TRANSFORMATIVE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE

By

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Abstract

This study contends that an understanding of the impacts of colonialism is essential for meaningful community work with Indigenous peoples. The epistemic approach of this research is grounded in Indigenous (Secwepemc) ways of knowing and research choices have been made so as to be congruent with that knowledge base. The work thus utilizes a qualitative, critical Indigenous methodology which purposefully centralizes Indigenous knowledges as well as thematic analysis for the organization and analysis of selected data. A total of eight books were selected for this research. Using thematic analysis, four main themes were generated from the data analysis: Recognize, Reclaim, Reconnect, and Revitalize. These themes are described and discussed in relation to the research questions in order to highlight Indigenous peoples' acts of resistance and how these acts are related to transformative community development within Indigenous communities. This includes a creative analytic practice in the form of story writing. This study's conclusion focuses on the intentional centralization of Indigenous knowledges in order to inform meaningful social change. The work provides Community Psychology practitioners, or anyone working towards social justice objectives, with some useful insights into how to support development, specifically with or within Indigenous communities from a transformative perspective.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This work proceeds from the premise that Indigenous peoples and communities have been devastated by contact with European colonialism (Alfred, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). In the wake of assimilationist policies and blatant genocide, Indigenous peoples have suffered wide spread dispossession of land, autonomy, and an irreversible unravelling of the socio-cultural fabric that traditionally connected people to their language, their ancestors, and the land itself (Richmond, 2007). The subsequent "redistribution "of land to Settlers was often justified by the notion that they were simply utilizing and domesticating this "empty wilderness" of the New World. The self-evident credence of this inevitable and morally righteous development is intimately linked to the Western concept of progress (Alfred, 1999); which assumes that civilization develops in stages - the tribal being the most primitive – and that as civil society progresses it naturally becomes more rational, technocentric and complex in its social structures (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). The progressive presuppositions of the colonial project were, and tend to remain, beyond permissible criticism. In a similar sense, the original peoples of this "empty wilderness" were seen as resources for, or obstacles to, the realization of Western destiny (Alfred, 1999). These underlying suppositions, progress and development, continue to loom large in the colonial project and continue to exert a significant negative physical, psychological, and cultural impact on Indigenous communities - including the delegitimization of Indigenous knowledges, worldviews and pedagogies (Battiste, 2000).

Many current social problems within Indigenous populations are directly related to the continuation and, perhaps more invidious, the adaptive mutation and growth of this

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constitutive colonial narrative. As is evident from the legacy of legally sanctioned residential schools, to child welfare practices, Indigenous peoples have consistently been addressed as a "problem" in need of assistive and charitable assimilation by Settler society. Indigenous communities are not only blamed for their inability to be absorbed with expediency, they are consistently framed by dominant society as hopelessly incapable of even articulating, let alone actualizing, their own solutions. A crucial aspect of this colonial framing process is pathologizing the individual and isolating his or her situation from broader historical and socio-structural relations (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). The attempt to conceal deeper power structures and societal inequalities reinforces underlying assumptions of powerlessness and justifies the paternalistic approach of the colonial State. In addition, it works to conceal awareness of collective struggle and acts of resistance that defy colonialism and reassert Indigenous autonomy.

I share in the belief that confronting the historic origins of the colonial myth, and challenging the present manifestations of this legacy, must involve decolonization as a form of transformative change through the reclamation of Indigeneity (Roué, 2006). Far from being lost or condemned to vanish, many of the values, principles, and practices of traditional Indigenous ways of being remain vibrant and evolving elements of contemporary communities (Long & Dickason, 2011). Decolonization is a complex undertaking and does not simply entail a kind of straightforward or platitudinal critical analyses of late capitalism or the paternalizing policies of racist legislation; but rather, decolonization involves a disciplined and multifarious understanding of the subtle privileging of specific ways of knowing, ways of learning, and ways of being in the world (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

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This study addresses and analyzes acts of resistance that work to centralize Indigeneity by focusing on a group of Indigenous scholars who are reframing Indigenous problems and working to contextualize issues within deeper colonial and social understandings. An important aspect of this work is recognizing the individual as embedded within broader social and historical relationships. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has written, "Many indigenous activists have argued that such things as mental illness, alcoholism, and suicide, for example, are not about psychological and individualized failure but about colonization or lack of collective self-determination" (p. 153). This study will highlight acts of resistance that foreground the effects of colonial violence; that is, interventions based on both Indigenous and community psychology values (personal, relational, and collective) which promote liberation (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). The objective of this analysis is to deepen an understanding of what supports transformative community development in Indigenous communities.

In a sense then, this work represents a kind of *conscientization* (Freire, 1970; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010); that is, a belief that empowerment and social transformation begins with people's comprehension of the unjust psychological and socio-political circumstances that limit them. To work towards transformative change, Community Psychology practitioners (CPP) are called to question the deep-seated presuppositions of the status quo, the colonial myths that often shape our social structures and institutions, and cultivate a sense of consciousness-raising. CPPs, according to Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) are called upon to "reframe problems, listen to the voices of disadvantaged people and make the invisible visible" (p. 29). We aim to not only frame issues in terms of oppression and the inequalities of power, but to emphasize the

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strengths of marginalized people. Ultimately, the goal is to foster awareness that leads to action.

Indigenous Community Psychology Practitioner

According to Nelson & Prilleltensky (2010), Community Psychology (CP) involves the practice of constantly balancing values, research, and action, to promote and support social changes that sustain healthy individuals and communities. In the field of CP, an emphasis is placed on community-based work which is pragmatic, reflexive, anti-oppressive, participatory, value-based, and reliant upon building alliances (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). CP practitioners do not advocate from the role of the detached observer, nor are we expected to assume the position of an objective expert. As such, it is not mandatory to adopt a strictly positivist position as we are encouraged to utilize our ethics and values to guide our research. This means that we can be transparent when our goal is to generate knowledge specifically aimed at changing unjust social conditions. If we are to see ourselves as professionals, it is in the sense of recognizing our privileged position, and therefore, comprehending our responsibility to incite actions, that promote liberation and well being.

For me, there is much shared ground between Indigenous methodologies and CP approaches. For example, both consider empowerment to be a relational construct. The foundational understanding is that we are interconnected and when we transform oppressive systems, other people may benefit. There is also a shared emphasis on holism, defined in part as "the inclusion of personal, relational, and collective values in our work" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 53). Values serve as guiding principles to generate social action that challenges the status quo. Similarly, transformative research is

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expected to provide an educational component, be accessible to non-academic readers, and researchers are invited to write about personal experiences. Within the CP field, Indigenous peoples are encouraged to identify positively with their own culture, to actively engage in decolonization, and to actualize self-determination (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

One of the objectives of this research is to further realize the potential in CP as a decolonizing practice where professionals do not perpetuate assimilationist or Eurocentric agendas, but instead value and honour Indigenous ways of knowing and being. This research is not intended to be an exhaustive inquiry, but rather an intentional centralizing of Indigenous knowledges for the explicit purpose of meaningful social change.

Location and Personal Connection

"Where are you from?" is the most common question I have been asked when meeting another Indigenous person. It is a question that invites multiple answers. It may be an attempt to understand who you are, your territory, your people, or perhaps, to determine familial ties. It may also be an invitation to share stories.

I am from the Secwepemc nation, granddaughter of Christine Simon, daughter of Robert Simon and Diana Jules. I am of mixed heritage; my ancestry is Secwepemc and Dutch. I grew up on my reserve, the Skeetchestn First Nation, which is a small interior community of 350 people. For the past 17 years I have sojourned on Coast Salish territory in Vancouver. I am strongly tied to my family, community, and my Secwepemc Nation. For many years I have searched for innovative solutions for community

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development with the sole purpose of returning to my community with this newfound knowledge.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to work with numerous organizations across the province, designing programs with rural, Indigenous communities. I saw firsthand how communities everywhere are negatively affected and harmed by colonialism. As a result, I have changed my mind about what ‘innovative’ programming is. I now realize that what has been seen as successful programming in other communities may not be appropriate for my own. I am invested in this research, personally and politically. My work will continue to be within or with Indigenous communities, where I hope to further define how community development from Indigenous perspectives can be meaningful, authentic, and truly transformative.

Relational Accountability

As an Indigenous person within academia, the question “where are you from?” takes on new meaning. I now find myself responding something to the effect of: I am an anti-colonial, Indigenous feminist. I am actively seeking ways to resist the subordination and domination of Indigenous peoples, women, minorities and the natural world, by colonial interests. In my experience, challenging the dominant hegemonic epistemologies and practices of colonialism and cultivating the ability to reimagine new, healthy and flourishing ways of being, are two sides of the same coin. In this sense, the development of an Indigenous critical consciousness must entail the centralization of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies.

Throughout my academic journey, I have not been exposed to Indigenous epistemologies in any of my research courses. As a result, I have often been faced with

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the daunting task of proving the legitimacy of Indigenous research methodologies and ways of knowing. Part of this challenge is explaining Indigeneity itself – where I am from, who I am - and the importance and purpose of narratives of resistance to neo-colonialism, and why research is anything but culturally neutral, objective, value-free, or apolitical. Embedded in these assumptions are historical relationships between colonizer and colonized, relationships that continue to inform contemporary knowledge production, shape subjugated identities, and aim to reproduce colonial ideologies and mythologies (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

As I have further developed my critical consciousness throughout this research, I have felt empowered and inspired by critical Indigenous theoretical frameworks such as TribalCrit (McKinely & Brayboy, 2006) and Critical Indigenous Pedagogy (Denzin, Lincoln, & Tuhiwai Smith, 2008). These frameworks call upon the researcher to understand how colonial domination manifests in everyday practices, and to develop effective oppositional resistance to on-going agendas of privilege. Through this critical Indigenous lens, I am encouraged to work from the assumption that interlocking systems of power and oppression are reproduced in our institutions and serve to disempower, subjugate, and marginalize people. As such, I will draw from Indigenous scholars and worldviews in a conscious effort to conduct research in a way that does not unnecessarily reproduce the hegemony of dominant Western ideologies. I am attentive to the role that my positionality, biases (i.e., formally educated in Eurocentric thought), values, privileges, and positions of power manifest in this work. Gender, race, class and other intersecting sites of oppression shape all of my thoughts and writing. Indigenous research involves approaches situated within the decolonization movement of Indigenous politics

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where it is “focused strategically on the goal of self-determination of Indigenous people,” and, “involves the processes of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization as peoples” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 116).

To ground myself in Indigenous ways of knowing is to understand the interconnectedness of the individual self and collective wellbeing. As Wilson (2001) has claimed, using an Indigenous methodology means being *relationally accountable*. As a researcher, I am accountable not only to the people and communities in my network and my family, but am also accountable to *All Our Relations* (King, 1990). Research in this sense is not just something that is “out there:” it is a connected process of producing and constructing knowledge that will serve my work, my community, and potentially any individuals who are engaging in similar social justice or activist work. As Kovach (2009) has written:

> We can call it decolonization, we can call it Indigenous praxis, or we can call it resistance. The point is that indigenous research needs to benefit indigenous people in some way, shape, or form – that is the bottom line. The whole notion of ‘knowledge for knowledge’s sake’ does not fit an Indigenous research framework at this point. Maybe someday we will have that luxury, but not right now. (p. 93)

Indigenous research methodologies call upon me to be relationally accountable to my people and to *All Our Relations*, rather than privileging a Western, positivistic kind of validity. This accountability has led me to ask questions as to my relational obligations. Am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? Does my research aim to benefit Indigenous peoples in some way? It is important that this work be useful. In accordance with my

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critical Indigenous framework and relational accountability, one of my key objectives with this research is to understand how to continue to do community work as a Community Psychology practitioner in a way that does not perpetuate ethnocentric practices, promote social control, or conform to the status quo (Wilson, 2001).

Statement of Issue

In order to realize my ongoing community work as an Indigenous CP practitioner, defining what community development means within Indigenous communities is essential. Likewise, I must be knowledgeable about the multiple pathways and possibilities for transformative change beyond the dominant Western trajectory (Alfred, 1999; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Critically speaking, this involves conceptualizing the revitalization of communities in a way that challenges and goes beyond Western notions of modernization, capitalism, and consumer-oriented community initiatives (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011). My initial literature review did not reveal any Indigenous Community Psychology practitioners in Canada who are critically addressing the complexities and particulars of development within Indigenous communities. There are, however, Indigenous scholars who identify certain general issues pertinent to community development and who suggest a need for holistic approaches that are socially, culturally, economically, and politically sustainable (Long & Dickason, 2011). Considering the gaps in the literature, this thesis will attempt to draw upon the work of a group of prominent Indigenous scholars engaging with these issues in order to increase awareness about key elements of Indigenous community development from a transformative perspective. This research is intended to increase understanding

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that will lead to action aimed at strengthening community capacity for transformative change.

In my lifetime, there has been a revitalization of Indigenous cultures. Many are looking at the past for inspiration and guidance in order to reclaim our own ideas regarding meaningful ways to move forward. In this respect, Indigenous peoples are coming to see themselves as not only capable of articulating community issues, but of finding authentic and viable solutions. What makes Indigenous knowledges (i.e. the richness of Indigenous worldviews, languages, and teachings) particularly salient is their relevance to modern day issues. Traditional teachings, such as how Indigenous peoples related to and respected the natural ecologies of this land over millennia, remain a part of the knowledge and value systems that continue to guide many Indigenous peoples and communities (Long & Dickason, 2011). One implication of this research might be to draw upon these knowledge bases to help interpret modern day issues facing Indigenous peoples, and guide transformative change towards healthy and sustainable communities. Building community and revitalizing culture, however, is not simply a matter of categorically disregarding Western thought. It is about reimagining and re-envisioning how Indigenous worldviews might guide whatever forms of political and social development are needed for the health and flourishing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike.

Indigenous knowledges are uniquely positioned to provide transformative perspectives on theory and praxis which may be of crucial value to non-Indigenous people who seek to understand the failures, dilemmas, or contradictions inherent in Western knowledge systems (Denzin et al. 2008; Hill, Lau, & Sue, 2010). By recognizing

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the value of Indigenous knowledges in community building, transformative frameworks can be developed to focus not only on the well-being of Indigenous peoples, but also on creating sustainable knowledge and practices that are relevant for any community-based development for social change (McGregor, 2004).

Statement of Purpose

The research questions guiding this inquiry are:

1. What are the acts of resistance performed by Indigenous scholars?
2. How are these acts of resistance a part of transformative community development?

This study addresses acts of resistance outlined by a group of prominent Indigenous scholars. In the present research, I will be using the following definitions of resistance. Based on the critical Indigenous frameworks, an act of resistance is defined as an intervention involving decolonization, expressions of sovereignty, or the importance of centering Indigeneity (Denzin et al. 2008; McKinely & Brayboy, 2006).

Not surprisingly, in all the books and articles I have reviwed for this paper, assimilation of Indigenous people into mainstream Canadian society was never identified as a goal of any community program or plan for development. Generally speaking, there is a sense that Indigenous peoples co-exist with dominant culture, and do so in a way that are consistent with Indigenous values (Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Phillips, & Williamson, 2011). This may only be possible with increased awareness of historic impact, cultural revitalization, and a sense of political agency in order to engender self-determination.

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Based on my own experience within communities and in preparing my literature review for this paper, there are several acts of resistance in terms of practice that fit a critical Indigenous description: community programming or development that includes some form of cultural revitalization (e.g., traditional language or ceremonies), consciousness raising about the historical impact of colonization, strengthening sustainable relationships to places and ecologies, and developing a sense of political agency in Indigenous identity in order to engender self-determination. The objective of identifying these acts is to deepen understanding of what supports transformative community development in Indigenous communities.

According to the Community Psychology of Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010), transformative community development must be grounded in a holistic approach that attends to personal, relational, and collective values of well-being. Personal values, for example, may include issues related to the promotion of health and self-determination. Relational values may involve respect for diversity, participation or collaboration. Collective values, on the other hand, are those that focus on support for the environment, community structures, social justice, and accountability. Transformative interventions at a community level aim not only to foster an individual's well-being, but are actions specifically geared toward systemic change. These values must be enacted in a balanced way in order for community revitalization and wellness to be successful.

This research is not intended to be an exhaustive inquiry. The purpose is to create a document that may increase awareness among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people about key elements of community development from a transformative, Indigenous perspective. It will inform my work as a consultant and Community Psychology

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practitioner, especially within Indigenous communities. For example, it is my hope that my research will be of use in providing additional information and direction for creating curriculum, resources, community-programs, and professional training and workshops. I will distribute my findings to interested contacts in my network in an attempt to generate further discussion, build interest in community organizing, or instigate other forms of action.

Assumptions

Even though this research may provide communities with possible avenues of inquiry and ways of thinking about their community programming or development, the central limitation of this research is transferability of results. The information may be useful to some communities making decisions about programming, development, policies, or elements for community building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, but given that each community is different, it is important to note that what is applicable in one community may not be directly transferrable to another.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is a review of topics related to community development from transformative and Indigenous perspectives. The first section begins by exploring the definition of *transformative* as well as common issues within the literature related to community development. The second and third sections highlight how community development might be transformative through the incorporation of holistic approaches that are rooted in Indigenous knowledges and the importance of recognizing Indigeneity in transformative models. The forth section summarizes the findings of incorporating Indigenous knowledges in community development; the fifth describes transformative Indigenous community development as a process that needs to be uniquely tailored to each community and tied to larger systemic changes; and the sixth section further explores the importance of transformative change in order to alleviate the negative health impacts of social inequalities in Canada. Finally, the seventh section examines how frameworks based on Indigenous knowledges may inform community development focused on transformative, social change.

With the advent of colonialism came dispossession of land, loss of resources and autonomy, cultural genocide, breakdown of families and, in some cases, decimation of entire communities (Richmond, 2007). For generations, Indigenous peoples have resisted the colonial pressure to passively acquiesce or apathetically consent to an agenda of full assimilation (Alfred, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). There are, however, some individuals who have acculturated out of circumstance and others who are trying to change the system from within. Regardless of people's intimacy with or alienation from their heritage, there is a growing sense that Indigeneity in Canada is something other than the

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fallacies perpetuated by the dominant culture's version of history and must be defined by Indigenous peoples themselves. As Alfred (2011) has commented:

> In contrast to this internalist approach –which we could summarize as an acceptance of assimilation with demands for mediation of its effects *within* the state –a more rooted indigenous peoples' movement has been emerging globally over the last 30 years as a movement *against* the state and for the re-emergence of Onkwehonwe [original people] existences as cultural and political entities unto themselves. (p. 7)

The fact of the matter is that Indigeneity, in any form, is alive today due to resistance. Resistance was the fortitude of our ancestors who continued to gather, drum and sing underground when it was unjustly illegalized. Resistance was the voice of people who spoke their language again after they were 'discouraged', or brutally forced, not to speak at residential schools. In the literature analyzed for this work, Indigenous scholars advance a traditionally inspired spirit of resistance to the systems of dominance imposed in the last century (Alfred, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). This literature does not serve only as a historical account of resistance efforts from one generation to the next; it seeks to describe a long tradition of resistance that may be utilized to make sense of and inspire present struggles. Indeed, the authors contend that we are witnessing a resurgence of Indigenous communities through a reinvigoration of Indigeneity itself.

Acts of resistance can occur on different scales, some, for example, involve conscious efforts to decolonize, regain sovereignty, or regenerate Indigeneity (Denzin et al. 2008; McKinely & Brayboy, 2006). On the other hand, individual acts of resistance

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can also be recognized as any instance, mentally, spiritually or behaviourally, where a person survives or manages omnipresent configurations of oppression (Wade, 1997). Wade (1997) has described acts of resistance as:

> Any mental or behavioural act through which a person attempts to expose, withstand, repel, stop, prevent, abstain from, strive against, impede, refuse to comply with, or oppose any form of violence or oppression (including any type of disrespect), or the conditions that make such acts possible, may be understood as a form of resistance. (p. 25)

Through a review of the scholarly literature, it is clear that the basic premise of Indigenist or decolonizing theories is the knowledge that our ancestors can continue to provide a strong cultural base to resist contemporary colonialism. This leads us to ask, how exactly is Indigeneity relevant to the complexities of current community development? The present literature was thus reviewed in order to examine issues related to Indigenous community development from a transformative perspective.

Transformative Community Development

The word *transformative* has multiple meanings and implications depending on discipline and context. According to Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010), transformative community interventions are designed not only to foster an individual's well being, but include actions specifically intended to change power relationships and eliminate oppression. "Ameliorative interventions are those that aim to promote well-being" therefore create "change within a system" whereas transformative interventions "strive to change the system" itself (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 156). Transformative community change means aiming to reveal and address the ideologically-laden origins of

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colonial myths and common sense presuppositions, as well as confront systemic oppression with acts of resistance. “Individual” issues are framed in terms of social oppression and inequalities in power that require liberating solutions guided by values such as self-determination, participation, and social justice (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

The literature review revealed a general absence of literature specifically addressing community development specifically from a critical Indigenous perspective. This search yielded a single article - from the book, *Racism, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in Canada* – that specifically addressed Indigenous community development, however, it focused on an urban, multi-nation community (Silver, Ghorayshi, Hay, & Klyne, 2011). Common issues within the literature did emerge and numerous articles addressed issues such as: colonization, marginalization, social inequalities, identity and the problems associated with economic progress as the sole significant focus of development. These prominent Indigenous scholars identified certain issues pertinent to community development, and suggest a need for holistic approaches which are socially, culturally, economically, and politically sustainable.

Rethinking Development

Due to the multitude of interpretations and theories about what *development* actually means, community development is a complex issue. My literature review revealed that in order for development to be transformative, it must be holistic and rooted in traditional Indigenous values. This idea of development directly challenges ameliorative change that predominately benefits those who already have economic power (Alfred, 1999; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Critically speaking, this involves

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conceptualizing the revitalization of communities in ways that go beyond myopic economic growth, approaches which challenge Western notions of modernization, capitalism, and consumer-oriented community initiatives (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011). Many scholars have begun to question this concept of development, which bequeaths a minority of people immense profit at the impoverishment of the rest of the population (Alfred, 1999; Battiste, 2000; Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Indigenous communities are not immune to capitalistic, imperialistic notions of development (Alfred, 1999). There are many Indigenous people who hold positions of authority in Indigenous communities and who rely on the colonial framework for their power, employment, and status (Alfred, 1999). Some believe that allowing people a reasonable standard of living will alleviate all of their problems; however, there is more to justice than unbridled economic growth that increases material consumption (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011). This is a particularly important issue to consider if Indigenous communities are to restore and strengthen healthy and sustainable relationships to places and ecologies. Concerns about class divisions have already emerged in Indigenous communities both on and off reserve (Alfred, 1999). If communities adhere to Indigenous values, there will be less chance of an Indigenous elite emerging and leaving others behind (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011). If traditional Indigenous values are removed from the equation, it is possible that growth may simply mimic the capitalist colonial notion that successful development is strictly economic and is the most important way to transform communities. Indigenous peoples must continue to examine this issue, as they seek to reconcile cultural tensions from within their Indigenous identities, and endeavour to redefine cultural and social futures in an increasingly developed world.

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Recognizing Indigeneity

The scholars argue that what makes “indigenous knowledges” (i.e., the richness of indigenous languages, worldviews, teachings, and experiences) salient is their continuing relevance to modern day issues. Traditional teachings, such as how indigenous peoples adapted to change on this land over millennia, remains a part of the knowledge and value systems that continue to guide many indigenous communities today (Long & Dickason, 2011). Indigenous knowledges are by no means static; in fact, many of the values, principles, and practices that are continuations of ‘traditional’ Indigenous ways remain vibrant and creative elements of contemporary communities (Long & Dickason, 2011). Issues related to Indigenous peoples’ resistance, such as mobilization towards self-determination, including reclaiming traditional knowledges, values, practices and teachings, are prevalent.

The literature clearly identifies the positive impact of traditional Indigenous knowledges, identity, and intergenerational education in Indigenous community revitalization (Alcock, Camic, Barker, Haridi, & Raven, 2011). Several scholars have claimed that community development programs that incorporate Indigenous knowledge result in a reduction of stereotypes, negative self-beliefs and suicides, and an increased sense of belonging among participants (Alcock et al. 2011; Baydala, Sewlal, Rasmussen, & Alexis, 2009; Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). Transformative community development seeks to reinforce the value of Indigenous knowledges and often involves rekindling processes of intergenerational teaching and learning (Ball, 2004; Beagan, 2011; Roué, 2006). These intergenerational community-based programs tend to involve Elders and youth, as well as community members who have the experience to facilitate their

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interaction (Ball, 2004; Beagan, 2011). In this process, Indigenous people of all ages are encouraged and supported to, first, map a common vision for their future, and, second, control the implementation of their own solutions to community issues (Roué, 2006). Community empowerment arises out of a sense of ownership which can then be transferred to external partnerships (such as a research community), upon which meaningful community development projects can be established (Baydala et al., 2009).

Transformative Indigenous Community Development

A transformative Indigenous approach to community development involves recognizing initiatives that originate in Indigenous communities. According to Poonwassie and Charter (2001), initiatives which espouse Indigenous worldviews and traditional approaches have proven to be most successful in meeting needs and in facilitating change. Indigenous peoples must strive to both remember and reimagine community narratives (e.g., history, myths, and teachings). This is important work in that it reaffirms core values and potentially asserts a renewed identity in order to ensure the continuity of communities and identities. In this context, community development means the continuous process of capacity building - building upon and strengthening local resources to generate well-being among community members (Alfred, 1999). Transformative change, however, also means a continuation of the process of decolonization, which is to say, Indigenous communities continue to regain autonomy after so many decades of colonial expansion. Acts of resistance that are rooted in cultivating traditional knowledges and culture continue to be an essential component of rebuilding communities.

It is important to recognize both the similarities and considerable differences

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between Indigenous peoples and communities, and to consider their unique strategies and visions for the future (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). Community development in Indigenous communities by non-Indigenous people who are not working in partnership with Indigenous peoples risks not only re-enforcing ethnocentric ways of knowing and inequalities (Fitzgerald, 2006), but also overlooking the diverse solutions needed to meet the needs of unique communities (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). Revitalizing communities based on the positive attributes of Indigenous culture and concepts of wellness, need to be specific to that community. Transformative Indigenous community development will also be tied to change on several interconnected levels, including personal, community or tribal, cultural/linguistic, national, and international (Coates, 1999).

Inequality and Self-Determination

The reality is that Indigenous Nations are coexisting with Settler society. Therefore, it would be beneficial if social and political changes occurred at a systemic level in order to reduce incursions from the colonial "Canadian" culture at large (Kirmayer et al., 2011). We live in a world of inequity, where a significant percentage of the Indigenous population is dealing with issues such as chronic poverty, violence, environmental degradation and other social problems that erode our communities (Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report, 2007).

According to the Indigenous scholars I have reviewed, a long history of colonization, systemic discrimination, cultural genocide, and other degrading experiences have led to the abysmal state of Indigenous health and well-being which we see today. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) contends, some people believe that European imperialism and racialization is a thing of the past; that the world is different now, evident in the 'fact'

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that Indigenous people have as many opportunities as anyone else. For many years, however, discrimination has been made transparent through research, for instance, in studies that have outlined how socio-economic factors are linked to health.

Even though there have been some improvements over the years, overall, the statistics on Indigenous people remain grim because they underscore a well-known and longstanding inequality in social status (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). According to the Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report (2007), if you are an Indigenous person living in Canada, you are more likely than your non-indigenous counterparts to be: surviving a lower standard of living; unemployed (and for those who are employed, the jobs are generally lower paying); experience a disease or health condition; hospitalized for substance use; at risk for suicide or HIV/AIDS; dealing with the affects of violence or abuse; and exposed to the prison system. Documents such as Mikkonen and Raphael's (2010) and the Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report, recognize the importance of self-determination in addressing this social inequality and resulting health disparities. Nevertheless, regaining this autonomy will have to be defined and implemented by Indigenous peoples themselves.

Frameworks for Transformative Social Change and Indigeneity

Canadian society would be ill advised to underestimate the value of Indigenous knowledges that have emerged from traditional values, beliefs, and practices (Long & Dickason, 2011). The revitalization of Indigenous communities and worldviews offers an opportunity to not only inspire and educate mainstream society, but to offer a genuine alternative to the current system (Alfred, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Many Indigenous societies not only had a community life that fostered values such as communal

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responsibility and equality, but also drew on generations of people who understood that a respectful relationship with the land was essential to their existence (Alfred, 1999). Indigenous peoples have philosophies that connect humans to each other and ecologically, which include values and principles for how to live a sustainable, respectful life (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Perhaps the relatively recent industrial and capitalist ethos that now dominate Canadian society might begin to be confronted and remediated by being exposed to some of the values-based sustainability of Indigenous ways of knowing. Thus, by recognizing Indigenous knowledge in the development of community, transformative frameworks can be developed with a focus not only on the well-being of Indigenous people, but also on creating sustainable knowledge and practices for any community development and any community-based programming for social change (McGregor, 2004).

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Chapter 3: Methodology and Method

This section is divided into eight parts. The first section provides an overview of the critical Indigenous theoretical framework that guided this research, which draws from both American Indian Critical Race Theory, or TribalCrit (McKinely & Brayboy, 2006), and Critical Indigenous Pedagogy (CIP) (Denzin et al., 2008). The second part describes why an Indigenous epistemology guided my research methodology and defines what is meant by "Indigenous" in this work. The third part focuses on what is meant by Indigenous qualitative research and why embodying an Indigenous approach is important as an Indigenous researcher. The fourth section describes how reflexivity is an important part of Indigenous inquiry, specifically to produce useful or purposeful research. The fifth part examines how anti-colonial Indigenous research builds upon the methodological approaches of feminism, postmodernism, and poststructuralism. The sixth section provides standards for utilizing a creative analytic practice, a process I engaged in as an appropriate form of Indigenous inquiry that resulted in a short story. The seventh part outlines the data collection procedure that was followed that resulted in eight books. The final section describes the complete process of the thematic data analysis.

Critical Indigenous Theoretical Framework

The critical Indigenous theoretical framework guiding this research draws from both American Indian Critical Race Theory, or TribalCrit, and CIP. As outlined in McKinely and Brayboy (2006), TribalCrit builds on the notion that colonization is embedded in Canadian society. It states that the racialized policies and economic development plans of the Canadian government (e.g. the Indian Act) and corporate interests are rooted in imperialism, Eurocentrism, and capital gains for the power elite.

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Similarly, CIP uses methods for explicit social justice purposes and values Indigenous and subjugated knowledges as rich and inspirational sources for social change (Denzin et al., 2008). Together, these frameworks provide a lens that not only criticizes neo-colonial power relations, but also problematizes Western conceptions of knowledge and seeks meaningful ways to resist and challenge hegemonic practices in research. In other words, these frameworks approach research as both an attempt to subvert the dominant thinking that reinforces colonizing relations - that is, the centring, manufacturing and reproducing of an 'acceptable' Western epistemology as a normative standard - and to develop and further an Indigenous epistemology (Kovach, 2009).

Indigenous Epistemology

Research methodologies are reflections of ontological (i.e. the nature of being, what you think truth or reality is) and epistemological assumptions (e.g. paradigms, philosophical presuppositions, worldviews, etc.). As a result, Indigenous researchers often find themselves in the problematic situation of reproducing Western epistemic and ontological norms, because they are required to work from within Western frameworks and expectations (Wilson, 2001). Henderson (2000) expands upon the universal or normative posturing of Eurocentric thought, claiming:

> Eurocentric thought does not claim to be a privileged norm… Instead, Eurocentric thought claims to be universal and general… Universality creates cultural and cognitive imperialism, which establishes a dominant group's knowledge, experience, culture, and language as the universal norm. Dominators or colonizers reinforce their culture and values by bringing the oppressed and the colonized under their expectations and norms. Given the

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assumed normality of the dominators' values and identity, the dominators construct the differences of the dominated as inferior and negative. (pp. 63-64) Kovach (2009), who has written at length about Indigenous methodologies, defines

epistemology as the way we understand the world, which, in turn, is foundational to the way we understand knowledge production. Epistemology includes beliefs, often very subtle or deeply concealed, about knowledge: where it comes from, whom it involves, and what counts as legitimate. When conducting research, "revealing one's epistemological positioning shows the interpretative lens through which researcher will be conducting and making meaning of their research. Identifying one's epistemic positioning makes visible how this positioning guides the research" (Kovach, 2009, p. 46). In addition, Denzin et al. (2008) have warned that a critical Indigenous researcher should be aware of Western epistemic presuppositions about the production, validation, and dissemination of knowledge. Utilizing Indigenous methods means there is always a tribal epistemic positioning in operation.

An Indigenous epistemology is the knowledge system guiding my research methodology. In this context, the word 'Indigenous' is used as a universal term encompassing vastly diverse communities, language groups, and nations - each with their own identification. The concept of 'Indigenist' or 'Indigenism' is recognizing distinctly Indigenous worldviews and value systems, and "centres a politics of indigenous identity and indigenous cultural action" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 146). There are shared fundamental beliefs among Indigenous peoples (e.g. interconnectedness, equality/respect for all life forms, and a holistic or cyclical view of the world), and there are significant differences between different Indigenous people (Battiste, 2000; Kovach, 2009; Tuhiwai

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Smith, 1999). The epistemic root of Indigenous inquiry is the relational, interconnected, action-oriented, value-based, and holistic Indigenous knowledge system (Kovach, 2009). An Indigenous epistemology "emphasizes its non-fragmented, holistic nature, focusing on the metaphysical and pragmatic, on language and place, and on values and relationships. Within Indigenous discourse, these are aspects of Indigenous epistemologies that consistently emerge. They are all bound by the relational" (Kovach, 2009, p. 57). An Indigenous worldview, as a specialized knowledge system, "asserts that all life is sacred and that all life forms are connected. Humans are neither above or below others in the circle of life" (Henderson, 2000, p. 259).

These assumptions become apparent, for example, in the different epistemic approaches to the validity of story, which, from within an Indigenous epistemology is not necessarily considered separate from theory. Stories are considered real, epistemic, and legitimate sources of data (Denzin et al., 2008; Richardson, 2000). From a decolonizing perspective, I am trying to be transparent about the methods I chose are aligned with an Indigenous way of knowing.

Indigenous Qualitative Research

Despite the emergence and rise of qualitative research methodologies (Denzin et al., 2008), the dominant paradigms considered to be the authority on legitimate or meaningful research tend to still be positivism and postpositivism. According to Mertens (2010), positivism is based on the "rationalistic, empiricist philosophy" (p. 10) that claims there is a value-free, separate or independent (e.g. from participants) objective way to control, observe and measure the world that results in 'truth,' a one-reality that is generalizable. Postpositivists still believe that one reality exists, and researchers can

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discover it through objectivity, and it can be generalized, but "they suggest that researchers modify their claims to understandings on truth based on probability, rather than certainty" (Mertens, 2010, p. 12). Postpositivists recognize that the researcher can strongly influence what is being observed; therefore the researcher should be neutral to prevent values or personal biases from influencing the work. "Although qualitative methods can be used within this paradigm, quantitative methods tend to be predominant in postpositivist research" (Mertens, 2010, p. 15).

Even though as a researcher I have explicitly stated my intention to do Indigenous, qualitative, transformative research, in some research courses I have taken, I have been directed to bracket myself in response to my self-location and anti-colonial political stance. Although I recognize the potential value in bracketing and not allowing my personal biases to inappropriately influence the research process, situating myself and approaching research from an anti-colonial critical perspective is part of the Critical Indigenous approach (Alfred, 1999; Battiste, 2000; Denzin et al., 2008; Kovach, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

As an Indigenous feminist, I am also in alignment with basic principles underlying a feminist approach to transformative research by Sielbeck-Bowen, Brisolara, Seigart, Tischler, and Whitmore (as cited in Mertens, 2010, p. 22-23). Firstly, research is political. It is "the personal experiences, perspectives, and characteristics researchers and evaluators bring to their work (and with which we interact) lead to a particular political stance" (Mertens, 2010, p. 22). Secondly, "Knowledge and values are culturally, socially, and temporally contingent…The characteristics of the knower will influence the creation of knowledge" thus "critical self-reflection is necessary" (Mertens, 2010, p. 23). Finally,

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"There are multiple ways of knowing; some ways are privileged over others. Transformative knowledge is sought that emanates from an experiential base" (Mertens, 2010, p. 23). For these reasons, my contention is that feminist and Indigenous approaches are complimentary.

Indigenous researchers are called to move beyond simply superimposing an Indigenous perspective on Eurocentric research paradigms (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2001). As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has written, "the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" as it has historically served as a barrier for Indigenous people "to be creators of their own culture and own nations" (p. 1). A critical Indigenous method calls into question the complicity of universities with neocolonialism (Battiste, 2000) and "encourages and empowers Indigenous researchers to make colonizers confront and be accountable for the traumas of colonization… this pedagogy imagines a postcolonial society and academy that honour difference and promotes healing... respects Indigenous epistemologies and encourages interpretive, first-person methodologies" (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 12). According to Wilson (2001), from a critical Indigenous perspective, theory and practice, (that is, method, methodology and epistemology), are an interdependent and relational part of research. This point has been reinforced by Kovach (2009), who claims that an Indigenous methodology is both knowledge system and method, and research conducted by an Indigenous scholar should use techniques and methods (metaphor, stories, symbols, ceremony, etc.) drawn from Indigenous worldviews. Embodying an Indigenous methodology, therefore, means asking questions about my role and obligations as a researcher and approaching epistemology from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational (Wilson, 2001).

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Reflexivity and Indigenous Epistemology

From an Indigenous epistemology, reflexivity is not optional. Personal narrative, story, and Indigenous inquiry are grounded within a relationship-based approach that invites reflexivity into research. "Reflexivity is the term often utilized within a variety of qualitative research approaches to reference the relational…it is the researcher's own self-reflection in the meaning-making process" (Kovach, 2009, p. 32). From an Indigenous perspective, sharing one's story is an aspect of co-constructing knowledge; the epistemic purpose of self-location is to reveal what we consider 'truth' and knowledge. Thus, my ontological belief is that I am not able to report the facts from an objective or unbiased point of view. Reflexivity is a process of consistently self-locating and acknowledging "I believe this to be true" (Kovach, 2009, p. 113). As Kovach (2009) states, these research frameworks:

> Can assist Indigenous researchers by naming and acknowledging three distinct aspects of Indigenous research: (a) the cultural knowledges that guide one's research choices; (b) the methods used in searching; and (c) a way to interpret knowledge so as to give it back in a purposeful, helpful, and relevant manner. (pp. 43-44)

Research should be conducted that is relevant, addresses pragmatic problems, and is in some way aimed at strengthening or improving community conditions for Indigenous peoples. From an Indigenous epistemology, knowing one's purpose and motivation for conducting research is fundamental because it is connected to accountability and collective, community relevancy; purposeful research is inseparable from the value of giving back (Kovach, 2009). A critical Indigenous lens provides a

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framework for understanding how research can lead towards decolonization as an ethical, healing, and transformative undertaking committed to community wellness, self-determination and cultural revitalization (Denzin et al., 2008).

Feminism, Postmodernism, and Poststructuralism

My research also resonates with and builds upon recognized qualitative research methodologies inspired by anti-colonialism (or postcolonialism), feminism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism (Mertens, 2010). Mertens (2010) has claimed that postmodernists tend to approach research as a process “with ethical and even political implications” (p. 9). Challenging Western ideological hegemony is of central concern to both anti-colonial and feminist-poststructuralist thought (Mertens, 2010). This is made possible by looking “at the intersection of race, class, and gender within the context of power” while analyzing text and recognizing “the role of text in sustaining the integration of power and oppression” (Mertens, 2010, p. 26). “This process makes visible previously silenced voices and the concomitant influences of dominant power structures as an act of resistance by the reader” (Mertens, 2010, p. 10).

I am drawn to critical theories and feminist methodological approaches because of the ways in which they require me to question the power inequalities embedded in the research process. As Tuhiwai Smith has written “the history of research from many indigenous perspectives is so deeply embedded in colonization that it has been regarded as a tool only of colonization and not as a potential tool for self-determination and development” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 85). Research is deeply connected to power. It has excluded, marginalized, silenced, and exploited some, while empowering others. This is essentially decolonizing personal and professional work for an Indigenous

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researcher, because as Tuhiwai Smith (1999) eloquently states, the very "word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (p. 1). Not only do I have an obligation to center Indigenous concerns and worldviews, but I must understand theory and research from an Indigenous perspective and how it may serve our own purposes (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). "This shift in position, from seeing ourselves as passive victims of all research to seeing ourselves as activists engaging in the counterhegemonic struggle over research, is significant" (Tuhiwai Smith as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 87).

Qualitative Inquiry and Creative Analytic Practice

Using arts-based approaches, such as writing and narrative discourse (i.e. storytelling) as forms of qualitative inquiry, is useful for socially responsible, ethical, political activist researchers who have the ultimate goal of enacting action-oriented research (Finely, 2008). I will be employing what Richardson (2000) has called creative analytic practice (CAP) as a culturally appropriate form of critical and interpretive inquiry. With respect to standards, identifies four criteria for utilizing the CAP approach effectively: 1) this work should make a substantive contribution to furthering our understanding of social life; 2) creative analytical practices should have aesthetic merit, invite an interpretive response, is artistic and complex, and thus satisfyingly not boring; 3) self-reflexivity means that I display an adequate amount of self-awareness and self-exposure, so the reader can make judgements about the point of view; and finally 4) the work impacts the reader emotionally or intellectually, ideally generating new questions or inspires the reader to write, respond, try new research practices, or instigate other forms of action (Richardson as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 964).

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As a creative analytic practice, I engaged in short story writing as a form of inquiry and a way of understanding transformation in community development. The results of this inquiry are in chapter 4. Stories are an important and culturally appropriate mode of inquiry for an Indigenous scholar, for as King (2008) has written in the *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*,

> Did you ever wonder how it is we imagine the world in the way we do, how it is we imagine ourselves, if not through our stories… we can trace these stories back to other stories and from there these stories back to other stories and from there back to the beginnings of language. For these are our stories, the cornerstones of our culture (p. 15).

Or more precisely, “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (King, 2008, p. 14). Throughout the process of data analysis, I engaged in creative writing that resulted in the creation a short story based on a transformational or trickster being (which for the Secwepemc people is often the *Sk’lep* - Coyote), regarding relevant issues in the data.

Procedure

In her book *Indigenous Methodologies*, Kovach’s (2009) work served as guide for navigating the procedures that were followed in this research. As noted, I am utilizing qualitative, critical Indigenous approaches to methodology and purposefully centralized Indigenous knowledges. This was an intentional resistance to neo-colonialism; that is, to contest colonial relations that work to inform knowledge production and aim to reproduce dominant ideologies and mythologies. The epistemic centre of the approach to this research was Indigenous (Secwepemc), with research choices being made so as to be congruent with that knowledge base, including a process of reflection and story writing.

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Instead of understanding this as a strictly linear process, I am evoking the metaphor of a spider web. I am approaching all aspects of the procedures (i.e., from the decolonizing preparation, to gathering knowledge, making meaning, reflective story-writing, and giving back) as integrated and interdependent. Throughout the process, my theoretical frameworks (TribalCrit/CIP) and Indigenous epistemology, informed all aspects of the research including the collecting and reviewing of data, privileging the voice and work of Indigenous people, and critical reflection. As noted in the next section, a thematic analysis (i.e. theoretically-driven process) was the methodological approach for the organization and analysis of selected data. The data was collected based on a theoretically driven process; the research questions and the issues addressed by the Indigenous scholars in relation to the key themes (e.g., acts of resistance and transformative community development within Indigenous communities).

The first step of data collection involved selecting the articles and books for the literature review, then the books and articles by Indigenous scholars. The majority of these sources addressed Indigenous issues within a Canadian context. I conducted my search in the following electronic resources: ERIC, PsycINFO, Simon Fraser University Library Search, JSTOR, SAGE Journals, Project MUSE, iPortal, The American Indian Quarterly, and the Canadian Journal of Native Studies. My search strategy included many combinations of relevant terms (e.g. Canadian/ Canada, Aboriginal/ Indigenous/ First Nations issues/ First Peoples, transformative, community/ development, community psychology, critical Indigenous, methodologies, intergenerational, colonization, resistance, self-determination, anti-colonial, decolonization, traditional Indigenous knowledge and tribal critical race theory), into the search options. Articles and books for

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the literature review were collected based on critical Indigenous framework, relevancy to topics (i.e., Indigenous, transformative, community, and/or development) and by whether or not they addressed the research questions.

A total of eight books were selected for this research. First, I prioritized influential, Canadian critical, Indigenous authors who were noted in my literature review and commonly cited in other critical, anti-colonial Indigenous literature. I selected books based on my critical framework, relevancy to topics (i.e., Indigenous, transformative, community, and/or development), and by whether or not they address the research questions.

The titles I chose are as follow: *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* and *Peace*, *Power*, *Righteousness*: *An Indigenous Manifesto* by Taiaiake Alfred (1999; 2009); *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* edited by Marie Battiste (2000); and *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness* by Fyre Jean Graveline (1998).

Canadian and non-Canadian authors were selected based on addressing critical Indigenous methodologies, qualitative methods, and meeting the criteria (e.g. anti-colonial), which resulted in the selection of four books: *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Rresearch,* (3rd ed.) edited by Denzin & Lincoln (2005); *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* edited by Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Tuhiwai Smith, L. T. (2008); *Indigenous Methodologies – Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* by Kovach (2009); and *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* by Tuhiwai Smith (1999); and one article called "What is an Indigenous

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Research Methodology?" in *Canadian Journal of Native Education* by Shawn Wilson (2001).

In the Adler School of Professional Psychology library databank and Fraser University Library Search databank I entered a combination of the relevant words (e.g. Canadian/ Canada, Aboriginal/ Indigenous/ First Nations issues/ First Peoples, liberation/ transformative/ transforming, community/ development, community/ psychology, critical Indigenous, colonization, self-determination, Eurocentric/ Eurocentrism/ anti-colonial). I reviewed the abstracts, book reviews, or physically reviewed the first books noted in the databank. I determine relevancy based on my critical Indigenous framework (i.e. anti-colonial) and knowledge of the topics (i.e., Indigenous, transformative, community, and/or development) and by whether or not they address the research questions:

1. What are the acts of resistance performed by Indigenous scholars?
2. How are these acts of resistance a part of transformative community development?

Books were excluded if they did not meet the criteria. For example, books by Canadian Indigenous authors that were not anti-colonial or critical, or failed to address the topics outlined (e.g. books written exclusively about policy or treaty issues), were not selected. My search resulted in the selection of three books: 1) *Racism, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in Canada* edited by Martin J. Cannon and Lina Sunseri (2011); 2) *Lighting the Eight Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations* edited by Leanne Simpson (2008) and; *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal issues – (3rd* ed.) edited by David Long and Olive Patricia Dickason (2011). It also resulted in one

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book that includes specific historical information about Indigenous communities in Canada, which was *First Peoples in Canada* by McMillan & Yellowhorn (2004).

To be clear, four of these books are edited collections: 1) *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* edited by Battiste (2000); 2) *Racism, Ccolonialism, and Indigeneity in Canada* edited by Cannon and Sunseri (2011); 3) *Lighting the Eight Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations* edited by Simpson (2008); and 4) *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal issues – edition(3rd ed.)* edited by Long and Dickason (2011).

Data Analysis

There is a fundamental difference between Western and Indigenous epistemologies. This difference is perhaps highlighted by the Western approach to knowledge production as a methodical process of reductive and thematic grouping, versus an Indigenous approach, which views knowledge production as relational meaning-making and is somewhat at odds with extracting coded facts out of context. To an Indigenous researcher, “epistemology and research methodology are a tightly bound, complex relationship” (Kovach, 2009, p. 55).

An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. “This language speaks from an epistemology that is totally foreign to the other research paradigms, an epistemology where relationships are more important than reality… Because this relationship is shared and mutual, ideas or knowledge cannot be owned or discovered” (Wilson, 2001, p. 177). As Kovach (2009) explains:

> This is not to say that Indigenous peoples did not rely on a form of analysis, if analysis means observing patterns and behaviours and making sense of those

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observations… However, the patterns and observations were highly contextualized and particular, and did not assume that this knowledge could or should be generalized to other instances. (pp. 130- 131)

Even though I appreciate Western research methods such as extracting, coding, categorizing, and other methodical ways of organizing knowledge, there has been an intuitive resistance to this process which I have struggled to articulate. I have been unable to clearly describe how to approach analyzing the data in a way that is appropriate to both worlds. In some of my research courses, I have been warned to consider how non-Indigenous readers may be offended by my writings, and informed that the incorporation of self-location or personal narrative is irrelevant, “rather than being recognized as a methodological necessity flowing from a tribal epistemology” (Kovach, 2009, p. 84). Counter-storytelling is a relevant critical, anti-colonial approach to research that provides alternative narratives to the dominant stories. This is one of the pivotal points of struggle for Indigenous peoples in academia - to produce work that is recognizable and considered valid while maintaining our cultural epistemic positioning within powerful institutions.

None of the Indigenous methodology books or articles I have reviewed provided a concrete example of data analysis or a specific way of addressing coding in a manner that is conducive to an Indigenous approach, which is deemed acceptable by Western methodological standards. To this end, I hoped to find a somewhat precarious balance between worlds, remaining true to my Secwepemc heritage, and drawing upon thematic analysis with as much integrity as I can manage. Thankfully, I am not alone on this path. Following the wisdom of Kovach (2009), I did, as respectfully as possible, engage in the process of thematic grouping and data coding, and I hope that “the ancestors will not

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disown me for this one" (p. 53). Therefore, I explored and analyzed issues addressed in my creative analytic practice using a thematic analysis of the writings of eight Indigenous scholars, and have presented the findings in a more conventionally academic essay format.

As Braun and Clarke (2006) have addressed in their work on using thematic analysis in psychology,

> ...thematic analysis is not wedded to any pre-existing theoretic framework, and therefore it can be used within different theoretical frameworks, and can be used to do different things within them... Therefore, thematic analysis can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpack or unravel the surface of 'reality'. However, it is important that the theoretical position of a thematic analysis is made clear. (p. 81)

In order to ensure that my thematic analysis is theoretically and methodologically sound, I will reiterate my epistemological assumptions and situate myself explicitly as an anti-colonial, Indigenous feminist.

Braun and Clarke (2006) have defined a theme as something which "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p. 82). As noted, I approached the entire data corpus with a "particular analytic interest in some topic in the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). I coded and noted instances in the corpus of specific data sets and data items initially having to do with patterns and themes around transformation, Indigeneity, community and development. In this sense, I created a detailed and nuanced account of a group of themes within the data, or what Braun and

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Clarke have referred to as a *theoretical thematic analysis* driven by my theoretical and analytic interests (i.e. critical Indigenous). My coding, therefore, was theory-driven and was implemented by using color-coded pens and color-coded post-it notes. Thematic maps were utilized to assist the identification of patterns, themes, and sub-themes.

Based on the recommendations in Braun and Clarke's (2006) article, the data analysis was performed as follows:

Phase 1: Familiarization with the data. During data collection, data was selected based on my critical Indigenous framework, relevancy to topics (i.e., Indigenous, transformative, community, and/or development) and by whether or not the data address the research questions. I was immersed in the data and familiarized myself with it, and reflected upon the meaning of the identified issues. Since this was a theoretically-driven process, I actively searched for meanings, patterns, etc. based on the specific data sets and data items having to do with patterns and themes around transformation, Indigeneity, community and development. Writing (e.g. noting ideas and potential coding) began during this phase and continued through the entire process.

Phase 2: Generating and organizing codes. This phase was the beginning of the more formal coding process, where codes began to identify particular (and purposefully limited) features of the data set. I re-read through the data, reflecting on the content and thinking about what was relevant in regards to transformation, Indigeneity, community and development, and any additional issues that were commonly addressed by the authors. Again, this process is theory-driven; the data was approached with the specific research questions and general themes that dictated the coding. The process of coding is considered part of the analysis. Therefore, text data was organized into meaningful

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groups. Data was organized (i.e. collecting organizing sentences) and labelled with respective categories for the purpose of generating themes for analysis. I read each book from start to finish. Interesting aspects of the data item patterns were identified by writing notes on post-it notes that were used to mark the sections, and by using color-coded pens or color-coded post-it notes.

Phase 3: Searching for themes and identifying sub-themes. Themes were identified which captured something about the data in relation to the research questions. Based on the initial research questions and themes, related or relevant coded data was analyzed to see if different codes could be combined to form additional themes or sub-themes. A thematic map was used to assist in identifying and organizing the new groups of themes and sub-themes. This resulted in confidently identifying codes that could be combined or discarded. By this phase, all the data was coded and organized in relation to themes and identified sub-themes, and I had a sense of the significance of these themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing the themes, as distinct and interconnected. Identified themes were reviewed and refined during this phase. Themes were either distinct enough to remain separate, collapsed together meaningfully, or were discarded from the analysis. This phase involved two steps: 1) the coded data extracts for each theme were reviewed to determine if they adequately formed a coherent pattern, and 2) I re-read the entire data set to ascertain whether or not the themes, to some extent, were an accurate representation based on my theoretical and analytic approach. By the end of this phase, different themes were identified, and it was clear to me how the themes were interconnected, and what the overall story was that they told about the data.

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Phase 5: Defining, refining, and naming themes. During this phase, I defined and further refined the themes that emerged. Themes and sub-themes were identified that were specifically of interest and united around a central idea or concept. This served assist in identifying the 'story' that the themes told, how they were interrelated, and how they fit into the broader overall 'story' about the data. In this phase, themes and sub-themes were clearly defined. For example, themes began to have names that were included in the final analysis.

Phase 6: Final analysis and writing. This thematic analysis told a story of the data which provided a coherent account of the themes, based on sufficient evidence (i.e. enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme). Extracts are easily identifiable as examples of the issues raised by the scholars, and are also illustrative of the analytic points I want to make about the data. The extracts were also used to illustrate an analysis that goes beyond content - to make meaning and sense of the data. These extracts were embedded within an analytic narrative to illustrate the overall story about this data. The purpose was to not only adequately provide a rich description/interpretation, but to also make an argument in relation to the initial research questions.

Through the process of data analysis, as a form of creative analytic practice and culturally appropriate mode of inquiry for an Indigenous scholar, I engaged in creative writing that resulted in short stories based on Trickster, a transformational being (which for the Secwepemc people is often the *Sk'lep* or Coyote). The writing was based on relevant patterns in the data.

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Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The data was approached with particular analytic interests relevant to transformative Indigenous community development, and was selected based on a critical Indigenous lens. This theoretically driven process provided a detailed account of patterns, themes, and sub-themes. The initial patterns were based on coding specific data sets and data items. Further analysis of the data resulted in themes and sub-themes that were organized into thematic maps. Themes were organized, refined and named, resulting in four main themes that intersect and interconnect. The themes are Recognize, Reclaim, Reconnect, and Revitalize.

All four of these themes are related to Indigenous peoples and communities' resistance and transformative community development. From these results, it is clear that there is not a singular definition of resistance, just as there is no singular definition of the revolutionary direct actions of an activist. Resistance can also be defined as the multitude of ways that people survive, resist, and thrive in their daily lives. Acts of resistance and transformative community development will be further discussed in chapter five.

Recognize

This theme involves recognizing the connection between past, present, and future Indigenous issues, both individual and community, in a socio-political, historical context. Not surprisingly, most of the scholars, whose work I studied for this research, dedicated a significant body of their writing to this theme. They detailed how a colonial legacy manifests in current-day policies, oppression, state control, systemic discrimination, and

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marginalization – colonial and racialized injustice that is evident in the health and social inequalities that currently define the Indigenous population.

Indigenous peoples have been profoundly impacted by contact with Europeans, who eventually became the Settler society on our traditional land (Alfred, 1999). The scholars I reviewed for this study thoroughly analyzed *how* Indigenous peoples were and continue to be colonized, in order to determine in what ways this contact has been beneficial or detrimental. Pre-colonization, Indigenous peoples had a lifestyle that sustained our communities, and this land, for hundreds of generations. Throughout history, Indigenous peoples have proven that they are creative, adaptable and resourceful. By adapting to change on this land over millennia, we had sophisticated place-based knowledges, philosophies, values, and governing systems that are the foundation of our stories, culture and spirituality to this day. Within a few generations, Turtle Island, or what is referred to now as 'Canada', has drastically changed. With colonization came new stories about the Natives and this land, stories that became what some of the authors identify as "imperialist or colonial myths" (Alfred, 2009; Battiste, 2000; Battiste & Henderson, 2011; Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Duran & Duran, 2000; Graveline, 1998). These colonial myths included fabrications about: how the development of Canada is entrenched within notions of progress; what constitutes the "Indian Problem;" and myths that resulted in social inequalities that have shaped legislation and, many of the scholars argue, is maintained by the *colonial mind-set* of some people today.

The colonial myth of progress. In one of the constitutive colonial myths, benign and heroic explorers, traders, missionaries, and settlers, braved the perilous journey to the New World only to discover a vast, empty landscape, populated by

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ignorant savages. Guided by complementary beliefs in progress and social Darwinism, these pious pioneers endeavoured to save these savages from their archaic primitivism, and tame the land in order that it might become productive and useful (Alfred, 2009; Altamirano-Jimenez, 2008; Battiste & Henderson, 2011; Brascoupe, 2011; Hall, 2008; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Yazzie, 2000). Social Darwinism, according to Yazzie (2000), includes the idea that Europeans were a superior race. The expansion of Empire through colonization, therefore, was morally and politically legitimatized because of the presumed genetic superiority of Europeans. As Altamirano-Jimenez (2008) explains:

> The "New World" became a place populated by pagan savages, who became the oppositional Other of the civilized West or the "Old World." Regardless of their background, European colonizers constructed these differences to legitimize their racial superiority… in order to describe and construct a world of Others. Through these oppositions, colonial discourses perpetuated an ideology that justified European expansion and the aggression inflicted on Indigenous Peoples through genocide, slavery, and deterritorialization. The European colonial moral discourse was that of a civilizing mission oriented to save "savages. (p. 178)

In bolstering this narrative of the savage "other," Indigenous peoples were portrayed as violent, ignorant, undeveloped, unchanging, incompetent, and, therefore, hopelessly deficient.

Indigenous scholars reject this colonial myth of progress and seek to advance another version of the story. In this version the heroic colonizers are revealed to be European imperialists driven by economic expansionism. They exploited Settler-

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Indigenous relationships in order to prepare the ground for modern industrial capitalism. To this end, lands and territories were unethically taken from Indians, because they were unable to manage and make proper use of these resources, and were perceived to be just another "vanishing race" (Alfred, 2009; Altamirano-Jimenez, 2008; Brascoupe, 2011; Calliou, 2011; Dickason, 2011; Hall, 2008; Simpson, 2001; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Voyageur & Calliou, 2011). Indigenous people became wards of the more superior Setter state, an unequal child-parent type of power relationship often referred to as paternalism (Alfred, 1999; McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Due to this original colonial myth, the paternalistic relationship between the State and surviving Natives is justified as natural, meaning that Indigenous peoples need to be closely and continuously regulated and controlled, lest they begin to regress into savagery.

In an attempt to voice resistance to this epic foundational narrative, McMillan & Yellowhorn (2004) state:

> Since Canada's beginning in 1867, successive federal governments, like reluctant guardians of uninterested wards, have treated Aboriginal People with varying degrees of indifference, malice and support… They [Indigenous peoples] find themselves unenthusiastic citizens of a nation that was created at their expense. They are more likely to announce their loyalty and emotional attachment to their First Nation than they are to Canada… Aboriginal People have had difficulty accepting the epic narrative Canada fosters as the country's "official" history because they remember that their homelands were erased so Canada could be possible. (p. 318)

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Although this myth has become increasingly subtle, invisible, and to a certain extent, unfashionable, it is firmly embedded in modern 'Canadian' culture. As Graveline (1998) has maintained, it is evident in the "deeply-rooted denial embedded in the psyches of Westerners regarding their own cultural hegemony" (p. 32). This denial is manifest in the overwhelmingly negative portrayals of Indigenous peoples and issues in the mainstream media (Fleras, 2011), as well as a lack of meaningful inclusion of Indigenous peoples in local and national governments, and in the relentless disregard of Indigenous rights in the development of the 'global market' (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Since we are either vanishing, invisible, or infantilized, the government has consistently denied the significance of Indigenous Nations to this country. Instead, the official story presents only two founding nations, Britain and France, which all but erase the country's "original inhabitants except in such commonly used phrases as 'Canada's Aboriginal People' or 'Canada's First Nations,' which describe this relationship in possessive terms" (McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004, p. 318). The colonial myth of progress has "led to policies that enabled Europeans to profit from our lands and resources while economically and politically marginalized us to the fringes of our own territory" (Sherman, 2008, p. 111). However vexingly inconvenient to colonial interests, Indigenous peoples have not simply disappeared or been passively assimilated.

Our presence, therefore, necessitates an aggressive reaffirmation of the colonial myth, in one form or another, and a constant eschewal of the immoral history and, in some cases, illegal occupation of Canada (Alfred, 1999). As Simpson (2008a) has claimed, "Indigenous Peoples whose lands are occupied by the Canadian state are currently engaged in the longest running resistance movement in Canadian history;

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indeed, one that predates the formation of Canada itself" (p. 13). In this sense, resistance should not be considered only an attempt to make the historical relationships between the State and Indigenous peoples visible, but to recognize the historical precedents for current struggles.

Identifying the elusive Indian problem. The invisibility of colonial myths serves to conceal the connection between individual problems and a larger socio-political historical context. According to Calliou (2011), Canada is primarily shaped by the ideology of liberalism, which incorporates such 'common-sense' beliefs as: humans are distinct from the rest of nature, individualism is the preferred political philosophy, and everything is a potential commodity. These ideological assumptions fundamentally conflict with Indigenous worldviews, and when forcefully reaffirmed through Eurocentric posturing, contribute to a fundamental lack of understanding that tends to denigrate Indigenous peoples. For example, in a liberal society there is also a fundamental belief in the existence of equal opportunity for all, and any failure to succeed is a result of a defective nature or individual inadequacy, not cultural-historical situationality. Or as Hall (2008) has written, "Eurocentrism erases the importance of land for Indigenous Peoples, and blames the lack of 'success' in economic terms on racist notions of our people's very natures" (p. 153). Past and current theories about Indigenous peoples' inability to properly take care of themselves, their communities, or their land has served to continually situate the Indigenous population as a "problem" that needed to be addressed by superior Settler society (Alfred, 1999). As Dickason (2011) states:

> Leading European thinkers concluded that Aristotle's doctrine 'that some men are by nature free and others servile' applied to Amerindians –in other words,

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> that they were not yet fully developed as human beings although capable of becoming so, like children. The custom of referring to Amerindians as children, or even worse as 'savages', would endure until well into the second half of the twentieth century. Such a people were obviously not qualified to run their own affairs; besides, the rights of Christians had priority over those of non-Christians. On both of these counts, Europeans had no doubts about their right to claim New World lands for themselves. (p. 4)

On the contrary, as Dickason (2011) continues to explain: "how wrong these European impressions were; New World societies met individual and community needs very well and had worked out solutions to problems of living that are still viable today" (p. 4). After a few hundred years of dispossession, forced segregation, and detribalization, social breakdown in Indigenous communities was inevitable, not the result of an inherent defect in our peoples' very natures (Graveline, 1998).

Nonetheless, Indigenous peoples were, and continue in many respects to be, perceived as continually in need of 'help' from their own Indigeneity by integrating them into a more evolved Eurocentric society (Battiste & Henderson, 2011). "For Canada, the Indian problem has been about the transformation of Indians into Europeans… the absorption and assimilation of aboriginal peoples" (Newhouse & Belanger, 2011, p. 353). Deeper issues of clashing worldviews and historical injustices that affect all Indigenous peoples in one way or another are obfuscated beneath colonial rhetoric about a so-called "Indian problem."

Indians do have a problem, however, and the Indigenous scholars I have reviewed for this thesis do not perceive the issue to be a lack of ability to acculturate. Rather, the

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Indian problem is identified as on-going cultural genocide by a predatory Euroamerican, patriarchal, and capitalist system that dominates and exploits our people. Pre-contact Indigenous peoples "lived in independent, sovereign nations governed by complex political systems. Rooted in the land, with a strong spiritual and religious foundation, these systems ensured our citizens were taken care of and that contentious issues were resolved in a peaceful and just manner" (Simpson, 2008a, p. 13). For Indigenous peoples today, "the pressure to assimilate is constant" (Graveline, 1998, p. 10), and Eurocentric values not only have "to be accepted," they also have "to be absorbed" (Battiste & Henderson, 2011, p. 17). Indigenous people are expected to assimilate European cultures and values, without question. In this sense, the Indian problem is maintaining ongoing acts of resistance against constant colonial incursions, in part, by maintaining those place-based, spiritual and self-supporting aspects of Indigenous traditions that have been preserved in the wake of decades of violent genocide. Duran and Duran (2000) have maintained, "If the labelling and diagnosing process is to have any historical truth, then it should incorporate a diagnostic category that reflects the effects of genocide. Such a diagnosis would be 'acute and/or chronic reaction to colonialism'" (p. 88). Although acts of resistance, such as a revitalization of traditional Indigenous ways, is a healthy response to domination, this situation is complicated by the colonial myth that perceives Indigeneity itself to be a defective state or nature.

Currently, the problem plaguing Indigenous peoples, is that "the status quo of a colonial order continues to target them for legal and cultural extinction, through intense genocidal policies that Indigenous people have faced and continue to face" (Lawrence & Dua, 2011, p. 20). Instead of perceiving "problems" as a function of the colonial myth,

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Indigenous peoples are still consistently considered fundamentally incompetent. Indigenous peoples can be portrayed as ungrateful, for instance, when they criticize the government for not allocating significant funds to address health, education, or community issues, as it is assumed the problem “lies with the indigenous individual or community rather than with other social or structural issues” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 92). The invisibility of the colonial myth refocuses on blaming individuals and communities for their failure to succeed in this ‘equal-opportunity’ society. This perpetuates the idea that Indigenous peoples are unable to find solutions to their own problems and completely denies the existence of the wider socio-political context in which we exist.

The colonial myth of equality. If “problematizing the indigenous is a Western obsession” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 91), perhaps critically examining, challenging and, indeed, problematizing the colonial myths of the West should become a more prominent Indigenous pastime. The authors provide many examples of examining colonial myths. For example, the myth of equality, and inconsistencies of the equal opportunity claims of “Canadian” society. In reality, very few minority people occupy positions of power. Indeed, “one need only look at the composition of national and local legislatures and of judicial systems and legal associations to see that Social Darwinism and the concept of ‘superior’ peoples having control are alive today” (Yazzie, 2000, pp. 42-43). Equal opportunity rhetoric once again serves to buttress the colonial myth and conceal the racist history of Canadian genocide.

Embedded in the idea of equality, is the ill-conceived idea that people with privilege are affluent due to their individual work ethic. However, as Graveline (1998) has

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asserted, in Canadian society "racism exists to feed White privilege –material, political, social and personal benefits are at the expense of those living in poverty with little political, social or personal power. White society –Westernism –did not rise to prominence because of its inherent superiority... Their success was built on the backs of Indigenous peoples who have been robbed of their lands, their resources, and their labour" (p. 113). Indigenous people "have not shared equally in the affluence of Canadian society. Unemployment remains very high, housing is often substandard, and health care and education are often inadequate" (Kerr & Beaujot, 2011, p. 183). The scholars reviewed for this research consistently aimed to unveil and name the Euroamerican supremacy and privilege that is ingrained in false assumptions and the "common sense" of modern society.

Confronting the imperialist mind-set. According to Alfred (2009), imperialism is due to "the worst sickness of the colonial mind, and all Euroamericans are affected by this disease of the colonizer to one degree or another… the enemy is not the 'white man' in racial terms, it is a certain way of thinking with an imperialist's mind" (p. 102). Cultural superiority and racism, along with unsustainable resource extraction and a belief in 'unlimited' consumption, have come to characterize this over-exploitative imperialist mind-set (Brascoupe, 2011). As Battiste and Henderson (2011) have claimed:

> Although Eurocentrism has created unheard-of material wealth for the European minority, it has also created a techno-scientific realm that is threatening the foundations of human life, especially among the Indigenous minority. It is a dismaying legacy. Violence, war, and oppression, have taken a heavy toll on Indigenous peoples' ecologies, lives and knowledge. (p. 12)

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Rationalized by an imperialist mind-set, industrial society and its economic strategies, social relations and colonial myths are proving to be increasingly detrimental for all of humanity (not to mention the rest of planetary existence). By comparison, Indigenous knowledges comprise cultural values that challenge the colonial logic of modern society. Rather than being thoughtfully and respectfully considered, the imperialist mind-set perpetuates the myopic vision that there are no useful alternatives.

Battiste (2000) has deemed the denigration of Indigenous knowledge bases and values characteristic of this imperialist mind-set as a form of "cognitive imperialism" that, "denies people their language and cultural integrity by maintaining the legitimacy of only one language, one culture, and one frame of reference" (p. 198). It is critical that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike come to understand that appropriating, supressing, or exterminating other cultural understandings is how colonialism maintains its oppressive control over the majority. It is this monocultural imperialist mind-set – the ideological presuppositions and taken-for-granted practices of Euroamerican culture – that need to be critically analyzed and resisted.

Alfred (2009) insists, "It is these imperial consumerist forces that are the deep sources not only of unethical conduct in our lives, but also of anxiety, stress, and depression for colonized and colonizer alike" (p. 188). The exploitative ability of an elite economic minority to dominate others and the natural world for short-term profits is the inevitable manifestation of the imperialist mind-set and negatively impacts both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Battiste & Henderson, 2011). Cannon & Sunseri (2011) maintain that this imperialist ethos has pervaded the "apparatuses of power now firmly entrenched into settler colonial consciousness" and therefore, may not be "easily

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dismantled" (p. 1). We may also need to question to what degree this imperialist mind-set has pervaded "Indigenous consciousness." How will our people be challenged to transform the "colonial mind-set that so many of us have internalized?" (Duran & Duran, 2000, p. 88).

This first theme is about recognizing the connection between colonialism and present day Indigenous issues. The authors provided examples of how a colonial legacy manifests in current-day legislation, social inequalities, and the Settler and Indigenous population relationships and mindsets.

Reclaim

As Indigenous peoples recognize colonial myths and the imperialist mind-set, the scholars argue that we must concurrently reclaim the right to tell our own stories, determine our own identities, and envision our own aspirations. The title of this theme is "reclaiming", which is not to imply Indigenous peoples have necessarily *lost* something they need to find, but rather that we need to assert our rights. For instance, by using reframing as a tool to confront colonial injustices, we are reaffirming our right to define our own lives. It is about recognizing the multifaceted complexity and contradictions of identity, and reclaiming our right to define 'Indian' for ourselves. This is centrally tied to resistance because, as Sherman (2008) has claimed "to restore confidence in ourselves is imperative because we desperately need to come together in a culturally significant way to secure our survival as distinct people" (p. 121). It is important to point out that this does not entail a complete rejection of Western knowledge or Settler society, but rather, it is about reclaiming our right to define our own sovereignty.

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Reframing and internal sovereignty. The authors I included in this study have consistently used reframing as a tool to construct their anti-colonial theories. On an individual level, reframing can assist in revealing the structurally oppressive nature of the dominant culture, so the problem can be identified, and energy can be redirected in other ways. Reframing history, for example, encourages critical consciousness and creates space for individuals to vocalize their own experiences of oppression. In a sense then, this work represents a kind of *conscientization* (Freire, 1970; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010); that is, a belief that an important component of peoples' empowerment and social transformation is their comprehension of the unjust psychological and socio-political circumstances that limit them.

In the following example, the authors examine the impact of institutional discrimination on radicalized people. They advocate for a process of reframing to increase a sense of personal empowerment and resist being pathologized. As Indigenous people leave their communities, or find work in Settler society, they are expected to seamlessly integrate as "wage slaves" in the "mainstream resource-exploitation economy" (Alfred, 2009, p. 37). Community breakdown, alienation from elders, and colonial-capitalist education are all parts of the cultural genocide that has been impacting Indigenous peoples for hundreds of years. The resulting stress, trauma, or sickness, is overlooked or dismissed as an acceptable part of the process of assimilating into Settler society. Since failure to succeed is perceived as being due to Indigenous people's inadequacies, scientific diagnosing and labelling tools are used to personalize and pathologize the negative affects of this colonial-capitalist culture on our people (Duran & Duran, 2000). With professional opinions and labels filling their case files, marginalized

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people naturally internalize this oppression and spend their lives trying to figure out ‘what is wrong with them.’ If they receive help adapting to this system by improving their “personal survival strategies” (Graveline, 1998, p. 9), they may do so without ever deconstructing their motivations. Individuals may expend tremendous time and energy, therefore, focusing on surviving subjugation without critically examining the roots of oppression.

Confronting cultural racism in Canada is a difficult task because it is systemic, and it entails a certain level of knowledge and skill with critical consciousness (Battiste, 2000). Racism, for example, can manifest in hiring or promotion practices (Voyageur & Calliou, 2011), rejection or failures which are easily internalized and translated into personal pathologies, instead of a function of systemic discrimination.

The current dominant history of Canadian society, “is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 34). This imperialist version of history has explicitly and implicitly reinforced the justification of wealth in the hands of few, at the cost of exploiting and marginalizing the majority. Rewriting and telling our own version of events and history is a powerful exercise of reframing. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) is not suggesting that a majority of people knowing the ‘truth’ will automatically translate into justice for Indigenous people today, but asserts that “coming to know the past has been a part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization” (p. 22). Duran and Duran (2000), have suggested that a more appropriate way to understand an Indigenous person’s suffering within a historical context would be a “soul wound,” which includes the “tremendous suffering that the people have undergone since

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the collective soul wound was inflicted half a millennium ago and continues in different guises even to this day" (p. 98). Connecting personal issues to larger socio-political historical contexts can provide a foundation for people to survive in this system with dignity, and ideally, engender the integrity to resist further colonial labelling (Duran & Duran, 2000; Graveline, 1998). Being able to frame 'the problem' in your own terms, and tell your own stories, is tied to personal and collective empowerment (Graveline, 1998; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999)

Collective transformation begins when people gather to question and reflect on dominant narratives. When people share experiences, feelings, and perceptions of oppression, they find common ground with each other. A critical part of reframing is prioritizing "First Voice," that is, "the reliance on the 'voice of experience,' our own interpretation of experience to guide our knowledge base" (Graveline, 1998, p. 118), compared to solely relying on professional or expert opinions. By speaking for ourselves and sharing our experiences, we can discover what parts of our realities are socially constructed by external and malignant socio-political forces. Sometimes this process is called "consciousness-raising" (Graveline, 1998, p. 89). Critical consciousness-raising for Indigenous peoples involves reclaiming our right to "internal sovereignty," a process that can be strengthened by reconnecting to our traditions. As Yazzie (2000) has aptly asserted, "internal sovereignty… is nothing more than taking control of our personal lives, our families, our clans, and our communities. To do that we must return to our traditions, because they speak to right relationships, respect, solidarity, and survival" (p. 46). Through critical consciousness and reframing, we can both draw upon our rich

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traditional heritage, and imagine new alternative ways of being in the world. When we begin to realize our power to change reality, collective transformation becomes possible.

The complexity and contradictions of identity. Indigenous people are not the uncivilized 'other' of the civilized. We can be, at times, romantic, noble, disobedient, even rebellious, but this can be true of any other people refusing to accept colonial myths. There are no 'authentic' or 'real' Indians; and to claim as much is akin to claim that all oppressors are White, male chauvinists. Not all Indigenous people are 'status Indians,' bilingual, or are able to define themselves through their family, community, or nations (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011). Alfred (1999) and Simpson (2008), among others, state that Indigenous identity is inseparable from land, language, and place-based knowledge. Others strive to define what it means to be urban and Indigenous, and what it means to fight for sovereignty on a landbase that is not one's own traditional territory (FitzMaurice & McCaskill, 2011; McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004; Silver et al., 2011). Indigenous Nations, like Settler society, are full of diversity, complexity and contradictions. Prior to the colonization, our families, communities and nations were considered a natural part of the "spider web of relations" (Little Bear, 2000, p. 80), a sophisticated network of kinships that has been distorted and fragmented by the imposed colonial system.

As Settler society expanded control, especially under the aegis of the Indian Act of 1876, for a plethora of reasons Indigenous people have both lost and gained fabricated identities. This Indian policy not only labeled Natives legally distinct from all other 'Canadians,' it established the colonizers as guardians who had the power to define our identities (McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004). It also made fundamental assumptions about gender, kinship organization, and sexuality, that were not congruent with Indigenous

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knowledges, that is, the richness of Indigenous worldviews, languages, and culture (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011). This racialized colonial injustice literally removed Indigenous peoples' freedom to determine who they are, whom they can marry, and has removed the autonomy of the communities to define their own membership (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011). This is but one example of how institutionalized racism, heterosexism, and sexism in colonial law, fragments the Indigenous population (Lawrence, 2011). The Indian Act is still used by the state to identify, and therefore regulate, the Indian population (Alfred, 1999; Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

With respect to identity, the Indigenous authors reviewed for this work argue for the need to reclaim our sovereignty strategically, in ways that are conducive to our traditional teachings, which respects the diversity of our people. Considered an essential part of decolonization, reclaiming our traditions, laws, and sovereignty, is a process referred to by Alfred and Corntassel (2011) as "self-conscious traditionalism" (p. 143). Where Indigenous peoples thoughtfully reconstruct our communities based on Indigenous knowledges and values. Reclaiming Indigenous autonomy includes "acknowledging a sense of belonging based on real or assumed bonds between people, their shared knowledge of traditional stories or history, original nation-to-nation agreements, common beliefs, and a tie to some specific territory – including urban areas" (Cannon, 2011, p. 95). Indigenous peoples need to determine their own issues and solutions regarding identity, rather than having it imposed by the Canadian state. Reclaiming identity may also mean coming to terms with biculturalism, that is, our ability to be secure in our Indigeneity, while adapting to co-exist with Settler society.

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This second theme, reclaiming, is not only about Indigenous people reclaiming our right to define our own history, lives, and identity; it is the reclamation of our right to dignity, autonomy, and sovereignty.

Reconnect

Reconnecting entails a resurgence of Indigenous knowledge systems. It is grounded in centralizing Indigeneity, including understanding the motivation behind restoring our languages, rebuilding our cultures, and respecting our roles and responsibilities.

Resurgence and contention. Scholars reviewed for this study argue that the way to deepen our resistance efforts is to focus on the resurgence of Indigenous peoples through the regeneration of Indigenous traditions or knowledge systems. According to Simpson (2008b), this is "a critical first step to recentreing our collective strategies for revitalizing the base of our nations… this is where we will find the answers to combat colonialism, to decolonize, and to re-Indigenize"(p. 75). In a society with a significant number of people suffering from stress, social alienation, and depression, Alfred (2009), identifies the foundation of resurgence as a reconnection to our culture, spirit, and collective power. Resurgence, he argues, will strengthen Indigenous peoples' ability to engage with "corrupting powers at all times and in all ways, as perpetual warriors" (p. 256). Rather than advocating for more insurgent tactics based on futile acts of violence against the state, Alfred (2011) argues that resurgence is our "*spirit* and *consciousness* directed into *contention* with the very foundations of colonialism" (p. 7). Alfred (2011) goes on to state:

> For Onkwehonwe [original people] who remain true to the spirit of their ancestors: it is a fight for independence and for connection to one's heritage…

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> Resurgence is acting beyond resistance… from a rooted position of strength, resistance defeats the temptation to stand down, to take what is offered by the state in exchange for being pacified. In rejecting the temptation to join the Settlers and their state, seeking instead to confront Settler society in a struggle to force an end to the imperial reality and to lay down the preconditions for a peaceful coexistence, we would choose to use contention as means of widespread enlightenment and societal change. (p. 8)

Simpson (2008a) asserts that a resurgence of Indigeneity offers "a stronger vision of liberation… that has respect, sacrifice, love, honesty, and the quest for balance at its core… a time when we will respect ourselves once more. [It is] about our Indigeneity coming back to life again" (p. 11). McMillan & Yellowhorn, (2004) maintain that:

> Indigenous peoples have inherited a culture of resistance and a legacy of heroes and martyrs, so to speak of surrender now would be to betray those ancestors who gave their lives to the resistance. To abandon the struggle now is to admit defeat, and no one is prepared to do that. Surrender is undesirable because it is the first step towards assimilation, which is as unpalatable as ever. (p. 333)

It is only due to the fortitude and sacrifices of our ancestors, that we still have Indigenous knowledges today. As Sherman (2008) reminds us:

> Indeed, we are lucky that those things have not been lost and owe much to our ancestors for maintaining what they could of an original ontology against sometimes impossible odds. While acknowledging those achievements, and their important contribution to our understanding of ourselves as Indigenous people, we

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cannot escape the fact that our territory was invaded and continues to be occupied. (p. 113)

We are still controlled and regulated by colonial policies; appropriation of our land, resources, knowledges, and practices, are still the reality facing Indigenous peoples. In this situation perhaps resistance lies less in opposing these colonial forces in any bellicose or heavy handed manner, and more in the strengthening of Indigeneity. In this respect, reconnecting to our ways of knowing and being in the world is a way of directing our spirit and consciousness into contention with the very foundations of colonialism.

Recentreing Indigeneity. Renouncing the agendas of Settler governments and institutions and recentreing Indigeneity provides a critical foundation for the sovereignty of our Nations. Recentreing involves addressing the politics of Indigenous identity and embracing our cultural knowledges in order to resist the colonial acculturation that frames our daily struggles (Graveline, 1998). Ultimately, it is about relearning how respect for diversity tends to lead to peaceful coexistence amongst human communities (Alfred, 1999). Not all Indigenous peoples' interpretation of Indigeneity is the same, but there are many similar fundamental philosophies and values.

Indigenous teachings assume a cyclical view of the world - a world that is considered to be in constant flux - which necessitates a respect for harmony, balance, and reciprocity (Little Bear, 2000). This relationship to the world tends to give rise to values such as generosity, respect and humility, and is guided by concepts such as interdependence and holistic problem solving (Henderson, 2000). According to Indigenous worldviews, everything is alive and interconnected. Our personal experience of interconnectedness, as Graveline (1998) has written, is understood as seeing our "Self-

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in-Relation" (p. 50). Therefore, it is important to respect all life forms, because we are "one big family with 'all our relations'" (p. 113). Humans are part of the world's ecology and any sense that we are separate from it is a cultural construction. The idea that humans can and should control, dominate or exploit the natural world, a notion that lies at "the core of Western ideology," (Duran & Duran, 2000, p. 91), was not present in traditional Indigenous philosophies. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) explains:

> The term 'respect' is consistently used by indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity. Through respect the place of everyone and everything in the universe is kept in balance and harmony. Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct. (p. 120)

When humans understand they belong to vast networks of kin, envisioned by Little Bear (2000) as a "spider web of relations," this results in "balance, harmony and beauty" which becomes "a positive rather than negative approach to social control" (p. 80). People are not solely responsible for their own selves; they are accountable to *All Our Relations*. It is a perspective that views the world as "radically, entirely relational" (Couture, 2011, p. 27). Thus, a common feature of Indigenous knowledge systems is the responsibility of humans to maintain balance in the world (Castellano, 2011). Responsibility to all our relationships or kinship networks is the very spirit of Indigeneity.

Reclaiming and incorporating Indigenous worldviews and values into our contemporary lives can potentially create a vast amount of "emancipatory strategies Indigenous Peoples can employ to disentangle themselves from the oppressive control of

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occupying state governments" (Simpson, 2008a, p. 14). The reality of the situation is that Indigenous and non-Indigenous nations will not be geographically disentangled in the foreseeable future. However, recentreing Indigeneity at least offers emancipatory strategies to strengthen Indigenous nationhood and potentially disentangle from the oppressive aspects of Settler occupation. As Hare (2011) has claimed, future generations of Indigenous peoples will continue to:

> Walk in 'two worlds', and need to be armed with a strong sense of who they are as Aboriginal people, contributing to their families and communities, while at the same time ensuring our participation in the social, economic, and political fabric of Canadian society. (p. 90)

In this respect, recentreing Indigeneity is an attempt to keep "the goal" close to our hearts as we traverse these often-contradictory worlds. Alfred (2009) has written:

> The freedom of our nations, with the restoration of our people to their land and the preservation of the cultural heritage of our ancestors, is the goal –not the accumulation of material possessions and elevated incomes –we should question why it is that our people have stopped short of this goal and begun to adapt to the existing colonial power relations. (p. 148)

As we have seen, a key element of the colonial project and of modern government agendas, has been the attempt to erase the Indigenous experience as distinct, in order to shirk the responsibilities of historical treaties and to justify the occupation of Indigenous lands. In the end, it matters very little whether this process is completed by means of overt assimilationist schools, legislative papers, or inculcating Indigenous peoples into the consumer-driven, imperialist mind-set. The result is the same, the fragmentation and

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absorption of Indigeneity. Recentreing and revitalizing Indigeneity, therefore, as a form of decolonizing resurgence is of utmost importance.

Indigeneity and language. The relationship between Indigeneity and language is a highly contentious issue, and one that most of the scholars reviewed for this study addressed in one-way or another. Essentially, when it comes to learning traditional languages, there are only positive gains to be made. As Norris (2011) states: "There is growing evidence of links connecting language maintenance and revitalization with health, well-being, positive educational outcomes, and improved life chances" (p. 116). And even though "loss of language doesn't necessarily lead to the death of a culture" (Norris, 2011, p. 115), all authors who address the topic of language highlight its pivotal significance. Learning the language of our ancestors is considered an unequivocal way to strengthen collective identity, knowledge, culture, and communities. It provides an obvious opportunity for building and deepening connection between generations and remains a critical way to maintain an alternative worldview. For example, the prominent gender distinctions and hierarchies that are "deeply encoded in Western languages" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 46), are simply not generally compatible with Indigenous ways of knowing and communicating. Accordingly, "losing a language is not just losing a way of communicating: it is like losing a world" (Norris, 2011, p. 115). For Indigenous people, language was intimately linked to a relationship with the land, as is evident by the uniqueness of place names and stories that were based on the landscapes of traditional territories. As Hare (2011) explains:

> As the very means by which Indigenous knowledge is contained and transmitted, ancestral languages convey cultural values, shape thought and

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identity, and describe relationships to people and place… Place names, land-based experiences, custodial responsibilities to landscapes, and traditional territories and identity are given expression and meaning through ancestral languages. (p. 94)

Language revitalization, therefore, is important strategically for political reasons, because "the transmission of language from one generation to another ensures the continuity of indigenous knowledge" (Hare, 2011, p. 94), and provides a strong foundation for identity. If the goal of decolonization is the recentreing and revitalization of Indigeneity, "languages are essential as *sources of knowledge*… there is an inherent value… which makes them worth fighting to preserve" (Alfred, 2009, p. 246). The purpose is not to reinforce stereotypes of "authentic" Indigeneity, as you can still be Indigenous even though you do not speak your language (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). For Indigenous people, there are many barriers to learning language, so it is generally accepted that it my not be possible for everyone.

Roles and responsibilities. Prior to colonization, Indigenous peoples had "a well-structured society in which everyone's role and place was well defined. Our family systems and self-governance supported these roles and functions, and everyone felt valued as a member of the collective" (Duran & Duran, 2000, p. 97). According to Simpson (2008b), reconnecting in a contemporary context means we need to spend time connecting to the land, nurturing our lifelong relationships, and even drawing upon traditional roles and responsibilities. Many of the Indigenous scholars reviewed for this study consider it a cultural responsibility to protect the landbase and maintain our ancient knowledge systems (Alfred, 2009; Graveline, 1998; Simpson, 2008b). Individual and

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community activities, such as ceremonies, gatherings, stories, and songs are all examples of how we continually re-establish and reinforce our connection to each other, and to all creation (Graveline, 1998). As Simpson (2008a) has written, “We hold responsibilities to our clans, communities, our nations, and we hold these responsibilities close to our hearts. Our work is *embedded* in community” (p. 17). Anderson & Ball (2011), have discussed the importance of young people experiencing a sense of belonging through participation in ceremonies, and understanding their roles and responsibilities in a web of community and ecological relationships. They argue that, traditionally, this sense of belonging was essential because the community’s success and survival were dependent on how well people worked together and maintained their equilibrium with the environment. This is still true of individual and community survival today.

This does not mean that Indigenous peoples do not respect individual autonomy. “Individual rights means having the freedom to be what one was created to be” (Henderson, 2000, p. 270). The understanding is that individual choices are intimately tied to kinship and an ecosystem. “In traditional culture, each person plays an important role in the health of their community, and this strengthens the community. When each person fulfills their responsibility, harmony exists in the community” (Brascoupe, 2011, p. 390). From a holistic perspective of wellness:

> If a person is whole and balanced, then he or she is in a position to fulfil his or her individual responsibilities to the whole. If a person is not balanced, then he or she is sick or weak –physically, mentally, or both. (Little Bear, 2000, p. 79)

Bearing responsibilities in this sense is not a burden. Many people appreciate the sense of reciprocity it engenders, and recognize that we all benefit from the support of others

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(Castellano, 2011). As we have seen, Eurocentric Canadian culture fosters an extreme form of individualism and predatory colonial-capitalist practices (Alfred, 2011). Individualism "emphasizes individual autonomy, private ownership of lands, and the accumulation of material goods and profits for persona wealth. The ideals embedded in this ideology also legitimized the exploitation of natural resources and the marginalizing of workers in a never-ending pursuit of progress" (Calliou, 2011, p. 26). Although there are multiple reasons for why people are suffering from anxiety, stress, and depression, surely an excessive focus on the needs of the individual, at the cost of community building, contributes to the problem (Alfred, 2009; Battiste, 2000). Indigenous philosophies can offer profoundly transformative alternatives. This is why reclaiming and revitalizing Indigenous ways of knowing and being, not only creates the possibility for change for Indigenous peoples, but also provides for the possibility of an alternative model to the narrow imperialist mind-set that has historically afflicted Settler consciousness.

This third theme highlights the importance of reconnecting to Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigeneity. Alfred (1999) has written: "It's not enough to survive and heal; there is also a responsibility to rebuild the foundations of nationhood by recovering a holistic traditional philosophy, reconnecting with our spirituality and culture, and infusing our politics and relationships with traditional values" (pp. 35-36). If we are to do more than just survive, and if we are to transform this colonial-capitalist mind-set, then we must work to rebuild our nationhood through reconnecting to the values and responsibilities of our traditional cultures. This is not to propose that we necessarily insulate ourselves against non-Indigenous peoples, rather we draw upon the

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traditional respect for diversity and encourage lines of solidarity with others who aspire towards similar ethics, and who also advocate for systemic transformation.

Revitalize

The final theme, revitalization, is realizing our community visions through strategies rooted in Indigeneity. "The process of people's healing, of their rebuilding or recreating themselves, is rooted in a revived sense of community and a revitalization of Aboriginal cultures" (Silver et al., 2011, p. 213). The goal is to realize nation-building by respecting a multilingual, bicultured coexistence (Alfred, 2009). Alliances and solidarity movements are potential sources for renewing political bonds and working towards transformative possibilities together.

Visions and fundamental roots. In spite of a devastating colonial legacy, many Indigenous peoples continue to live out their lives without responding to colonial oppression with indiscriminate and violent hatred. Of the scholars reviewed for this study, even the most radical proposed a model of peaceful co-existence with Settlers. This should not, however, be conflated with passive acceptance of the status quo, or a kind of softer assimilation. Peaceful co-existence is predicated upon the recognition of the inherent value of Indigenous peoples and knowledges, respectful nation-to-nation relations, and acknowledgement of the myriad contributions that Indigenous peoples provide in Canada. For example, many Indigenous activists and philosophers have contributed to the ecological movement. There is a growing number of Indigenous entrepreneurs who are guided by cultural values, so that they may initiate successful projects and businesses in alignment with traditional ways (Dickason, 2011). Brascoupe (2011) has also pointed at the "growing evidence", that suggests Indigenous communities

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can contribute to the economy, while strengthening cultural foundations. Brascoupe (2011) uses the example of community development, whereby, "communities… revitalize and transform through healing initiatives rooted in their culture and spirituality" (p. 394). Similarly, some educators have begun to challenge Eurocentric models, and instead draw upon traditional practices such as talking circles, and the involvement of community members, such as elders, in the classroom. One might also draw parallels between traditional modes of Indigenous pedagogy, and the cooperative and experiential models that are presently gaining prominence some in schools (Castellano, 2011; Graveline, 1998; Hare, 2011). Indeed, many Indigenous peoples are self-consciously and deliberately seeking to harmonize Indigenous and Western ideas, yet remain fundamentally rooted in Indigeneity.

For example, an emerging sector in the Canadian economy and cultural consciousness is food security, and people's ability to secure traditional or organic foods. This has resulted in an increase in community-scale organic farming. The challenge now is for Indigenous peoples to not only regain economic security and restore traditional territories, but to implement "sustainable resource harvesting and restoration of the environment built on indigenous knowledge and leading-edge technologies" (Brascoupe, 2011, p. 383). Perhaps sites of shared interest and mutual benefit, such as food security and sustainability, will provide the space and impetus for respectful exchange between Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. This strengthening of relationships and bonds is important, economically speaking and ecologically speaking, but it is also crucial in the building of a "united political force" (Silver et al. 2011, p. 216).

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The vision remains rooted in Indigeneity; working towards the realization of peaceful coexistence through collaboration, cooperation, commitment and acceptance of diversity. Pitawanakwat (2008) has envisioned such a vibrant community as a place where:

> …children grow up surrounded by our ancestral language; our presence is respected throughout our traditional territory; our economies are sustainable and honour our relationships with all of Creation; our social and political institutions meet our needs and reflect our values; and we interact within Canadian society without fear of being subsumed intellectually, linguistically, physically, and spiritually. (p. 171)

Assimilated Aboriginal vs. renewing a multilingual-bicultural co-existence. It is important to recognize that as a part of survival, whether from intense pressure or desire to change conditions, some Indigenous peoples have attempted to immerse themselves in Settler culture and the imperial mind-set. The colonial myth reinforces the notion that denying one's Indigeneity is not only inevitable, but that it comes with material gain and a sense of acceptance. Regardless, none of the authors reviewed in this study advocate for full assimilation into Settler society. They also rejected "soft-core assimilation" (McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004, p. 333), whereby Indigenous peoples are integrated into society with minimal recognition as a distinct people, and are paternalized by the state. Alfred (2009) asserts that this is the rationale behind the state-created concept of 'aboriginalism', which he considers to be the "ideology and identity of assimilation, in which Onkwehonwe are manipulated by colonial myths into a submissive position and are told that by emulating white people

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they can gain acceptance and possibly even fulfillment within mainstream society" (p. 23). But when you consider the larger socio-political system, it is apparent that "there is a large problem with assimilation even for those who choose it over any form of resistance: full assimilation is impossible" (Alfred, 2009, p. 129). Regardless of Indigenous people "having access to generic public education and capitalist job training" (Alfred, 2009, p. 230), we continue to face systemic racism and discrimination.

Considering that over half of the Indigenous population has migrated to urban centers, a few scholars argued it may be desirable, not to mention inevitable, that we consider Indigenous sovereignty in terms of culture and community, rather than exclusively place-based. This is to say sovereignty impacts, and is relevant to, urban peoples as well as those who live on reserves (McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004; Silver, et al. 2011). Regardless of locale, McMillan and Yellowhorn (2004) have argued that many Indigenous people clearly resist acculturation:

> …because they know their history will end when every Aboriginal Person is assimilated into larger society. Canada will then use Aboriginal distinctiveness to enhance and legitimate its rule. In fact this is already happening, as numerous Aboriginal images are used to represent Canada to the world. Resistance is a natural reaction to domination; indeed, generations of warriors have defended the frontiers of their homelands. (p. 317)

The solution to the "manufactured hegemonic" idea of "pan-Aboriginalism" is to recognize and honour the uniqueness of our diverse cultural teachings and ways of knowing (Simpson, 2008a, p. 16). For many of us, when we participate in 'Canadian' society, we intend and aspire to do so as Indigenous people from our respective Nations.

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In order for a fair and just relationship between Indigenous Nations and Settler society to evolve peacefully, there needs to be a "shift away from the objective of bilingual (to use the colonial terminology) monocultural assimilation to what we might call a multilingual bicultured coexistence" (Alfred, 2009, p. 248). This is in alignment with Indigenous worldviews which recognize our responsibility to each other and interdependency, while still respecting diversity. "One task of decolonization is to replace the sameness of universality with the concepts of diversity, complementarity, flexibility, and equity or fundamental fairness" (Henderson, 2000, p. 266). The distinction of Indigenous peoples and the revitalization of our cultures, are necessary elements of viable self-determination.

To renew our right to sovereignty is to regain control of our destinies. There is much debate about whether absolute sovereignty in terms of separatism is even possible (or desirable), or whether Indigenous peoples should aim more for liberation in terms of a nation that has a strong, autonomous governance, but is still a part of Canada (Alfred, 2009). There are many pressing issues to resolve if we continue working within the system. These include revisiting the role of our elected on-reserve Chiefs and Counsellors, and the issue of those roles being an imposed form of governance (Alfred 1999; Voyageur, 2011); the lack of culture and language revitalization for students (Battiste, 2000; Graveline, 1998); sovereignty goals of urban Indigenous people (Lawrence, 2011); and the limitations of our community organizations having to rely on state funding (Calliou, 2011). Regardless, for any form of nation-to-nation partnership to work, fundamental shifts in perspectives and power need to transpire. There also needs to

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be a significant commitment to solidarity based on mutual respect, harmony, and social justice.

Alliances and solidarity. Newhouse and Belanger (2011) are optimistic that Indigenous people "are transforming Canada as they work to address the Canada problem" (p. 376), and that this transformation is potentially beneficial for all peoples. In the coming century, an Indigenous ethos may come to offer genuine alternatives to the current dominant forms of community development. The worldviews informing these traditional values have developed from survival strategies and cultural systems that have nurtured Indigenous peoples for centuries. They provide a framework for sustainable connections between humans and the environment, and to each other. Aspirations for decolonization go beyond the social movement of any one particular community, towards the support of local and global alliances (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Indigenous peoples are not alone in proposing an agenda based on social and ecological justice (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). We are now facing transnational corporations and a societal elite who have found new ways of protecting themselves from accountability (Alfred, 2009).

Diverse groups of Indigenous people working together or with other non-Indigenous collectives is made possible by finding commonalities in visions, principles, values, and ethics. The collaboration between anarchists and Indigenous activists in the anti-globalization movement might be an example of such lines of solidarity. Alfred (2009) coins the political philosophy *anarcho-indigenism* as a potential starting place to develop an ethical framework for these synergic movements that are fundamentally anti-institutional, radically democratic, and committed to taking action. Alfred (2009) continues:

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> There are philosophical connections between indigenous and some strains of anarchist thought on the spirit of freedom and the ideals of a good society… There are also important strategic commonalities between indigenous and anarchist ways of seeing and being in the world: a rejection of alliances with legalized systems of oppression, non-participation in the institutions that structure the colonial relationship, and a belief in bringing about change through direct action, physical resistance, and confrontations with state power. (p. 45-46)

Since civil disobedience on a mass scale is unlikely to be effective, and violent revolutions are undesirable, perhaps small, flexible, autonomous groups organizing together is still a viable solution. In response to being exploited, people are empowering themselves and mobilizing in grassroots movements, “rather than waiting for either the government or organizations to handle the problems” (Bedard, 2008, p. 105). Some Indigenous leaders and organizations have used coalitions “in their efforts to protect their peoples’ rights and their land” (Calliou, 2011, p. 273), and address social and environmental justice issues. The revitalization of Indigenous communities and Knowledges offers philosophies that connect humans to each other and ecologically, which include values and principles for how to live a sustainable, respectful life (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). These provide genuine alternatives to the dominant colonial system and, therefore, can potentially be the foundation for development in any community striving for transformative social change (McGregor, 2004).

Summary

This chapter described four main themes: Recognize, Reclaim, Reconnect, and Revitalize. All four of these themes intersect, interconnect and are vital to Indigenous

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communities' resistance and transformative community development. The first theme highlighted the importance of recognizing how colonial myths manifest in current-day issues impacting Indigenous populations. The second theme defined what reclaiming our internal and collective sovereignty, specifically reclaiming the right to define our own communities, means. The third theme examined issues related to reconnecting to Indigeneity, including the importance of language, roles, and responsibilities. The final theme discussed realizing a vision for community development based on strategies rooted in Indigeneity and a nation-to-nation partnership made possible through a respectful and peaceful co-existence.

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Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary of Objectives, Obligations and Purpose

Based on the literature review and guided by a theoretical framework that seeks to galvanize transformative community development from an Indigenous perspective, this study contends that an understanding of the impacts of colonialism is essential for meaningful community work with Indigenous peoples. A crucial aspect of community work, therefore, is the recognition that individual issues are embedded within broader cultural-historical contexts. I share in the belief that confronting the historic origins of imperialism and its colonial myths, by challenging the present manifestations of this legacy, *must* involve decolonization as a form of transformative change (Alfred, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). As we have seen, however, decolonization in this sense is not narrowly reactionary (i.e. redefining Indigeneity *against* Settler culture), but rather chiefly entails the reclamation, resurgence, and revitalization of vibrant Indigenous cultures that can stand on their own.

This *theoretical thematic analysis* was driven by my theoretical and analytic interest in the topic. The purpose of this study was multifaceted. Primarily, I wanted to centralize Indigeneity by focusing on anti-colonial, critical Indigenous scholars, who are reframing Indigenous community issues by working to contextualize them within deeper colonial and social understandings. In order to get at some of the key findings of these scholars' work, I identified themes clustered around a central idea and organized sub-themes for analysis in accordance with the research questions. As outlined in my procedures, the entire data corpus was approached with a particular analytic interest in community development from a transformative and Indigenous perspective. Identifying patterns and

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themes was also guided by a Community Psychology framework for transformative community development, which is grounded in a holistic approach that attends to the personal, relational, and collective values of well-being (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

As an anti-colonial, Indigenous feminist researcher, my obligations and standards were as follows: to resist and challenge hegemonic epistemologies and practices and to be *relationally accountable*, that is, to aim to ‘give back’ by producing work which is purposeful, helpful, and relevant (Wilson, 2001). Conducting research that is relationally accountable means that the research should increase awareness of the issues and address problems that contribute to an understanding of how to strengthen community. It should also seek to make visible previously silenced voices and expressions of sovereignty, be artistic and complex, display self-awareness, and should aim to impact the reader intellectually *and* emotionally. Ideally, the goal is to foster awareness that incites action, promotes liberation, and nurtures well-being. This research is not intended to be an exhaustive inquiry, but rather an intentional centralizing of Indigeneity for the explicit purpose of meaningful social change.

The purpose of this research was also to explore the potential of Community Psychology (CP) as a decolonizing practice for Indigenous Community Psychology practitioners (CPP), and inform my own work in the field. I believe this research is important in this regard because it allows myself and other CPPs to recognize and highlight results that may inform further consciousness raising, in part, by framing issues in terms of the inequalities of power and questioning the deep-seated presuppositions of the status quo. This critical discipline is crucial if CPPs are to avoid perpetuating assimilationist or Eurocentric ideas. If CPPs are to participate in meaningful work with

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Indigenous peoples, they must develop critical capacities specifically aimed at changing unjust social conditions, and a cultural-historical approach to knowing and knowledge. In order to deepen understanding of what supports transformative community development in Indigenous communities, CPPs need to find ways to support and value the resurgence of Indigenous knowledges.

The remainder of this chapter will relate the research results to the literature review in order to identify where the results either support or contradict the issues raised. The four main themes of the results - Recognize, Reclaim, Reconnect, and Revitalize - will be discussed in accordance with the research questions. To reiterate, this chapter will discuss: 1) how the resulting themes and sub-themes are related to acts of resistance performed by the scholars, and 2) how these issues are a part of transformative community development from an Indigenous perspective. This chapter will conclude with a discussion about implications for community psychology, as well as limitations and recommendations for future research.

Comparing Findings with the Literature Review

I had incorrectly concluded that because most of the authors reviewed for my literature review did not specifically use the word “transformative” there is a gap in the literature about community development from a critical perspective. On the contrary, all the Indigenous authors included in the present study advanced a critical analysis aimed at fostering not only well-being on an individual level, but provided multiple examples of *acts of resistance* specifically intended to confront systemic oppression, transform power relationships, and eliminate oppression (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). There are common themes in both the literature review and research that addressed issues such as:

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colonization, marginalization, social inequalities, identity, and the problems associated with economic progress as the sole significant focus of development. All the Indigenous scholars reviewed identified certain issues pertinent to transformative community development, for example, by suggesting a need for holistic approaches which are socially, culturally, economically, and politically sustainable. The literature review and research findings both highlight the authors' conscious efforts to generate knowledge that is about decolonizing, regaining sovereignty, and regenerating Indigeneity (Denzin et al. 2008; McKinely & Brayboy, 2006). In both the review and research the scholars advance the notion that transformative Indigenous approaches are those in which Indigenous people identify the issues and alternatives themselves.

In the literature review, Indigenous worldviews and knowledges were highlighted as an important preventative measure against transformative development being solely defined by capitalistic, imperialistic notions by a few emerging Indigenous elite. Although this was still noted as a concern by some of the authors in the research, it was not significant enough in all the data to focus on it exclusively as a main theme in the results.

Creative Analytic Practice - Recognize

Coyote sat on a hillside watching the people, his head tilted slightly. *Tsk*, he thought, "after all my hard work to put the territory in order." Why, he was just telling brother Bear the other day that the village is in such good shape because of him. He went to lots of other villages and helped them too. He wondered why the two-leggeds had stopped using their powers to make things better like he taught them. Instead of gathering like they used to, they mostly stayed in their big houses. "I used to hear the drums, and

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they would sing songs for me. They seem confused, maybe, hey? Did they forget?" he says to Crow. Crow was known for shape-shifting in order to gossip with the people as they gambled at the slahal bonegames. Crow said it was a good way to get dried salmon and something called *chips*, but he always got hungry on the way home before Coyote could have some. Maybe he would never know, there hasn't been a bonegame for years now.

"Crrraaaa" Crow says, "Maybe you are right. Maybe it's time. You should go back down and help them. They would sing songs about you again." Coyote begins to think he *is* right, maybe he should fix things again. He is glad Crow is here to remind him how clever he is. Crow hops closer, with a twinkle in his voice, "You can remind them of how *powerful* you are. Maybe you can even be…" "I can be a leader!" Coyote interrupts excitedly. Crow nods, knowing Coyote hasn't watched the two-leggeds in some time. He was too busy trying to be the sun, making things live or die. "But you know, the people won't listen to you unless you are powerful." "I know" said Coyote as he began to walk away "I'll be a wise and powerful two-legged. I'll be a creator of life. I'll be a spiritual person, I'll sing all the songs and drum the best. The people will honor me." Crow said he thought Coyote was very clever indeed.

That afternoon, Coyote saw grandfather Owl south of the river and told him his plan to help the people. Owl tried to reason with him, but Coyote was so proud of himself that he wouldn't listen.

When Coyote woke up the next morning, he was exactly how he had planned.

He was an old woman.

Recognize

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According to Wade (1997), an act of resistance is any attempt to expose oppression. The scholars studied for this paper highlight how Indigenous peoples continue to be oppressed by Eurocentric versions of history and epistemic assumptions passed off as 'common sense.' In this first theme the *act of resistance* includes recognizing and naming the past and present profound impact colonialism has had on Indigenous people. In all four of the subthemes, the scholars I reviewed analyzed colonial myths that included rationalizations and assumptions negatively impacting Indigenous peoples, and all offered alternative interpretations.

Colonial myths are so prevalent that some Indigenous people, when applying for work, choose not to identify themselves as Indigenous. They do not want to get the job simply because the company needs to fulfil their "people-of-color quota." Understandably, Indigenous peoples want to be recognized first and foremost for their talents, intellect, and achievements. I have heard similar comments from urban Natives who do not want 'token Indian positions' within organizations. This survival technique, of course, is most effective if, in the job interview, one can adequately 'pass' as non-Indigenous. Regardless, the point is not that Indigenous peoples deserve something 'for free,' as the oversimplified interpretation of this point generally goes. Instead, the point is to draw attention to how effectively this belief conceals the racialized and systemic discrimination that is the 'common sense' scaffolding of Canada. As noted in the literature review and results, the impacts of colonial injustices are plainly evident in the health and social inequalities of the Indigenous population in Canada today. For generations, one of the major survival strategies of Indigenous peoples has been to learn

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how to think, speak, and act the "right way." In Settler society, the right way has tended to be the "White way" (Graveline, 1998, p. 23).

One of the objectives of this research is to further realize the potential in Community Psychology (CP) as a decolonizing practice, where professionals do not perpetuate assimilationist or Eurocentric agendas, but instead value and honour Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Confronting the ideology of imperialism and colonial myths, therefore, are an important part of transformative community work.

From my findings, Community Psychology practitioners (CPP) may gain insight into how ameliorative community-based programing can excessively focus on the "Indian problem" and not directly address the cultural-historical roots of systemic discrimination. "Individual" issues are framed in terms of social oppression and inequalities in power, that require liberating solutions guided by values such as self-determination, participation, and social justice. According to Nelson & Prilleltensky (2010), transformative community interventions should be designed not only to foster an individual's well being, but should also include actions specifically intended to change power relationships and eliminate oppression. In this sense, transformative community change means striving to reveal the ideologically-laden origins of colonial myths and common sense presuppositions, as well as aim to confront systemic oppression with collective action.

For CPPs to be grounded in a holistic approach to transformative community development, according to Nelson & Prilleltensky (2010), it is an approach that attends to personal, relational, and collective values of well-being. One example of working from a personal value is promoting self-determination, encouraging and supporting Indigenous

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people as they deconstruct colonial myths and identify positively with an Indigenous defined history. This can be possible, for example, through experiential, arts-based community programs. There are multiple ways to incorporate culture into art, including using traditional language in hip-hop, poetry, photography, and digital media. Doing community building based on collective values can include supporting initiatives focused on connecting Indigenous knowledges with environmental or social justice movements. Working from a relational value involves building respectful relationships with Indigenous individuals and communities. The scholars provide examples of how building respectful relationships can include understanding the decolonization process on an individual or community level, such as confronting and transforming the myth of progress, myth of equality in Canada, and imperial mind-set.

Creative Analytic Practice - Reclaim

A family took the old woman in, assuming she was the great-aunt of so-and-so. People began to realize how funny she was. Maybe she was joking. Mumbling, asking strange questions, playing tricks and giggling to herself. Before long, her toothy chuckles had earned her the nickname *Sk'lep*. Crows seemed to cuckle and caw at her when she walked by, though at first she didn't notice. Then she started chasing after them, yelling about the blackness of their feathers, about going west, or what they knew, but the crows only seemed to laugh as they flew away.

After the third week, the family found Sk'lep wandering around outside at night and they began to worry. "Maybe she's sick," said granddaughter, pointing to her head. Granddaughter read a lot of books and watched a lot of television, so she knew about such things. "You know what she asked me?" her cousin said, pausing his video game,

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"she tried to get me, right in the MIDDLE of the last level, that I finished last night, to stop playing and find a 'hooot hooo'… I think she wants to find an owl. And it was at midnight!" When took her to the city doctor, he said something was wrong with her, but it was nothing physical that he could see. "She might be depressed, but let's see if the problem can be fixed with sleep." He gave them sleeping pills and told them to come back if it didn't help.

During the fourth week, great-auntie Sk'lep slept. She slept and slept, waking only when the family fed her. She would tell them about her dreams. Endless dreams. At first she didn't make a lot of sense or said strange things. Talking about things long ago, talking about fishing spots only the old people remembered or something about forgetting. Then after three days of sleeping, they could understand her more. She talked about her dreams, of spiders and broken webs, being really hungry, or when there was a lot pain and being really afraid. In her dreams this went on for years and years, maybe hundreds. She still felt heavy and tired. They let her sleep. By the fourth day, the family was relieved when she said she was better. She ate bannock and salmon, and joked and laughed. But she couldn't remember any of her dreams anymore, or about how she got there.

Reclaim

As an *act of resistance*, critical consciousness-raising can be considered as one step towards transformative community development. A crucial component of resisting the imperialist mind-set occurs when Indigenous peoples are encouraged to use *First Voice,* and are empowered to reclaim the right to tell their own stories, determine their own identities, and articulate their own solutions (Graveline, 1998). This kind of

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consciousness-raising is achieved through gaining back "personal strengths which are available when the sources of alienation are located in systemic rather than individual deficits" (Graveline, 1998, p. 195). When we speak for ourselves, share our stories, and begin to collectively understanding our oppression, we can shift internalized racism and refocus our energy on personal or systemic change. As noted in the results, *Internal sovereignty* means simultaneously taking control of our personal and collective lives, while realizing our traditions and Indigenous knowledges are rich resources for both (Yazzie, 2000). Consciousness-raising, therefore, is a part of reclaiming our personal and collective sovereignty. As noted in the results, community development involves restoring our sovereignty strategically.

Indigenous knowledges can guide us through the significant process of reclaiming our right to define our own community membership. The Indian Act has effectively divided the Indigenous population, and consciousness-raising at the site of identity is crucial for reclamation. As Simpson (2008a) says, "we cherish the diversity of Indigenous cultures and believe that it is necessary to protect and promote that diversity" (p. 16). To regain our sovereignty is to regain the respect for the diversity of our peoples. As an *act of resistance*, this brings our people back into the circle and from this place we can recreate our communities with *self-conscious traditionalism* (Alfred & Corntassel, 2011). It also strategically strengthens the connection between our reserve and urban communities which serves to strengthen our collective power.

Before we address issues related to identity and community development, it may serve us well to be reminded of the pervasiveness of the colonial mind-set; and the fact that "many Canadian cities were founded on Indigenous village sites whose inhabitants

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were removed to make way for settlers" (Pitawanakwat, 2008, p. 169). Urban Natives have and can provide a unique support network, such as supporting Indigenous people who are new to the city, forming alliances with other marginalized peoples, mobilizing to challenge political issues, or creating strong inter-national urban communities (Lawrence, 2011). When we are discussing sovereignty, self-determination, or self-governments, we are talking about *all* Indigenous peoples, those state-labeled 'status' or those who are not. There are many creative solutions to consider. Some Indigenous communities have created 'urban-reserves' by purchasing plots of land in urban centers and designing agreements so they have reserve status (FitzMaurice & McCaskill, 2011; Pitawanakwat, 2008). One of our tasks, as Indigenous CPPs or community builders, is to recognize how the Indian Act and other legislation has weakened us. We can begin to decolonize by gathering our people to reclaim the heart of our Indigeneity.

Creative Analytic Practice – Reconnect

By winter, Sk'lep was feeling better and the Elder took her into the sweathouse across the northern part of the field. They would sweat every week, first thing in the morning, and every week she felt stronger. The band office tried to find her identification, but eventually gave up. She still couldn't remember much, only bits and pieces of dreams she wasn't sure she wanted to remember. But she repeated the traditional words and songs that the Elder said during ceremony, and they felt like they began to make some sense. They expressed gratitude to the rocks, to the water, to the Earth, to *All Our Relations*. She would leave part of her lunch on the log by the sweat for the crows, but they would wait till the people where gone to fly down from the trees.

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Sk'lep started to go with the old people everywhere. The support worker took them to movies, a powwow, Friendship Centre events, and to the school for language classes. The family went on more walks with her, to help her remember places and spots she forgot. She didn't understand things, like why granddaughter was too busy to join her at the sweat all the time, or weave baskets or bead. Why her grandchildren were planning to go so faraway for school. Why the family was stressed, and rarely ate together because of work. Great-auntie had funny habits too; she would rather sit in the car than go with them into the big, noisy store. But most of the time she was happy, gossiping with the old people and with the *Relations* at the sweat.

Some times, when she was still half asleep, she would feel the need to look for something. Cousin stays up late, he says, to play video games. Some times, though, he thinks he can tell when auntie is going to sleepwalk, so he stays up to stop her before she walks out the door into the darkness.

She always says there is something she forgot. Something she was supposed to do.

But when she wakes up the next day, she never remembers.

Reconnect

In order to address the impacts of colonialism, work towards decolonization, and re-Indigenize (Simpson, 2008b), the foundation of our resurgence will be "reconnecting to our culture, spirit, and collective power" (Alfred, 2009, p. 256). Renewal of our Indigenous knowledge systems and reconnecting to our heritage *is* an *act of resistance*. As Alfred (2011) has claimed, we must channel our spirit and consciousness directly into "contention with the very foundations of colonialism" (p. 7). Community-based programs, that serve to reconnect the individual and the community, or programs that

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include cultural practices such as ceremonies, are *acts of resistance*. As Graveline (1998) maintains, “Ceremony can revitalize the will to build community relations and mobilize us to actively resist forms of Eurocentric domination personally and collectively” (p. 130) because, “the spirituality invoked in ceremonial work is related to the philosophy of Self-In-Relation and recognition of the link between individual responsibility and community well-being” (p. 133). There have also been increases in ceremonies supported and conducted by urban Natives. As Castellano (2011) asserts, “Ceremonies have stability over time… While particular features of protocol in a sweat lodge may differ from place to place, the core efficacy of sweat ceremonies to facilitate healing and transformation continues to be validated by participants” (p. 49). I consider this to be a viable solution to urban Indigenous community building, since Urban Natives need “places and spaces to connect and talk”, and this sense of belonging “generates Indigenous involvement in the community” (Silver et al. 2011, p. 216).

When Indigenous people work to decolonize by reconnecting, we often find that these lifeworlds “contain the authority to heal Aboriginal identities and communities. Restoring Aboriginal worldviews and languages is essential to realizing Aboriginal solidarity and power” (Henderson, 2000, p. 252). As Simpson (2008b) states, one of the best ways to do community work that preserves Indigenous Knowledge systems is by supporting the next generation to reconnect to land and language. This can be accomplished by providing the “space and time for youth to connect with their Elders and the Knowledge Keepers of their community” (Simpson, 2008b, p. 82). Simpson (2008b) argues that “we do not need loads of cash to develop fancy curricula and learning programs; we need to provide opportunity and support, and then get out of the way” (p.

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82). In regards to doing transformative community work, whenever possible, CPPs can aspire to allocate funds or provide community training for the purpose of creating space and support for the reconnection between generations.

Among the scholars reviewed, it is clear that learning our own language is preferred. Learning our own language would be a natural *act of resistance*. As noted in the results, it is important to remember that for Indigenous people, there are many barriers to learning language, so it is generally accepted that it my not be possible for everyone. There is tremendous energy, however, behind language and cultural revitalization that can be harnessed for transformative community development. Castellano (2011) reminds us that “Indigenous languages reveal in their structure and content the values that have served the people over generations” (p. 49). Deciding whether or not learning our language is beneficial or even possible, however, is only part of the challenge. The issue is whether or not Native language courses in schools are going to be enough. Not surprisingly, research shows that full immersion language programs are the most successful (Hare, 2011). In regards to Indigenous community development, it certainly starts at the individual level. Program development can include a plan to provide the best possible start for children to learn their language. The reality is that many caregivers, especially young parents, are facing job insecurity among other racialized barriers. Strong individuals, supported by strong families and community ties, is an essential part of the *spider web of relations* we are reconnecting (Little Bear, 2000). As CPPs, if we are aiming to strengthen our youngest generation’s language and culture, we must also consider how to provide parent support, including childcare, education, resources, and programs.

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Creative Analytic Practice - Revitalize

The Elders decided it was time to have another community event, a spring powwow with drumming, singing, and dancing. They would send an invite across the province. Some people wanted to add a conference too, to talk about what was happening with the land, the language, how to get the young people involved and working in the community.

On the first night of the powwow, the Elders hosted a slahal bonegame, the first in years. There were good prizes, and lots of teams full of young and old people from other communities. Sk'lep didn't remember how to play, but it didn't take long to relearn. Two teams sit across from each other, each team has five sticks. Then the teams take turns. Each team drums and sings, while the opposite team guesses which hand has the bone without the stripe. If you guess it right, you win one of their sticks. If you guess wrong, they win a stick. The team that has all the sticks wins. Even with just a few teams, the games can go for hours.

By the final game, Sk'lep found herself across from someone she felt like she recognized, but didn't know why. "I dunno" one of the organizers said, "I'm pretty sure that group is from the city." But this person kept smiling at her, and was a good player too. The person led lots of songs and had a loud, crackly laugh when the other team was tricked into guessing the bones wrong. Finally, in the last game, just when Sk'lep's team was down to their last stick, they won them all back. It was a huge victory. Everyone said it was due to Sk'lep's song. From that night on, they said they would name the song after her.

"Hey, wait!" Sk'lep heard behind her as she was leaving. The familiar person walked towards her, taking one more chip out of the bag before offering the rest to

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Sk'lep. "You don't remember me, hey?" She didn't, she said, but she was curious. "Ha, ha. I'm your cousin! Yeah, I know, you don't remember much, do you?" She shook her head. "You must always feel like you are looking for something or you forgot to do something?" The look on her face said she did. "Don't worry… it's here. Everything you need is right here…" the person said, pointing to their hearts. "It's always been there. We don't need to remember everything. We just need to know when we want things to change. Maybe it's time for a vision, hey? Maybe it is time for a transformation." They hugged before parting, Sk'lep said thanks and that she would think about it. But as she began walking she wondered what the person had meant. She turned around to ask, but they were gone.

Revitalize

Indigenous peoples are facing many challenges, such as overwhelming pressure from the state to assimilate, complete ignorance or disregard by some Settlers of our inherent rights, and at times, discrimination and lateral violence by our own people. Revitalization, as *acts of resistance,* call upon us to respond with immense creativity, compassion, and adaptation. Sometimes the first step is the will to dream. As Simpson (2008b) has written, "Nishnaabeg Knowledge Holders know that the first step to making something happen is often a dream or a vision" (p. 81). Then we can build critical-consciousness, and through using our own voice, work in solidarity with others to articulate an alternative vision based on Indigenous knowledges, philosophies, values, and sustainable practices.

Sustainable practices in transformative community development, for example, mean economic development loses its emphasis on short-term, exploitative profit yields

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and, instead, becomes focused on cyclical sustainability. Brascoupe (2011) argues that for Indigenous peoples, economic development based on our Knowledges are "the sustainable use of renewable resources" (p. 381), and "through education, training, health and healing, community planning, and indigenous knowledge, Aboriginal people can build upon a sustainable economic, environmental, and cultural strategy" (p. 382). Besides the obvious health and economic implications of these projects, this also speaks to communities' interests in revitalizing by taking control of their wellness.

Yazzie (2000) contends that "'Sovereignty is nothing more than the ability of a group of people to make their own decisions and control their own lives" (p. 46). Thus, communities must consider how they can effectively reassume control of their destinies. To this end, as an *act of resistance*, Indigenous people are envisioning their liberation as a revitalization of their sovereignty. There tends to be many misconceptions and differences of opinion about sovereignty among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. It is a complex issue, for the very reason that Indigenous peoples and communities have diversified needs. A commonality they share is that Indigenous peoples have an 'inherent' right, which means our rights are "rooted in history and treaties" (Newhouse & Belanger, 2011, p. 367). One of the most fundamental inherent rights of sovereign nations is "the right to govern its own people and territory under is own laws and custom… Indians have always had that right, and the Treaties re-enforce this position" (Belanger, 2011, p. 362). An Indigenous peoples' movement towards self-determination and an Indigenous defined self-government does not necessarily entail complete independence from Canada, but it does "return to the nation-to-nation relationship as originally envisioned by the Royal Proclamation of 1763" (Newhouse & Belanger, 2011,

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p. 354). For Indigenous peoples, this involves redefining our relationship with the state, from one of paternalism to partnership.

It is important to recognize, as CPPs working towards transformative community development, that Indigenous peoples and leaders have consistently aspired to “self-government and limited interference by the Canadian state in their local affairs” (Calliou, 2011, p. 278). Self-government, according to Voyageur & Calliou (2011) is a “necessarily fluid political concept: [it] will take different forms in different communities and at different times” (p. 208). What is important is that Indigenous Nations should have the freedom to define self-government for themselves. In order for a fair and just relationship between Indigenous Nations and the Settler state to be respectful, Indigenous people must not be required to abandon their Indigeneity or inherent right to sovereignty. Urban community development and sovereignty, according to these terms, means Indigenous organizations are run by and for Indigenous people, and are rooted in traditional values (Silver et al. 2011). In transformative community work, not all organizations who provide services for Indigenous people should only have Indigenous staff. However, it is important for there to be a significant commitment to solidarity between non-Indigenous organizations or companies, and Indigenous communities based on mutual respect, accountability, and social justice.

As Indigenous CPPs, it may be a challenge to work within non-Indigenous organizations or companies, which receive funding to address Indigenous issues. The challenge may in part be due to the potentially tokenistic nature of these positions, for example: frontline, limited, or temporary project-based funded roles. These positions can justify non-Indigenous organizations’ receiving funding, which would otherwise have

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gone to Indigenous populations. Despite whether or not these are done with "good intentions," without accountability, organizations that consider themselves to be in the best position to "help", Indigenous populations risk reflecting the paternalistic attitude dominating Settler culture. This is not saying that respectful collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities are not possible, beneficial, or desirable.

To mitigate this issue as a CPP, we can encourage or support organizations or companies desiring to "help" Indigenous people to be accountable by implementing anti-oppression or racial justice frameworks or practices. There are many ways to implement and realize more accountable practices for organizations or companies receiving funding "on behalf" of Indigenous peoples, or money directly from Indigenous peoples or communities through program or training fees.

Accountability can mean, for example, creating strategic plans with concrete actions describing how to bring Indigenous people onto boards, into supervisory positions, or at the very least, create an Indigenous advisory committee that has actual decision-making power. Accountability can also be accomplished by implementing meaningful, in-depth racial justice training for the entire organization or company. By 'racial justice training' I do not mean an ameliorative few hours of 'cultural competency' training that does nothing to change the dominant office culture. Organizations and companies can provide professional training or additional support for increasing education in order that more Indigenous or other people-of-color who are casual, volunteer, or frontline staff are promoted into senior, management, and board positions. These are all examples of accountability, solidarity, and transformative ally community work.

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According to Reynolds (2010), being an imperfect ally means focusing less on being perfect, and more on being flexible, accountable, and useful. “When there is trust that I am a committed ally over the long haul, my unavoidable (yet, not innocent) mistakes can be held alongside my acts of solidarity” (Reynolds, 2010, p. 14). Transformative community change will involve mobilization at a grassroots level, which will require strategic, creative, and thoughtful sharing of power. We can find inspiration and frameworks for our collaborations in political philosophies such as *anarcho-indigenism* (Alfred, 2009). As Indigenous people:

> We must reclaim our worldviews, knowledge, languages, and order to find the path ahead. We must sustain our relationships with our environment and follow our elders’ advice. We must rebuild our nations on our worldviews and our good values. We must be patient and thorough, because there are no shortcuts in rebuilding ourselves, our families, our relationships, our spiritual ceremonies, and our solidarity. (Henderson, 2000, p. 274)

Revitalization of our communities is going to be a long journey requiring sustained effort by both Indigenous peoples and our allies. As we develop holistic, sustainable approaches that challenge colonial hegemony, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people will benefit equally.

Indigenous Community Psychology Practitioners

As an Indigenous person becoming a CPP, this research has informed my work by increasing my awareness of, and strengthened my ability to, articulate Indigenous issues related to transformative community development. As Indigenous CPPs creating transformative community-based programs or spaces that strengthen Indigenous people’s

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relationships with the land, with our languages, and with *A ll Our Relations*, we will need to maintain our efforts in multiple areas. According to Anderson and Ball (2011), we will need:

> to include ways to rebuild our human relations through residential-school healing programs, education and support for mothers and fathers during the transition to parenthood, infant development programs, quality child care, family-strengthening initiatives, family literacy, community development, employment, and social justice. Efforts are being undertaken in all these areas, but it will take time and resources to rebuild healthy communities. (p. 73)

As Silver et al. (2011) explain, "all of this –at the individual, the community, the organizational and broader political levels –is a process of decolonization, a process of Aboriginal people seeking to take back control of their lives after many decades of colonial control" (p. 226). As outsiders and CPPs doing transformative community work, it is important to build a relationship with Indigenous individuals and communities based on trust, mutual respect, and reciprocity. We must begin by listening, to understand what individuals and communities need. We would be wise to let Indigenous individuals and communities lead the way as they create their own ideas for addressing identified issues.

Implications for Community Psychology

This study may provide CPPs, or anyone working towards a goal of social justice, with some useful insights into how to support community development, from a transformative perspective. This research could give practitioners a starting place to build a relationship through critical consciousness-raising, or allow them to gain ideas about starting points for further community program design, education, and group discussion. It

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can also provide a framework that could potentially influence social policy, for example, if policy is changed or created while being informed by Indigenous knowledges.

The revitalization of Indigenous communities and worldviews offers an opportunity to not only inspire and educate mainstream society, but to also offer a genuine alternative to the current system (Alfred, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Indigenous peoples have philosophies that connect humans to each other and ecologically, which include values and principles for how to live a sustainable, respectful life (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).
Perhaps the relatively recent industrial and capitalist ethos now dominating Canadian society might begin to be confronted and remediated by the sharing of the values-based sustainability of Indigenous ways of knowing. Together, we are challenged to find:

> solutions that meet our specific needs in the present and future. We are not working to find our way back to what we once were in the past, but are, instead, diligently struggling to bring forward those teachings, ceremonies, practices and ways of relating that can help to rebuild a strong cultural bases from which to resist contemporary colonialism. (Sherman, 2008, p. 120)

Thus, by recognizing Indigenous knowledges in the development of community, transformative frameworks can be developed with a focus not only on the well-being of Indigenous peoples, but also on creating sustainable knowledge and practices for any community development and any community-based programming for social change (McGregor, 2004).

Limitations

Even though this research may provide communities with possible avenues of investigation and ways of thinking about their community programming or development,

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the limitation of this research is the transferability of results. The information may be useful to some communities making decisions about programming, development, policies, or elements for community building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, but given that each community is different, it is important to note that what is applicable in one community may not be directly transferrable to another.

My preference would have been to do transformative, action research with an Indigenous community. Due to insufficient time and resources, I feared that any community-based research ran the risk of being conducted in a way that may have reproduced an unethical, or worse, exploitative, relationship that has been the unfortunate tendency of research conducted on Indigenous people in the past. I question, therefore, whether the research would have benefited me more than the community. A mandatory part of my responsibility and accountability as a critical, Indigenous researcher doing relational research, is to do research that involves appropriate respect for cultural norms, and allows time for relationship building and/or knowledge sharing, including time for participants to review contributions and make changes, resulting in meaningful, transformative outcomes for the community.

Nevertheless, for this conceptual research, I recognize the following limitations: I alone have created the guiding research questions; due to a lack of information on how to utilize Indigenous methodologies in my analysis I have decided to use thematic analysis to analyze and interpret the data; and my theoretical approaches have played a significant part in selecting themes including the initial themes of transformative, Indigenous, community development.

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As a form of creative analytic practice, I wrote a short story about Trickster (which for the Secwepemc people is often the *Sk'lep* - Coyote), and, even though storytelling is an appropriate mode of narrative inquiry, it is important to recognize that I have written the story in English. I recognize that Indigenous authors need to be mindful and cautious when sharing traditional knowledge within non-Indigenous spaces. To be clear, this is not a traditional Secwepemc story translated into English, but rather a form of inquiry that incorporates a traditional character and is influenced by some of the traditional themes commonly related to this character.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research is not intended to be an exhaustive inquiry, but rather an intentional centralizing of Indigenous knowledges for the explicit purpose of meaningful social change. To realize community development from a transformative Indigenous perspective, and the potential of Community Psychology as a decolonizing practice, serious efforts should be given to research that specifically details how professionals can do programming that does not perpetuate assimilationist or Eurocentric agendas, but instead values and honours Indigenous ways of knowing and being. This would include studies that focus on transformative community development, such as community-based programs prioritizing critical consciousness-raising and direct action initiatives, or on programs focussed on reconnecting Indigenous people to land, language, culture, or identity. Future research could also focus on finding effective strategies for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, to help instigate systemic change and transform social inequalities and health disparities. Such research could further inform Indigenous people's movement towards efforts to decolonize, regain sovereignty, or regenerate

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Indigeneity (Denzin et al. 2008; McKinely & Brayboy, 2006). Furthermore, future research should investigate successful alliances and partnerships with non-Indigenous people that are based on respect, equality, or justice.

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