trying to get those mississauga to their massages before they make a bad decision, overseer goes down to the beach, puts an offering down and sings that song.

then she wait.

she wait and wait

she wait and wait and wait.

she wait some more.

then she starting to get impatient. like maybe that one that lives in the water is there and just not coming up so she can see her. making her wait on purpose like.

overseer fly over to kaakaabiikaa to see what she can see. see if she see any signs of mishibizhiw.

the water get all choppy, and the wind gets all excited like maybe something going to happen, sky gets all grey coloured.

"hola what happened to my sunny day? binesiwag gimme my sunny day back! i'm working on my tan because i have a hot date tonight. got a new fancy party dress, going to that new place to eat, and i want my sunny day back."

"oh, why aaniin, mishibizhiw, so nice to see you. i know you gotta get all dolled up in that new party dress. i'll give you your sunny day back, don't you worry. you'll get your sunny day back in time for your tan and your date. but first i need you to do something for me."

overseer gets out some candy and gives it to mishibizhiw. everybody wants to be a helper after candy. overseer butters mishibizhiw up.

"this job really, really important. the survival of the lake and the river and everything depend upon it. the survival of the mississauga depend upon it. the survival of mishibizhiw and binesiwag depend on it. and you, mishibizhiw, are the only one smart enough, fast enough and with enough sucking power to do it."

mishibizhiw eats up the candy.

“hey overseer, how about licorice next time. red, not the black.”

“ok mishibizhiw, next time licorice.”

mishibizhiw thinks about overseer’s request.

“i am really fast. and i am very smart, and nobody, i mean noooooobody can suck like me. it’s true”

“yep it is. now pay attention. i need you to swim down the river until you get to liftlock 21. then stop.”

“liftlock 21? the nationalism historical site of wonder?”

“ehn”

“the highest hydraulic liftlock in the world?”

“that’s the sucker, sucker.”

“easy.”

“i hope you’re not going to ask me to dig. i just got my nails done. like the colour?”

“oh yes. the colour is perfect, blueberry, na?”

“ehn its blueberries all right.”

“i fix your nails if you have to dig, ok. my auntie does nails, i get you a special deal. no problem. she do feet too.”

“ok?”

“ok. so you get to the lift lock, and you got to be quiet and discreet.”

“ok, then what?”

“the you suck and suck and suck. suck it all out, ‘til it’s gone. suck all them locks out, all the way through the system, ‘til you get to the big lake.”

“ok.”

“ok.”

“overseer?”

“yep?”

“do i got time for a little fun on the way home after all the sucking?”

“like what?”

“like maybe knock down that jail the teaching rocks are locked in?”

“i dunno. that going to make the neighbours really mad. that’s another one of their nationalism picnic parks.”

“the neighbours already really mad because their boat elevator is all gone.”

“ok. maybe hit it by mistake with your tail on the way back out. then call me, i set that appointment up with my auntie for your nails and feet. i’ll get you a real bargain.”

so now those mississauga just coming out of echo-maker’s massage parlour, no not parlour, massage therapy clinic, when they see some kind of strange blue light off in the distance, at the base of the mountain sort of imploding, maybe getting sucked into the ground, like a big vacuum just under the surface. their eyes a little blurry from all that dim light and that padded toilet seat you put your face in at the massage place. they think they are not seeing right.

but when they get home, them neighbours all gone. no house, no lawn, no geraniums, no fence even. like they were never there. like they got abducted by aliens or something, like they were never there. erased. gone. kaput. like maybe it all just a bad dream. mississauga sit down in their house all relaxed, have some tea, maybe a snack, try to remember what they were doing before those neighbours showed up.

nishnaabemowin: aanjibines means transformer or renewer, nahow is ok, biindigen wushk is rhubarb, kaakaabiikaa is a waterfall, mishibizhiw is a large, underwater lynx and binesiwag are thunderbirds.

she sang them home

bozhoo odenaabe
shki maajaamegos ndixhinaakaz
it’s been a long time.

oowaah
odenaabe

oowaah
odenaabe

it’s this way, i can feel
my lateral line drawing forward

let me let me let me
taste you

oowaah that feels good on my gills

my kobade told her daughter about that feeling
my great grandmother told her daughter
my kookum told her daughter
and my doodoom told me.

it was better than they said.

i’ve never felt like this
this is the perfect place
it’s easy here

oowaah odenaabe odenaabe odenaabe odenaabe

bubbling
beating
birthing
breathing

bubbling
beating
birthing
breathing

oowaah odenaabe
i never thought we'd meet.

careful with me odenaabe
i'm not strong like those old ones.
they fasted and swam up here every year
this is my first time
weweni odenaabe
weweni

there are more coming from chi'nibiish
they're waiting at the mouth.

chi'nibiish
saagetay'achewan
pimadashkodeyaang
odenaabe
kitchi gaming
atigmeg zaageguneen
asin saagegun

asin saagegun
atigmeg zaageguneen
kitchi gaming
odenaabe
pimadashkodeyaangodenaabe
saagetay'achewan
chi'nibiish

you're quicker than i thought

is jijaak still here?
i hope jijaak.
an old one told me about
"land of jijaak and migizi" she said.

don't worry odenaabe
your wounds from the shackle locks
from the dams
they'll heal now they're gone

we're bringing pimizi
we bringing all the ones that are gone

it's over now
you can cry now

it's over
we're all going to be ok now

they're gone.

and there is more of us waiting to be born.

nishnaabemowin: bozhoo odenaabe is hello otonabee, shki maajaamegos ndizhinaakaz means my name is new trout that leaves (salmon), odenaabe is the otonabee river that boils and bubbles like a heart, weweni means carefully, doodom is a name for mother used by children, meaning "my breastfeeder," kobade is link, great grandmothers, great grandchildren, chi'nibiish is lake Ontario, saagetay'achewan is trent river, pimadashkodeyaang is rice lake, gichi gamimg is katchewanooka lake, asin saagegun is stoney lake, atigmeg zaageguneen is clear lake.

”

8.5 Example of Iterative Analysis

The following is my formal iterative analysis of 'pipty' that collates the notes in my hand-written research journal with Simpson's (2013, pp. 45-7) narrative:

i.

mike harris built a big concrete building on top of kinomagewapkong bcause he wanted to protect those teaching rocks from the rain. at least that's what his people said, but that can't be true because mike harris hates ndns, so why would he want to protect our teaching rocks? see. i told you. doesn't make sense.

"i want those fucking indians out of the park."

First reading: despite being on their ancestral land. Demonstrates the impact of provincial park developments on their grounded normativity and ability to live as Indigenous peoples on their own terms.

Second reading: seems absurd to protect "the teaching rocks from the rain" considering their longstanding importance to those who have historically inhabited this area who have never felt it necessary to protect them from the rain before. Had to Google Ndns → a name given to themselves, popular in urbans areas, Simpson lives in Peterborough – identifies with this name. Discomfort at Harris' view of First Nations and the park → colonised people and colonised nature, could argue that

to colonise one you have to/or you just do colonise the other (demonstrates that geo and body politics cannot be separated).

Fourth reading: indigeneity as something that needs protecting, continued in current multicultural discourse, but protecting on whose terms? The way this 'protection' manifests itself - is it actually protection or assimilation? Difference between what Indigenous people are told in terms of motives and the actual reasons for 'protection' maybe. Not even discrete about hate for Indigenous people, that seems shocking to me and nonsensical, how can he justify his perspective? As she says it "doesn't make any sense".

while he was building his big concrete building to protect the tourists from the rain, he blocked the creek and now we can't hear our ancestors talking to us, and some people say the spirits got stuck outside the building and some people say the spirits can move in and out of the building because after all, they are spirits. once those zhaganosh found out about those teaching rocks there was no way to project them because every time those zhaganosh find something special they can't leave it alone. they just can't.

First reading: They put indigeneity on display, objectify it because of difference which is constructed in relation to the colonial Self – celebration of multiculturalism which I suggest actually involves assimilation on the terms of the state. This is not just seen in demarcating parks but also in academia, textual representations etc. (link to Said and others who have spoken about how this distance between the self and other is a paradox due to difference being derived from each other, therefore relational).

Second reading: No one way of being Indigenous, no singular truth about the spirits – up for interpretation → I suggest this is due to relationality, linked to Viveiros de Castro's work. Something that is not disputed: the actions of the colonisers disrupted and continue to disrupt their way of life.

Fourth reading: Concrete development (repeated theme throughout many of her stories) as inhibiting relationality, if ancestors are unable to talk to the Indigenous peoples then this restricts their ability to engage in their epistemologies and generate knowledge – it's not that the ancestors have stopped talking, they can't hear them → Indigeneity is not disappearing, just being prevented from its embodiment. Talking about the white people (zhaganosh) – I am implicated in this, I have dedicated the time to learn about her ontology because it is different 'special' compared to my own, I am guilty of not being able to "leave it alone" → does it have a space in academia in the hands of white scholars, should it only be brought into academia by Indigenous scholars, but then because the system is infused with coloniality would it ever be spoken about in mainstream academia (is it beneficial to talk about it in these spaces or is it indigenising the academy?) – Highlights the importance of whose terms knowledges are addressed and for what ends. We assume the right to research something because we find it interesting despite potential costs, we may address that costs as something unfortunate rather than not doing the research at all (links to smith) – I am implicated in this (must address).

dudley george is the first aboriginal person to be killed in a land rights dispute in canada since the 19th century.

i guess that's right, if you don't count suicide, cop killings, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, violent deaths, deaths from poverty, deaths from coping and deaths from being a woman.

First reading: BODY POLITICS - deaths by land rights disputes only take into account certain kinds of deaths, direct deaths → not the ontological damage which results in deaths from other means and the potential death of indigeneity.

Second reading: absolving themselves for the responsibility of the deaths of the Indigenous → it is time responsibility was taken up in a number of ways, not just in terms of land claims → demands transcend this space.

Third reading: poverty, heart disease etc → these deaths and suffering seem to go unquestioned as to why those conditions arise in the first place. Deaths from being a woman” – how can that be blamed on an individual? No power over that at all – yet this is naturalised as being normal, female Indigenous bodies are just in more danger than other bodies. With the other causes of death - part of a system that makes it difficult for them to survive, and not just physically but also ontologically – this suffering as partially a consequence of colonial occupation. Link to Povinelli and the ‘event’.

Fourth reading: this framing of deaths enforces the divide between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ – does not take into account how for Nishnaabeg to live *as* Indigenous, for indigeneity to live, requires living on the land on their own terms. Italics - not the language of Mike Harris who calls them ‘Indians’ – maybe more official reporting? Framed as though that’s an achievement. Sharp contrast to the sentence below. Get the feeling that there are other causes of death not mentioned, the extent of Indigenous deaths is likely unknown and unreported (link to murdered and missing Indigenous women in British Columbia).

abaab: a key, to open with something, unlock,
release, loosen

Fourth reading: fragmented, doesn’t seem to fit, breaks the flow of the story – previously talking about something very serious and dramatic and suddenly goes to a definition – I remain curious.

i’m standing on the dirt road outside of the park gate with everyone else waiting for someone to bring the key from the rez. this old woman gets out of her truck and she goes into the back because she keeps all kinds of stuff in the back and she comes out in her rubber boots and she walks right up to the chain link with her bolt cutters and she cuts that chain in half and moves it out of the way. then she doesn’t even say anything, she just walks back to her truck and puts the bolt cutters in the back and drives back to the rez.

Fourth reading: reference to chain link reminds me of kobade → killing Indigenous as a way to break the links between generations, part of what it means to be Indigenous according to Simpson. But maybe not, it is framed as though an Indigenous person is cutting the fence so maybe this isn’t the imagery she is going for. Maybe they want to go in the join the protestors? The character has a lot of different things in her boot – always has to be prepared? Or cuts the bolt because the park doesn’t symbolise anything other than colonialism to her anyway, why wait for a key when you don’t respect the fence and enclosure it represents?

abaabika’ige: s/he unlocks

Fourth reading: these definitions begin to make more sense now in terms of linking the unlocking or getting through the gate → *multidimensionality* and *abstraction*.

the profs from the native studies department are just silent because although we enjoy writing papers about this kind of thing, and although we like to discuss this sort of thing at conferences in casinos, while we complain there is no fair trade dark roast coffee, we do not actually enjoy being in the middle of events when they unfold.

First reading: events like this provide material to write about, in a strange way Indigenous scholars benefit from it (also like me – this makes me feel extremely uncomfortable, if it wasn't for the coloniality I would not have this topic to write my dissertation on, same with other academic work – benefitting from the asymmetrical system within which we reside).

Second reading: Real life events like this brings discussion back down to earth, brings what academics write about into the present, material manifestation. Admits to her own distance at times, or the distance of some Indigenous scholars. Emphasises that academia can make you distant from things that are happening in the present and reminds us of the importance of reducing this, what we write has importance and impact in the world.

Fourth reading: complaining about the coffee, links to complaining about not being able to ice skate when there are clearly much bigger issues that need facing in 'nogojiwanong' → *duality* of the position Indigenous scholars assume (addressed by Hunt and hybridisation) this involves.

ii.

"is there still a lot of press down there?"

"no, there's no one down there. just a great big fat fuck indian."

the night after dudley george got shot you came and picked me up and we drove to the ocean.

"the camera's rolling, eh?"

"yeah."

you were angry. you knew i'd know why. you knew i'd let you be angry, you knew that i'd know it wasn't really angry anyway. it was cover for hurt and sad.

"we had this plan, you know. we thought if we could get five or six cases of labatt's 50, we could bait them."

"yeah."

i think we fucked, and maybe i should say we make love, but maybe not because we didn't actually make love. it was sadder than that. we were sadder than that. but it wasn't bad and it wasn't wrong. it wasn't desperate. i think it was salvation.

"then we'd have this big net at a pit."

"creative thinking."

"works in the [u.s.] south with watermelon."

you cried in my arms. when you were done crying, you handed me a 50, and i told you about how the old guys on the reserve called it "pipty" because there are no f's in ojibwe.

Second reading: Manifestation of anger to hide "hurt and sad" → vulnerability (linked to 'buffalo on' → vulnerability has never been beneficial for them as it makes them easy targets, vulnerability as a

privilege). 'pipty' → hybridity of language (I resort to hybridity due background in postcolonial studies, I remember that Simpson (2017) does not identify as hybrid – what are the implications of this? Linked to 'smallpox, anyone') → bringing the world fifty closer to ojibwe – they adapt the English language for themselves – assert power over language (reminds me of that poem about adapting the Queen's English) – they maintain control of language.

Third reading: They are already so vulnerable in many ways because of who they are, it can seem or be dangerous to be vulnerable emotionally – linked to 'buffalo on' and being able to foresee the next colonial move.

Fourth reading: Different temporalities of the dialogue in quotes and the block text – *multidimensionality*. Dialogue as telling their side of the story, a side that is likely not to be conveyed by the press that are mentioned, based their protest on one that had already happened in the US? Block text – ocean as a place of reflection and contemplation, a place to get away. Salvation - a way to move past the vulnerability and hurt imposed by this violation of Indigenous bodies and find hope (do the two link narratives link? And if they do, how? What is the significance?)

iii.

abaab: a key, to open with something, unlock,
release, loosen

aabaabika'ige: s/he unlocks

and we never get to

aabawe wendamoowin: to forgive, to warm up to or to
loosen one's mind, to loosen or unlock one's feelings

Fourth reading: The definitions all click together now and the beginning theme of vulnerability is tied into the events of the story which could be total non-fiction or a mixture, I am unsure – although maybe in that final moment of "fucking" or "love making" – the salvation, they could unlock their feelings. My ability to do this whenever I choose as a privilege, vulnerability is a theme of decolonial research and de-centring one's knowledge – should see this as a privilege and address this in our writing, our vulnerability (although in comparison to theirs' is it even vulnerability? Or just uncertainty, is doing this actually making me vulnerable – maybe in that my research might not be very good, but that is not vulnerability to the same or anywhere near the same extent – link to Simpson addressing ambivalence in 'smallpox, anyone').

General thoughts and observations:

Third reading: Simpson uses juxtaposition and fragmented writing, reading her pieces is not a smooth linear practice, it takes time, re-reading (multidimensional) → jolted out of your comfort zone and out of the comfort of understanding what you read the first time round, these stories are an arena in which I, or Western knowledge, is not at the centre – I am just one observer on the side lines, can't follow everything easily like you can when you're in the centre, it takes time → makes me vulnerable. Her stories have multiple layers and meanings. Repetition of the definitions and building on them throughout the story → keep being brought back to an idea that you don't quite understand its relevance until the end → meaning is built and pieces of the jigsaw are gradually put in place, at first

you think she is just telling multiple stories at once but when you reach the end of your third or fourth reading you begin to understand the interconnectedness of it all.

8.6 Tying Analysis into Knots

The following is an excerpt from my research journal:

