NAVIGATING ERASURE:

EXPLORING THE LIMITS AND POTENTIAL OF INDIGENOUS STUDIES WITHIN THE
SETTLER COLONIAL ACADEMY THROUGH HAUDENOSAUNEE CRITICAL SELF-
REFLEXIVITY

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ABSTRACT

Navigating Erasure: Exploring The Limits and Potential of Indigenous Studies within the Settler Colonial Academy through Haudenosaunee Critical Self-Reflexivity

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This thesis explores the double-bind Indigenous Peoples encounter when pursuing post-secondary education in the field of Indigenous Studies. I argue that Indigenous voices deemed tolerable are incorporated into the commodification of Indigenous thought and experience for the Settler audiences who profit most from post-secondary institutions. My analysis discusses the possibilities for Indigenous Studies to navigate this parasitic relationship and assist Indigenous lives that academia renders unrecognizable. I examine my educational journey and conduct a literature review of the role that Settler Colonialism plays within Indigenous Studies. Through the use of critical self-reflexivity, this thesis employs Haudenosaunee political thought and Indigenous storywork to tell my personal narrative navigating the macro and micro dynamics within the academy that exploits Indigenous student's self-interest to maintain the Settler-Colonial status quo in higher education. I identify strategies to assist academics in conducting ethical research within Indigenous Studies and imagine insurgent education within the Canadian university.

Keywords: Settler Colonialism, Haudenosaunee, commodification, Critical Indigenous Studies

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Finally, I would like to thank my family. This goes beyond what I can express here - without them, the fundamental core of my thesis would be completely different than it is in its current form. As they have provided moral support throughout my life and challenged me to become a better person, it was no different during my time writing this thesis. I am thankful that my mother and brother were able to witness its completion. It is a bittersweet moment - Mom passed away three days after my defense. This thesis is a reflection of everything she taught me. I hope I have made her proud.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Glossary

Capitalism: as engaged in Coulthard (2014), the economic and political system in which the state's trade is controlled through private ownership. This system puts tangible value in property rights, including private property. This system and its foundation in the exploitation of labor and resources for profit and ownership over land assist the state in the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples.

Circle wampum: as defined in Williams (2018), a wampum belt signifying the creation and structure of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Two rows of beads intertwine to form the outer circle and fifty strands are bound from the edge and lay towards the center of the circle, representing each chief within the Confederacy. The chiefs are represented to form and uphold the government and the people through maintaining law and peace.

Cultural entrapment: a term utilized by Moreton-Robinson (2016b) that refers to the result of the limitations put on recognized expressions and embodiment of Indigeneity through the essentialization of culture as defined by Settler academics. Stereotypical markers of identity and behavior are utilized in litmus tests to determine if an individual or group are authentically Indigenous in the eyes of the Settler observer. Indigenous Peoples are then forced to work within or resist these limitations and live with the consequences of their obedience/disobedience which compounds with the ongoing effects facilitated through the maintenance of Settler Colonialism.

Decolonization: as utilized by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) and Tuck and Yang (2012), the process in which social structures that maintain Settler Colonialism are dismantled. The methods used to facilitate this process vary in scope, scale and length and are interdependent on one another to successfully destabilize entrenched social structures that are critical to the maintenance of Settler Colonialism.

Deradicalization: as explored in Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022), this refers to the act/process of stagnating radical change in the status quo through the promotion of moderate views. In education, this can take form in shifting discourse from identifying and resolving systemic issues to focusing on changes to be made by individuals in daily life. It can also take form through the misrepresentation of goals or demands made by groups or individuals seeking systemic change. In Indigenous Studies, deradicalization takes form in the shift from discourse regarding rights, law and state obligations to the exploration of culture and the promotion of reconciliation.

Depoliticization: as explored by Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) and Tuck and Yang (2012), this refers to the act/process of removing the political connections of a given topic. Depoliticization is actively engaged through deradicalization in educational contexts and within Indigenous Studies. In relation to Indigenous rights issues, depoliticization allows the state to distance or remove itself from its obligations to domestic and international laws and human rights.

Enfranchisement: as explored by Nichols (2014), this term refers to the legal process in which an Indigenous Person's rights were extinguished by the Government of Canada. This was facilitated through voluntary and compulsory methods through the application of the *Indian Act.*

Essentialism/ization: as explored by Simpson and Smith (2014) and Moreton-Robinson (2016b), these terms refer to the process in which few specific traits are used as primary markers to identify a group of people. These characteristics are attributed to race or culture rather than social factors that may have influenced them. These markers are then used as a litmus test in determining authenticity and enable cultural entrapment.

Great Law of Peace: as described by Williams (2018), the story of the Peacemaker's journey that led to the uniting of five nations - Mohawk, Oneida, Tuscarora, Cayuga and Onondaga into the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, with each nation playing a governing role. The Tuscarora were later brought into the Confederacy as the sixth nation.

Guswentha: also known as Two Row Wampum. As described by Williams (2018) and Newhouse (2008), treaty made between Haudenosaunee and Dutch and an important basis for subsequent treaties. The relationship is represented by two rows of purple beads on a white background, vessels in which the respective peoples travel.

Imperialism: as explored by Smith (2012a), this refers to the policy/ideology of a nation used to justify the expansion of its power over other nations. This is achieved through diplomacy, militaristic aggression, and/or coercion through various forms of attrition. Imperialism creates the foundation for the structure of Settler Colonialism to build upon - as Settler ties to the colony/empire weaken over time, the preservation of the Settler's ability to claim and occupy land still requires a structure to support their presence.

Indigenization: as engaged by Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) and Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), this refers to the process in which social structures are modified to include and respect Indigenous Peoples and Knowledges within their existing structure. Indigenization is limited by those who have agency and power over a given social structure, thus establishing its role and limits in decolonization.

Indigenous Resurgence: utilized in Smith (2012b) and Corntassle (2011), this term refers to the regeneration of Indigenous nationhood facilitated by the rebuilding of political orders rooted in kin-centric relationships and obligations. Critical to this movement is the incorporation of other

oppressed peoples and their perspectives and providing alternatives to societal issues caused and maintained through Settler Colonialism.

Insurgent Education: described by Corntassle (2011) as part of an active decolonizing strategy challenging the status quo, characterized by truth-telling focused on local Indigenous struggles.

Neo-liberalism: explored by Brunette-Debassige (2022), this term refers to the political movement towards enabling the free market through government deregulation and the reduction of government spending. This approach has provided justification for the infringement on Indigenous rights and the dispossession of land in the name of economic development of the state and its citizenry across North America..

Politics of Distraction: a term utilized by Brunette-Debassige to describe state and institution-led efforts to prevent systemic change from occurring through depoliticization, deradicalization, misrepresentation and other forms of misdirection. It can be engaged as a form of attrition to buy the state or institution time to adapt to calls for change without having to make systemic changes that would compromise their agency and power.

Politics of Recognition: a term engaged by Coulthard (2014) that describes attempts by citizens to seek justice for an oppressed group of people through state's legal apparatuses. For Indigenous Peoples in North America, Coulthard (2014) discussed how engaging in the politics of recognition has limitations as the functioning of the state takes priority over the provision of redress if adequate redress compromises the functioning of the state.

Settler Colonialism: a term popularized by Patrick Wolfe (2006) that describes the social structure seeking to secure permanent occupation on foreign land separate from the home colony through the removal of Indigenous peoples.

Storywork: a conversational method of generating understanding and knowledge defined and utilized by Justice (2018) and Kovach (2015), and in this thesis relates personal experiences that provide context for developing analysis.

Radical Imagination: a term engaged by Karuka (2017) that refers to the generation of alternatives to state apparatuses in addressing the social realities faced among oppressed groups grounded in Indigenous and Black radical traditions and coalitions.

Reconciliation: as engaged by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) and Whyte (2018), this term refers to the process of reestablishing peaceful relationships between two parties. In the Canadian context, it refers to state-led efforts to amend relationships between Canada and Indigenous Peoples regarding the Residential School system and the Sixties' Scoop. While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission outlined 94 Calls to Action to amend the systemic issues that informed the operation of Residential Schools and the Sixties' Scoop, reconciliation has been invoked to limit discussion around Indigenous rights to these singular events and detached from the ongoing efforts to maintain Settler Colonialism.

Reflexivity: as utilized in Cote-Meek (2014a; 2014b), this methodology examines one's own feelings and thoughts to understand how these influence experiences and analysis. A critical approach to self-reflexivity involves examining one's positionality with attention to systems of power and dominant knowledges involved in perpetuating oppression.

Refusal: as defined by Simpson (2014), this term refers to the moral decision to deny participation in any process where exploitation can be expected. For Indigenous Peoples, this decision can occur at the level of the individual, such as within studies, conversations, employment, etc., or as a

collective through demonstrations and legal challenges within or against state apparatuses. In each instance, refusal is an act of reclaiming and exerting agency.

Settler: as utilized in Wolfe (2006) and Maddison and Nakata (2022), this term refers to any non-Indigenous Person that actively maintains Settler Colonialism. This can take many forms, including but not limited to the repeating of and belief in racist stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples to participating in employment that facilitates the dispossession of land, the denial of rights, and/or the dehumanization of Indigenous Peoples.

Settler Moves to Innocence: behavioral tactics described by Tuck and Yang (2012) that Settlers engage when confronted with the implications of history and their proximity to the injustices inflicted on Indigenous Peoples. This allows the Settler to mitigate feelings of guilt while retaining the privileges reaped through the maintenance of Settler Colonialism.

Settler Normativity: as engaged with by Smith, Funaki, & MacDonald (2021), this term refers to *the* process of normalizing the customs, expectations and practices of Settlers in everyday life. Settler norms are then made to be the standard and used in contrast to other behaviours to identify them as deviant and less than the established norms.

Strategic Compromise: an extension of refusal as discussed by Simpson (2014); this term refers to decisions made within oppressive structures that seek to minimize the potential for further exploitation by the oppressor while also creating space for future gains to be pursued by the oppressed.

Whiteness: similar to Settler Normativity, except it is about the normalization of white people, their culture and practices. As engaged with by Andersen (2016), Simpson and Smith (2014) and Coulthard (2014), this term refers to the accumulation of privilege gained and maintained through

historic and ongoing injustices based on race. It can exist outside of and within the context of

Settler Colonialism and Settler normativity.

Introduction

Nonetheless, [Cook-Lynn's] broader point stands: Indigenous studies was not created to ensure the reproduction of universities and their legitimacy if it means that Indigenous peoples do not also benefit (Andersen, 2016, p. 58).

Getting the door open to this university isn't enough if all we've done is find our way into the broom closet, and then act self-righteous about being stuck there (Tallbear, 2016, p. 82).

"Haudenosaunee academic" is not an easy title for me to carry. As Indigenous Peoples, we share the histories of nations that Settlers have and continue to oppress through both direct and indirect methods. By the time we enter the academy – if we make it that far – we have likely experienced significant loss and trauma and/or have supported our friends and family as they face similar challenges. Our social location as Indigenous academics imply a degree of privilege, yet we also must navigate health and economic issues that have been compounded upon throughout the course of history and limit our potential in the present day. Furthermore, we must make the choice to uphold responsibilities back in our home communities and/or families or pass them on to somebody else while we pursue a formal education. The balancing act between meeting the expectations of our communities and the academy lead us to feel like outsiders in either context. From a Haudenosaunee perspective, this manufactured irrelevancy forces us to tread water between the two vessels represented in the Guswentha (Two Row Wampum) after losing balance from having a foot in each ship. The implications of each of the challenges we face are complex and compel us to rationalize our roles in academia and address the root of the problem. Settler Colonialism is the driving force that has shaped the realities we navigate to reach the doors of the

academy and influences our ability to not only succeed as academics, but also limits what positive change can occur within the academy's halls, let alone in our home communities. This thesis' discussion of Indigenous Studies paired with select excerpts of my personal story helps reveal a complex negotiation between radical potential and institutional capture within the context of Settler Colonialism.

Background

The altruistic idea of assisting or creating societal change for our communities is a common ideal which motivates us to pursue a formal education. The historic and ongoing injustices against Indigenous Peoples in North America has led to poorer quality of life that Indigenous Peoples have witnessed first-hand, while those that learn about these realities within the academy can be compelled to challenge their understandings of justice and begin to question their role in systemic racism and what they can do to make things better. The field of Indigenous Studies was created with the altruistic goal of improving Indigenous quality of life and is thus inherently political. Like others before me, it was the desire to create change that led me to specialize in Indigenous Studies.

Conversely, it was the disconnect between the theory and goals supported by the field and the practices conducted under the banner of Indigenous Studies that led me to question my own involvement in the field. The disconnect between the founding ideals of Indigenous Studies, my personal expectations, and the daily operations done under the umbrella of the field begins to make sense when viewed from a Settler Colonial lens. Over time, Indigenous Studies has had to adapt to the pressures of Settler Colonialism under the direction of the academy. This has resulted in the broadening of the field's focus from the intentions of those who advocated for its creation in the 1960's (Fontaine &McCaskill, 2022; Cook-Lynn, 1999; Morris, 1986). While there is an argument to be made about the strengths in the proliferation of topics being explored under the umbrella of

Indigenous Studies, it must be stressed that negative factors such as the embracement of neoliberal practices have also influenced the deradicalization/depoliticization of Indigenous Studies. The university, as a critical institution in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism, has vested interests that do not align with the ideals advocated for in the creation and canon of Indigenous Studies, thus creating a conflict of interest that Indigenous Studies must navigate to survive. To maintain economic stability and protect the interests of its investors, the academy has retained control over most of the output of Indigenous Studies. The radical reform that decolonization calls for presents a real threat to the operation of academic institutions, thus efforts to deradicalize systemic changes such as calls to action, policy amendments, institutional practices, research agendas and student supports have increased. This leads actors within and adjacent to Indigenous Studies to make concessions in daily operations to be allowed to hold space within post-secondary institutions. While strategic concessions can provide an opening for Indigenous academics in the field to begin to address vital issues and push against the existing structures that limit the potential of Indigenous Studies, these concessions can also assist in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism.

Research Imperative and Questions

At the outset of this iteration of the thesis – having completed studies at Six Nations Polytechnic, an undergraduate degree in Indigenous Studies from McMaster University, and the coursework for Indigenous & Canadian Studies at Trent University – I was grappling with where I come from and how these programs have impacted my life. I have been engaged in post-secondary studies since 2012 – over 10 years – which amounts to over one third of my life thus far. I think about the waves of false hope that this journey in post-secondary education has taken me on, from periods of suicide ideation, to belief that change can happen, to skepticism of reconciliation rhetoric, to the realization that Settler Colonialism captures attempts to interfere

with its operation. While I have a measure of privilege, having had access to relatively inaccessible academic spaces, this research study has brought clearer awareness that what I have gone through at the university is nonetheless a microcosm of Settler Colonialism. Through the past 10 years, it has been repeatedly made out as if I have experienced the 'exception to the rule' in events occurring within the institutions. With no adequate resolution to those events, I internalized guilt and blame, negatively impacting my studies, my family, and outlook on the future. Therefore, this project holds an imperative at multiple levels: personally, in relationship to those I hold responsibility with/for, as well as professionally and intellectually. It contributes to Indigenous Studies by drawing together and analyzing often contradictory literature regarding potentials and limitations of the field, demonstrating use of a heterogeneous methodology, and laying groundwork for further resistance to Settler Colonialism's co-optation.

In this thesis I discuss how the administration of Indigenous Studies is dependent on meeting the demands of their host institution, thus the need to maintain presence within the academy forces the administration to prioritize the wants of the institution over the needs of the field. This double-bind has rendered Indigenous Studies' existence difficult to define without critical analysis of the influence that Settler Colonialism has had in the direction and growth of the field. When engaging critical analysis, this compromise in prioritization reflects the pressures placed on Indigenous communities and serves the state's interest in nation-building and eliminating future challenges to the state's claim of sovereignty as Indigenous Peoples are led to prioritize individual success and, in turn, the maintenance of the academy over Indigenous resurgence. Rendering Indigenous lives irrelevant to our land has been an effective strategy in undermining Indigenous governance, and Indigenous Studies has assisted in the development and deployment of this strategy. Specifically, Indigenous Studies has assisted in Settler Colonialism

through the policing of access, engagement, and reproduction of Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives. What I view as the deradicalization/depoliticization of Indigenous Studies also reinforces Settler Colonialism through the proliferation and promotion of busywork that fails to address pressing issues currently impacting Indigenous lives. I believe that this dynamic is the result of Settler Colonialism's nature to maintain itself (Wolf, 2006) through the subversion of Indigenous dissent.

While it may seem that progress has been made across the board regarding Indigenization over the last few decades, the ability for Indigenous Peoples to speak for ourselves - let alone to create new avenues for future Indigenous students to access a formal education - remains stifled by the objectives and operations of post-secondary institutions. Indigenous narratives and decolonial language (i.e., Settler, genocide, etc.) that challenge the status quo are often deradicalized by those in recognized positions within academia, and those that are deemed too radical or threatening to Settler order are prevented from becoming part of the academic fold. This results in sites of compromise in which Indigenous voices that are deemed tolerable are incorporated into the commodification of Indigenous thought and experience for the Settler majority to profit from in post-secondary institutions. Based on this analysis, it is necessary to discuss the possibility for Indigenous Studies to navigate this parasitic relationship to assist Indigenous lives.

In order to do this I ask, *RQ1: What is Settler Colonialism in North America?*; *RQ2: How does post-secondary education play a role in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism?*; and *RQ3: How can Indigenous Studies navigate the influence of Settler Colonialism in the academy*? Through understanding the current limitations on what progressive change can occur within the academy, strategic interventions can be conceptualized to address them or bypass them entirely.

This will enable the next wave of academics committed to assisting Indigenous lives to address embedded systems critical to the maintenance of Settler Colonialism through the academy. I argue that theorizing strategies to navigate the presence of Settler Colonialism as individuals will assist academics in conducting ethical, radical research within Indigenous Studies. This will result in the expansion of what progressive change will be possible through the field in the future and advance post-secondary institutions through Gaudry and Lorenz's continuum of Indigenization (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018).

In this thesis, I utilize Haudenosaunee political thought and critical self-reflexivity to create a radical research methodology that acknowledges and repurposes anger and grief as a way to facilitate what Corntassle (2011) calls insurgent education by connecting with the reader through emotion and motivate rational action towards progressive change. I use critical self-reflexivity to examine my own experiences in relation to the findings of the literature review to locate myself within the academic institution that I simultaneously critique and participate in. Critical self-reflexivity allows for the revealing of microcosms of greater systemic issues while also privileging Indigenous voice through the reinforcement and validation of personal experience within systems of oppression.

Thesis Outline

My methodology section will outline the rationale and methods I used to approach the research topic and present my findings. I use critical self-reflexivity in the retelling of my personal journey to the academy to reveal what led me to question the presence of Settler Colonialism within Indigenous Studies. I draw on Haudenosaunee political discourse to reflect the lessons I have learned through my post-secondary journey and use them to critically analyze the disconnect between the ideals upheld by academic institutions and what occurs within their daily operation.

To explore the influence of Settler Colonialism in Indigenous Studies, I conduct a literature review to define Settler Colonialism and examine its operation within and around the field in the academy. I then use the findings to critically analyze my story and illustrate how my life has been influenced by the maintenance of Settler Colonialism through Indigenous Studies and the academy at large. I argue that this approach provides an opportunity to uphold and apply Indigenous methodologies through a modern context while also providing tangible examples of Settler Colonialism in action to illuminate both the trickiness and necessity of undermining its function within the academy.

With my methodology established, I share my personal story that explores my educational journey. To better understand my role in the academy and where I fit in alongside efforts to reform the academy, I chose to center this research project on a sample of relevant literature in conversation with my own experiences. As one of two sons of a Mohawk woman who raised us as a single parent, my immediate family has played a critical role in my support and motivation to pursue my education. I share some of my family's history to provide insight into social factors that affected my growth into the person I am now. By sharing my story with my matrilineal bloodline providing historical context, I establish my impetus for this research while simultaneously revealing how Settler Colonialism has affected this journey so far. My relationship with my family has been the driving force to push myself towards completing my education despite our experiences with Settler Colonialism within the academy. I did not interview any individuals that were present in the events I discuss and while I acknowledge that they may have a different interpretation of them, these events are examined in relation to how they impacted my educational journey and outcome alongside my immediate family. I reflect on our experiences to juxtapose the role of family in Haudenosaunee politics against the functioning of the academy.

After sharing my story, the literature review explores Settler Colonialism's presence within Indigenous Studies in post-secondary education in North America. The literature review is organized in correspondence to the three research questions: *RQ1: What is Settler Colonialism in North America?*; *RQ2: How does post-secondary education play a role in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism?*; and *RQ3: How can Indigenous Studies navigate the influence of Settler Colonialism in the academy*? To answer these three research questions, the literature review provides insight into both the creation and maintenance of Settler Colonialism and examines how Indigenous Studies scholars have attempted to navigate and/or undermine the operation of Settler Colonialism within the academy.

The literature review samples various scholarly sources to provide context to answer three research questions. *RQ1: What is Settler Colonialism in North America?* outlines a working definition of Settler Colonialism to be utilized in answering RQ2 and RQ3. Each of the sources examined here provide insight into the definition of Settler Colonialism, how it has developed over time and how it maintains and reimagines itself to succeed in the removal of Indigenous Peoples from our lands in the present day. Through the manufacturing of Indigenous populations as an exploitable resource, Settler society is able to profit from the cycles of oppression that they have maintained since contact. The literature examined in this section provides the foundation for the following research questions to build upon by identifying the critical role exploitation has in achieving Settler Colonialism's primary goal in the present day.

With a working definition of Settler Colonialism established, it is then used to assist in answering *RQ2: What role does post-secondary education play in Settler Colonialism?* The literature examined in this section outlines the role education has played in maintaining Settler Colonialism. Various factors that shape economic and educational outcomes for both Settlers and

Indigenous Peoples are identified. These social factors provide context to understanding the trajectory of the development of the field of Indigenous Studies.

The final selection of literature will be used to answer *RQ3: How can Indigenous Studies navigate Settler Colonialism in the academy?* The literature examined here identifies the goals of Indigenous Studies and how it has maintained its presence within a Settler Colonial institution. This section also explores progress made in keeping the field relevant to Indigenous lives outside of the academy. The literature review concludes with a summary of its key findings.

The discussion section will utilize the findings of the literature review to critically examine my personal story. I connect my family's past and our experiences in the academy to the literature to illustrate how our experiences were predictable outcomes of the academy's investment in Settler Colonialism. I will draw on Haudenosaunee political discourse to problematize the current functioning of the academy. I explore the exploitation of hope, traditionalism and idealism and argue that Indigenous Studies has reinscribed limits to critical thought that reinforce Settler Colonialism through cultural entrapment. I utilize values from within the Great Law of Peace to speak back to current practices of co-optation, essentialism, and deradicalization occurring within the literature. Finally, I discuss how the academy promotes the exploitation of grief and silencing of anger. I suggest that grief and anger are essential emotions to be used as a resource for our benefit in seeking restorative justice and redress, including but not limited to the reclamation of Indigenous Studies.

The conclusion will summarize the findings of the literature review and the discussion section. This chapter will also review the limitations of the research and the solutions I provide as they advocate for first steps in addressing the presence of Settler Colonialism in the academy. As a final thought, I will reiterate caution regarding Settler Colonialism's ability to co-opt dissent and

suggest that this ability can be used to our advantage. Finding the exact moment an intervention is co-opted signals when something within that intervention is perceived as a threat to the status quo. I encourage future research to examine attempts at intervention that were co-opted to further understand the limits in which the academy wants to keep us in and push back against the limits of cultural entrapment.

Methodology

Insurgent education entails creating decolonizing and discomforting moments of Indigenous truth-telling that challenge the colonial status quo. It does this by questioning settler occupation of Indigenous places through direct, honest, and experiential forms of engagement and demands for accountability. (Corntassle, 2011, pa. 5)

For this paper, I will entwine Haudenosaunee philosophy and critical-self reflexivity to develop a methodology of Haudenosaunee critical analysis that acts as a method of insurgent education as outlined by Corntassle (2011). Specifically, I will utilize Smith's (2012) Indigenous research agenda and Kovach's (2015) discussion on Indigenous methodologies to use as a framework to develop and apply in a localized context. I will be drawing on Guswentha methodology as described by Newhouse (2008), key moments of the Great Law of Peace and the functioning of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council as described by Williams (2018) to center Haudenosaunee cultural and political discourse in my critical analysis. As a Mohawk scholar discussing ethics, I believe it is necessary to ground my research in our philosophical principles to provide one example of Indigenous methodology that moves beyond superficial engagement with Indigenous constructs and that can be replicated by other Indigenous scholars or inspire them to create new methodological frameworks for future projects. By engaging Corntassle's idea of insurgent education, Newhouse's (2008) Guswentha methodology, and William's (2018) exploration of the Great Law of Peace, I am able to engage and present my findings through a critical Haudenosaunee lens.

Corntassle (2011) presents insurgent education as a radical agenda that uses education to pursue political progressive change. In defining the term, Corntassle identifies four key aspects of insurgent education: it is localized to the Indigenous nations that have ties to land where the

education is taking place; it actively counters the politics of distraction by centering Indigenous lives; it is conducted in formal and informal contexts; and it demands accountability for the ongoing dispossession and assimilation caused through the maintenance of Settler Colonialism (Corntassle, 2011). Corntassle argues that insurgent education is facilitated through Indigenous truth-telling that directly challenges the status-quo through enabling discomfort. Discomfort is necessary to shift perceptions of Indigenous lives and struggle to compel action and begin to build critical capacity among allied minds to address the systemic issues at the core of the discomfort. Insurgent education provides the framework for which my story and the literature can be cross-examined to compel radical discomfort.

Ethical Considerations

While I engage Settler Colonialism within this paper, it must be noted that the sources examined also voiced concern with the term. In an ironic but predictable turn of events, that Settler academics have co-opted the study of Settler Colonialism to erase the presence of Indigenous Peoples and our connection to the land from the emerging academic discourse (Carey & Silverstein, 2020). Beenash (2017) echoes these concerns in identifying the need to ensure that the Settler does not inadvertently take the focus away from Indigenous Peoples. Carey and Silverstein (2020) and Hokowhitu (2016) also claim that Settler Colonialism has been dominating research within the field and limiting the amount of useful results coming out of it. There is also the view that Indigenous sovereignty can and should be engaged in isolation from Settler Colonialism (Carey & Silverstein, 2020; Barker, 2012). These concerns must be addressed when examining Settler Colonialism. Smith (2012a) shows the potential for academics to replicate past harms through the research they produce. In maintaining the standards of research set by the institutions that academics work for, they make the final decision in which voices are heard or silenced and

what information is considered relevant (Smith, 2012a). Steinman (2016) note that there are a variety of voices that are relevant to discourses surrounding Settler Colonialism and that more perspectives and realities exist beyond the state/traditional government divide. Coulthard (2014) and Smith (2012a) argue that if the research process is engaged uncritically, it can contribute to the issues raised by Barker (2012), Beenash (2017) and Carey and Silverstein (2020). Like Beenash (2017) and Carey and Silverstein (2020) suggest, if Settler Colonialism is to be engaged, it can be done as long as it is handled with care and critical intent. It is then necessary to understand Settler Colonialism in relation to its geographical location. In the context of my research, this necessitates exploration of the construction and maintenance of Settler Colonialism in North America.

Smith's Indigenous research agenda (2012) provides fundamental goals and ideals to achieve while conducting Indigenous research. According to Smith (2012), personal integrity and the importance of respect within research are critical to conducting ethical Indigenous research. The interplay between personal integrity and respect within the research process takes account of the proximity to the consequence of research outcomes for what Smith calls "insider researchers" (Smith, 2012, p. 138). I apply personal integrity through my decision-making to engage with a challenging topic – one that, in part, addresses the institution in which I am still enrolled. My respect for the hard work of those who established Indigenous Studies programs with radical intent is reflected in my ongoing commitment to organizing and resistance to co-optation. Indigenous researchers need to write in ways that privilege and respond to the expectations of the community they are engaging and/or claiming within their research methodologies. Honesty is appreciated within the Indigenous research agenda, while humility allows for the researcher to engage in reflexivity that maintains kinship as a central lens for analysis within a research project. I undertake

honesty and humility by taking careful stock of what has not been an easy journey, sharing parts of my life history, and situating myself and my proximity to the issues of Settler Colonialism which I discuss. Smith (2012) cautions that while a research methodology may meet the expectations of the academy, they may not meet the expectations of the Indigenous criteria invoked within that research. Smith's insight into the Indigenous research project provides key aspects to meet through my engagement with Indigenous storywork and my interpretation and application of Haudenosaunee political thought.

As an exploration of self within existing structures, interviews were not conducted for this research project. This thesis serves as an accounting of my own positionality in relation to the issues that I examine in preparation for future research in which interviews can be conducted. It is unethical to conduct interviews without first taking responsibility and initiative to identify your own strengths and weaknesses. Lack of preparedness to conduct interviews can result in unintended harm. Having not been trained to conduct interviews for the purposes of this thesis, I chose to instead take stock of my own skills and knowledge to analyze the issues at hand and lay a methodological foundation that will guide my work in the future with other participants.

Storywork

My story identifies key moments to explore in relation to the findings from the literature review and provides context to localize my critical analysis. I will use critical self-reflexivity through storywork as engaged by Cote-Meek (2014), Justice (2018), Kovach (2015), Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) and Smith (2012b) to recount my post-secondary educational journey and what led me to research Settler Colonialism within Indigenous Studies. Storywork allows me to draw on my lived experience to engage in Indigenous knowledge systems and produce critical analysis that is given context through its localization. It allows me to provide the reader with

insight into my rationale. Storywork also provides space for engagement with discomforting emotions such as grief and anger to engage the reader beyond an intellectual exchange. Storywork provides the vessel to deliver insurgent education. I use critical self-reflexivity as described by Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) to identify lessons and inspiration derived from my family's history and my educational journey that have shaped my axiology. I will share critical moments in my family's history through my mother's bloodline to locate myself within a Haudenosaunee methodology that privileges and reflects our traditional political structures while reinforcing the importance of familial ties in the production of knowledge. These moments also reveal the contention between traditional Haudenosaunee political thought and the social outcomes for Indigenous Peoples manufactured through Settler Colonialism. I believe this approach will provide the reader with transparency through understanding the possible biases I carry through my relationships with my family and community and acknowledging that some of these biases cannot be circumvented to the point of full neutrality.

Haudenosaunee Thought and Discourse

I draw on Haudenosaunee philosophical thought (Williams, 2018; Newhouse, 2008) to guide my rationale. Newhouse's (2008) description of the Good Mind calls for a balance of reason and passion. While I share my own experience to rationalize my intent to critique structures that have been detrimental to myself and those around me, it is also imperative that I hone my critique to encourage dialogue that may lead to positive change. It is important to clarify that I am not catering to a politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2011; Simpson, 2018) to be respected and validated by actors invested in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism as it is not reasonable to engage in performative respectability when it is part of the issue being explored. This ethic of intent is given precedence by William's retelling of the Great Law of Peace, where the process in which

individual thought is guided towards collective action was essential to the law's formation (Williams, 2018). Williams notes that the Peacemaker's journey started with individual thought that progressed to collective action and it was a process of calculated risks (Williams, 2018). I interpret these lessons into a methodological obligation that I clearly identify the issues at hand with care and respect for my family and community as they will inadvertently be associated with the work that I do. This caution about cause and effect also forces a choice to be made regarding the exploration of issues that intersect with the topic at hand. Settler Colonialism is a nuanced issue that has invaded all aspects of life and goes beyond the scope of what I can address as an individual. While my experience covers a range of intersections with Settler Colonialism, there are other impacts that I cannot speak to through my story. Therefore, my experiences provide limits to what issues I can effectively engage with in my contribution to broader discussions addressing Settler Colonialism.

My contribution to ongoing discussions regarding Settler Colonialism is also a reflection of the participatory nature of Haudenosaunee political discourse as noted by Williams (2018). By presenting my story through the lens of my family, I am replicating and reinforcing the political unit essential to the functioning of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (hereafter 'the Confederacy'). Williams noted that the Peacemaker strategically utilized the clan system to convey the importance of kinship and responsibility to individuals within the Confederacy (Williams, 2018). Ties through kinship instilled rights and responsibilities among the Haudenosaunee that created a safety net for the individual to have a sense of personal independence. I interpret these practices to rationalise the matrilineal lens I privilege in my story and my analysis.

I utilize Guswentah methodology as explored by Newhouse (2008) in combination with William's (2018) interpretation of the Great Law of Peace to engage in what Tallbear (2016) calls

intellectual promiscuity. Guswentah methodology invokes the symbolism and meaning behind the Two Row Wampum, a binding agreement made between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Dutch in the early 1600s, which has had its agreements reaffirmed through subsequent treaties and agreements with other Settler nations over time. The Guswentha promoted the sovereignty of both nations existing in shared space, while also allowing for cultural exchange. Williams noted that the Great Law also allows for the growth of the Confederacy through the symbolism of adding rafters to the longhouse, allowing for constitutional adjustment that enabled the Confederacy to adapt to new situations as they arose and allow everyone to have their voice heard by the council (Williams, 2018). Williams also observes that the Peacemaker familiarized himself with the tools, abilities, and strategies he had access to and utilized any that would assist him in achieving his goal (Williams, 2018). Guswentha methodology, the adding of rafters and the Peacemaker's strategic adaptation of methods give precedence to engage in intellectual promiscuity (Tallbear, 2016) in this paper. Sources from various fields of study are engaged in the literature review to provide as much context to answering the research questions as possible given the scope of the topic.

Some of the sources I draw on to develop my methodology also present complexities and concerns that need to be addressed in the context of Settler Colonialism in which I must navigate. Kovach's (2015) claim that Indigenous knowledge systems are not built upon Western thought invokes notions of authenticity that reinforce cultural entrapment (Moreton-Robinson, 2016b), where predefined traits are used to measure and recognize performance of Indigeneity that are influenced through the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. Kovach's critiques of individualistic Western research also diminish the potential impact of individual effort in ongoing contributions to Indigenous methodology and fail to account for Indigenous academics finding their way back

to community through the academy. While Newhouse's Guswentha methodology (2008) and Williams (2018) provide impetus through Haudenosaunee political thought for the growth and nurturing of the individual to engage with and contribute to their collective community through intellectual promiscuity, William's exploration of the Great Law of Peace also explained the Circle wampum and how one may lose Haudenosaunee citizenship if they become citizens of another nation and respect their laws (Williams, 2018). Settler Colonialism has maintained itself through the destruction of kinship ties between Indigenous Peoples, and while some of those kinship ties remain intact, many of them do not, resulting in isolated individuals with no kinship ties and little representation within discourse regarding Indigenous Peoples. As one of many individuals that had to learn to survive through Western lens and were separated from their communities, Kovach's critiques and extreme interpretations of the Great Law of Peace referred to by Williams (2018) create unrealistic standards that problematize dislocated Indigenous (in my case, Haudenosaunee) academics instead of the systemic issues that facilitated their dislocation.

Further complicating my analysis is the dynamic in which ideals promoted through traditionalism must contend with the realities of the Settler Colonial present. Traditionalism in this context refers to the belief and embodiment of Indigenous governance and customs that predate contact. They provide a rationale to interact and shape society and can be invoked to advocate for progressive change or uphold the status quo. The Good Mind, which Williams for is a moral commitment to be working towards the common good by joining rational minds that "are not obstructed or twisted by emotions or thoughts of anger or grief" (Williams, 2018, p. 265), is a difficult commitment to uphold in the Settler Colonial present. I argue that grief and anger are the two main emotional byproducts caused through the maintenance of Settler Colonialism for Indigenous Peoples. While holistic wellbeing is often cited as a valid lens for Indigenous

methodology, grief and anger are unique emotions in the reproduction of Settler Colonialism. Grief tends to be commodified while anger is discouraged or stifled. I utilize anger and grief as emotional motivation to convey my personal story and engage in critical self-reflexivity.

My methodology must also navigate respectability politics. Respect is articulated as a critical component of the Great Law of Peace and is also an ideal upheld within the hierarchy of the academy. Where Williams (2018) outlines a process of enabling respect between two parties, the systemic operation of the academy in the production of graduates and the hiring and retention of professors maintains a hierarchy in which those in positions of power are to be respected based on their credentials and their contributions to the academy. For Indigenous Students navigating these spaces, the academy's imposition of respect does not need to follow William's process in which trust and friendship must be established to gain respect (Williams, 2018, p. 225). This dynamic challenges Indigenous ethics while allowing for the maintenance of hierarchy because the student cannot question their experiences if it means challenging their superior or risks blemishing the reputation of the academy. This is a dynamic in which I navigate in retelling my experiences to find compromise and remain able to effectively discuss systemic issues with critical intent within my research.

I share my story while also being aware of the exploitative Settler consumption of Indigenous trauma that has occurred after the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015. The uncritical consumption of Indigenous trauma limits meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples and changes in the operation of Settler Colonialism by allowing Settlers to disassociate themselves from the oppressive systemic issues in which they benefit from. While I recount the lessons I have learned from my lived experience, I intend to validate Indigenous experience by privileging my interpretation of Haudenosaunee

methodology that is grounded in my matriarchal bloodline while also revealing tangible examples in which Settler Colonialism has influenced these realities. While I am cautious of replicating harmful interpretations of Indigenous culture that only serve as narrative devices that Tallbear (2016) notes have become commonplace within Indigenous Studies literature, I engage Haudenosaunee political and philosophical thought to use the commodification and expectation of Indigenous performance of trauma against itself. Specifically, I use this opportunity to challenge ideas and practices that have and continue to harm Indigenous Peoples and to advocate for relevant, useful work to be produced within the university that advances the pursuit of improving the quality of life for Indigenous Peoples. It is my intent to utilize critical self-reflexivity to lay bare any biases that are present within my work while also providing an example of praxis that allows for Indigenous scholars to emulate and present quality research without having to distance themselves from the people and communities they aim to serve. This approach allows me to propose interventions that are grounded in a place of knowing, which runs contrary to the practices utilized to marginalize Indigenous Peoples throughout the history of the academy.

Literature Search

To define Settler Colonialism and identify how it manifests in post-secondary educational institutions, I structured my search for literature around four primary texts: "Conceptualizing the Impact of the Colonial Encounter" by Sheila Cote-Meek (2014), "Conversation 10: Appropriation" by Lee Maracle (2017), "Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory" by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), and "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" by Patrick Wolfe (2006). I utilized Academia.edu, Trent University's Library and Archives website, and Google Scholar to search for further literature related to the phrase "Settler Colonialism and Education." I restricted the search to English-only results due to time constraints. Recent literature was prioritized when

available. I then read the abstracts among the results to find resources that assisted in defining Settler Colonialism and the role education plays within its operation. My supervisor, David Newhouse also guided me towards literature to find relevant information. In total, forty-nine sources were identified to be utilized in the literature review. Thematic analysis will be used to identify and summarize common themes and claims across the literature.

My interpretation of Haudenosaunee critical analysis provides the structure in which the scope of Settler Colonialism can be managed and discussed within this paper. Through the combination of my interpretation of Haudenosaunee politics and philosophy and critical self-reflexivity, I am navigating the expectations of the field while also taking space to speak to power within the academy. In applying my understanding of Haudenosaunee history, governance and ethics to a methodological approach, I am interpreting them to rationalize the need to explore works done both by Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics within this research. This process collects and respects the work done by other academics while providing my contribution towards supporting our Peoples. To address Settler Colonialism, we must understand how the system works from within and listen to the voices of other Peoples that have also experienced the brunt of Settler Colonialism. By engaging and contributing the ongoing conversations occurring within and adjacent to Indigenous Studies, I uphold reciprocity through knowledge exchange within a socially isolated research project. Through my interpretation of Haudenosaunee political and philosophical discourse regarding collectivity, I present my story and analysis as insurgent education that engages discomfort to explore systemic issues.

My Story

Settler Colonialism has influenced the trajectory of my life through my own experiences and those passed down to me through my family. Getting to this point in my life was not easy and

this research is a reflection of that journey. As one of two sons raised by a single Mohawk woman, our family has stayed together with a few short exceptions. My immediate family is close because of the circumstances in which we have found ourselves - if any one of the intersecting factors in our lives were changed, I could have become a different person entirely. I share this story to connect myself to my research to explore the causes and effects of the institutionalization of Indigenous Studies while also privileging voices that have been excluded in the pursuit of higher education. I draw on my experience also as a case study to juxtapose with the literature to question the direction of Indigenous Studies and my place within it. As an Indigenous student with a degree of social privilege, I frame my experience as part of a greater mosaic for the reader to consider alongside what other Indigenous students with different degrees of privilege experience on their educational journeys, for better or worse.

As a single parent, my mother has been a constant for most of my life. Her lived experience influenced how she chose to raise me and my brother. From a young age, Mom had developed an ethic of critical interference that would influence my own outlook. Her life has been difficult since shortly after she was born in 1960. Three days after her birth, her father was murdered in a bar fight in downtown Detroit by other Indigenous men. Mom bore witness to domestic violence within the family that was fueled by alcoholism and Christian zeal passed down by those in our family that survived their time in residential school. Her brother also died in an accident during her childhood. Learning to live with loss, violence and grief became necessary for Mom to survive.

Mom met my Dad when she went to college in London and they had my brother and myself together before they separated in 1995. Mom had left her job as a dental assistant in Ohsweken to care for my brother and I while Dad had become a police constable to support the family. The job changed Dad and his temper at home worsened. Dad slept with another woman during this time

and impregnated her. Mom found out and kicked Dad out of the house. The divorce caused economic and social disruptions for our family. Mom won custody of me and my brother while Dad was ordered to pay child support, but through the process, Dad declared bankruptcy and Mom got saddled with his debt. Mom worked as an Avon sales representative for years to be able to take care of her mother (we called her Nanny) and two children while also being able to bring in money to cover our financial needs. Nanny took the divorce especially hard as she loved Dad like a son, resulting in a decline in her health. Mom became Nanny's caretaker as she got sick often and the hospital became our home away from home. Nanny had to get multiple surgeries done through to the end of her life and Mom was there to help her though it until she passed away in 2004.

While he left Mom and started another family, Dad left a lasting impression on me. Anger was my father's defining trait, and it became mine, as well. Dad and I never had any deep conversations; almost all were superficial with the exception of 'the talk' he would recite to us almost every visit. Dad told my brother and I that if we are ever involved with the police to always cooperate. I did not think of it much then but I think he was trying to protect us from racism in policing - Dad was not the best example to follow for anti-racism, but he knew enough to try to prepare us for things that may happen. While he did not communicate his affection clearly, he was genuine in his communication of anger and this is what he was like during most of his visits with us. I know I had anger issues fueled by separation anxiety caused by Dad leaving, but witnessing his rage amplified my own poor behaviour. I was separated for a few months from my family by the Children's Aid Society and my poor behaviour led me into interactions with the police. At the height of my bad behaviour, I had to do community work or end up going to juvenile detention. I was not in a good place and I did not know how to express myself besides lashing out at those around me.

While I acted out in anger growing up, that anger turned inwards when I became a teenager as I could begin to see how my Dad's expressions of anger hurt others. I reflected on how my anger had hurt the people that I thought I cared about and I internalised that I was the problem that needed to be dealt with. This led to suicide ideation and multiple suicide attempts. While my Mom did everything she could to fill both roles of father and mother, the absence of a father in my life and observing how my biological father handled his own anger instilled a feeling of injustice in me - something was wrong, and I was not able to make it right. My anger and depression led Mom to seek help for me. It is because of her and my brother's constant support that I am still here.

While it took several years to begin to unlearn self-hatred and be able to see how my behaviors have hurt other people, this journey led me into the academy. Mom took it upon herself to find alternate pathways to support my education and make sure I was able to graduate from high school and follow her and my brother into the university. Since I stopped going to class, Mom arranged for me to meet with a teacher at the local Tim Hortons to complete my high school diploma. Each of my teachers made learning interesting and relevant to me while removing the pressure of sharing a classroom with students that made my life difficult. After earning my diploma, I followed in the footsteps of my family and went to Six Nations Polytechnic to begin my post-secondary academic journey. At the time, I resented my education as I still could not see a future with me in it. However, once I got immersed in my first classes, I found purpose in becoming an academic. My journey to get there had been difficult and was influenced by circumstance and trauma compounded across generations. I would only be able to make sense of my reality and put it into words after I learned about my history and concepts that have contributed to my lived experiences thus far.

I started my undergraduate degree in 2012 at Six Nations Polytechnic (SNP) in what was then called the Native University Program. I followed in the footsteps of my mother and brother who entered and completed the program before continuing their education at McMaster University. The program acted as a stepping-stone to ease into a university program at one of the institutions partnered with SNP. Over the course of one year, I took introductory courses across multiple fields, including Indigenous Studies. It was in this course that I found connection with the curricula and became interested in my academics. Prior to this moment, I did not have personal goals besides making it through to the end of each day. I felt the desire to reconnect with my culture and history, which gave me purpose that I lacked at the time. What I learned within this program - through the small classes and the passion in which my professors taught the content - inspired me to specialize in Indigenous Studies after I graduated from SNP and followed my family to McMaster University.

I transferred to McMaster University in 2013 and entered my second year in my undergraduate degree. McMaster University described its Indigenous Studies program as an opportunity for "students to expand their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures, while developing professional skills to work with Indigenous communities" (McMaster University, 2023). While I worked towards fulfilling the requirements of the Honours Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies program, I joined the McMaster Indigenous Student Community Alliance (MISCA) to meet other like-minded students and assist my mother and brother in the operation of the student group. While MISCA started as an insular student support group, my family pushed for it to become a political advocacy group on campus after being made aware of issues in the group and within the Indigenous Studies Department itself. This led to rifts between students, staff and faculty as daily operations within the department were challenged. My family was accused by an employee of the department of engaging in lateral violence. This was the first

time I heard of the term lateral violence, so I wanted to understand why that term was used against my family. I decided to study the phenomenon in my self-directed research at the end of my degree.

From my research, I found that lateral violence was misused against my family. Lateral violence is possible between people within a particular group with comparable social privileges. What was occurring at McMaster was a by-product of systemic issues in which individual actors with greater privileges, such as employment within the institution, were harming others with less privilege. The weaponization of identity and misrepresentation of lateral violence were used as a deflection to attempt to silence the criticisms and concerns being raised. This made me begin to question the efficacy of focusing on lateral violence as it does not address the systemic issues that enable dysfunction such as lateral violence.

As I continued to explore the concept of lateral violence and work towards completing my undergraduate degree, the interpersonal conflicts between Indigenous students, staff and faculty began to escalate. Rumors were being spread, some people physically hurt each other, and others just removed themselves from the picture to avoid the conflict. For my family, these conflicts did not stay at the university as we had to prepare to deal with whatever was going to happen the next day. This constant stress and fear made my depression flare up and suicide ideation became constant again. I confided in one of my Indigenous Studies professors, who reached out to the Indigenous Student counselor to help me. By this point, the counselor had already been contributing to the infighting and disliked my family. The email my professor sent was ignored and I was left to help myself.

Shortly after my experience with my professor, my family and some friends launched a formal complaint against the program through the university's Equity and Inclusion Office. My family brought our and the issues other students were having into the resolution process. This

process went on for several months while a lawyer interrogated my family and friends. While we were being questioned and told to not talk to each other during the process, our friends backed out of the complaint out of fear of reprisal from the department. Without them, and because most of the accusations were based on behaviors and actions without tangible evidence, the lawyer presented our case as a squabble between families and claimed no further action was needed. They did note, however, that what had happened to me was unacceptable as I provided emails and referenced campus policies on assisting students in crisis and the counselor was found to be at fault for not taking the time to support me in the role he occupied. While the student councillor claimed that they did not reach out to me because they were an academic counselor and not a social counselor, they provided social support in office and through events to students that got along with them. While the formal complaint led to no changes on record, the division between student supports and academics and the employee turnover within the Indigenous Studies Department that occurred after the complaint's resolution reflected changes we advocated for during the process. The student counselor has since changed, the department and student services became separate entities, and the roles of the student counselor and elders have been made more transparent. While those changes were welcome, the stress of the conflict pushed Mom and my brother to leave the university without earning their degrees. The Indigenous Studies Program spaces on campus would never feel safe for me from that point forward.

Alongside the formal complaint, my experiences within my classes began to change my perception of Indigenous Studies. Fortunately, with one exception, my negative experiences within the classroom were not with other Indigenous Students but with the Settler students that made up most of the class. Indigenous Studies had cross-listed many of its courses with adjacent programs to ensure the class had enough students to run it. The proliferation of interest in the field post-TRC

also played a role in facilitating classrooms in which Settlers were most of the students enrolled. These two factors, combined with the systemic issues enabled through Settler Colonialism which have resulted in less Indigenous Peoples being able to attend post-secondary institutions, created tense learning environments for the few Indigenous students in attendance. As a byproduct of most of the class being non-Indigenous, they dominated classroom discussions. At first, I remained silent as I did not feel comfortable speaking as a voice of authority on the subject - I was in the class to learn just like everyone else. Overtime, I felt an awkward awareness of my identity - as my non-Indigenous colleagues engaged the professors and assignments, I felt uneasy as it seemed like I knew less than everyone else around me about Indigenous topics. As I made my way through the available courses and engaged in political advocacy outside of the classroom, I acclimatized to the dynamics in the classroom and began to participate in class discussions. While I did the work expected of me in class, my discomfort with the consumption and production of knowledge and experience within these spaces began to take shape.

In the final years of my undergraduate degree, I began to consider job opportunities in Indigenous Studies for undergraduate students. I found that undergraduate Settlers were being hired as teaching assistants for the introductory courses despite undergraduate Indigenous students with the needed experience applying for the same jobs. I was able to push for this to be amended within the hiring practices within the universities' union, but it still seemed strange that such practices were not implemented post-TRC. In hindsight, my family's efforts to hold the department accountable for their interactions with students may have also limited the chances I would have been considered for jobs within McMaster University - a barrier that Settler students and otherwise obedient students did not have to navigate. It felt bizarre to see Settlers in class explaining to students how to properly insert "Indigenous voice" in their work in proximity to Indigenous

students and professors. After spending years learning about land dispossession and the economic exclusion of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, it was confusing to see it happening in classes where this content is taught. I also noticed that the students that were hired were never present at Indigenous-led events outside of the academy. While extracurricular advocacy allowed myself and other Indigenous students to apply our knowledge and feel like we had purpose in our work, volunteering and organizing takes a lot of effort and attendance, let alone assistance. Any of the volunteer work or events in the area would have validated what we were doing and mitigated the feeling of exploitation occurring within the academy. These experiences led me to question who Indigenous Studies is meant to serve through its existence in post-secondary education.

The student organizing and advocacy I engaged in MISCA also led me to be critical of advocacy itself. As a student learning about the injustices done to us as Indigenous Peoples, I was drawn to the call for Indigenous self-advocates supported in the post-TRC climate. During this phase, I performed opening addresses and speeches for various groups in and around McMaster University. I thought I was doing a good thing while also getting my name out in spaces that I wanted to contribute to after I graduated from the academy. I was emulating what I had seen other Indigenous advocates having done and said, having internalised that this engagement is expected of us as it occurred often both locally and nationally, which would then bleed into class discussions and be reinforced as positive interventions. Over time, these gigs felt tokenistic and when MISCA brought this to the attention of the groups we were collaborating with, it strained some collaborations and ended others. While MISCA backed away from engagement with tokenistic events, other groups stepped in to play the part.

As I reached the end of my undergraduate degree, a group called the McMaster Indigenous Health Movement (MIHM) held their yearly conference online in 2021 due to the COVID-19

pandemic. Under the guidance of Indigenous academics with recognized positions of authority in the university, students from Indigenous Studies and Health Sciences arranged for guest speakers and scholars to present their research during the conference. While using the rhetoric around the improvement of healthcare and quality of life for Indigenous Peoples, the conference provided space for a small subset of the academic elite and selected community members to make connections within government organizations while the government officials given space within the conference reinforced their public image. While this dynamic can be observed in many academic conferences, this conference was held within my home institution, through the program I would be graduating from. Due to my proximity to this conference, the decisions that the MIHM made in 2021 made me question my own role as an Indigenous academic within the university, specifically, the MIHM's decision to invite Carolyn Bennett to be the opening speaker of the event. Bennett, who was the Minister of Crown Relations at the time, had also played a lead role in fighting the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society's[1] efforts to get the Canadian government to adequately fund healthcare for Indigenous Peoples in Canada through the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Appendix A). The MIHM announced that Carolyn Bennett would be giving the opening remarks less than two weeks before the conference day. This gave little notice for anyone to arrange for any kind of protest. The MIHM insisted it was not their intention to discourage protest but instead claimed that they did not want to confirm her presence in case it fell through. The MIHM promised that those who attend the conference would have the chance to ask Bennett questions and they encouraged attendees to ask difficult questions. I registered for the conference to take them up on their offer.

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[1]The First Nation Child and Family Caring Society (FNCFCS) is a non-profit organization that advocates for First Nation Youths and their families (Caring Society, 2023)

During the conference, Bennett talked at length about the tragedy that befell Joyce Echaquan[2] and how she is committed to making changes within the provision of healthcare in Canada so what Joyce experienced would never happen again. Bennett spoke about how she was working with the Echequan family to create lasting change, but never explained what concrete actions were being taken. I sent my question to the moderator asking about Bennett's history with denying the relevance of international human rights in Canada, but it was not passed on. Instead, the moderator said that they were going over the submitted questions and noted that many of them were critical of Bennett, then began to repeat questions that appealed to Bennett, such as career advice and or general praise for the work she claimed she was doing. I arranged to meet with the MIHM after the conference to voice my concerns with how this was handled. I explained that I felt that the conference provided Bennett with a platform to further justify herself in her political maneuvering. I also questioned the silencing of critical questions after we had been told that we would have the opportunity to be heard. While the student MIHM organizers apologized and said they did not have much say over how everything turned out, the Indigenous lead stated that they disagree with my analysis and they did not think how they handled it was wrong but will try to do better the following year about advertising the guest speaker. This experience made me question my own intelligence as the choice to invite Bennett to give opening remarks by the MIHM seemed to contradict the ethics I had been taught within Indigenous Studies up until this point. It also made me question the dynamics around which Indigenous Peoples are heard, seen, and respected enough to be able to speak and act on behalf of a collective and which ones can be silenced. While one

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[2] Joyce Echaquan was an Atikamekw woman killed at a Quebec hospital in 2020 following racist abuse at the hands of medical staff – some of which was recorded live on Facebook by Joyce and her daughter – with the coroner reporting "racism and prejudice that Mrs. Echaquan faced was certainly a contributing factor to her death" (Kamel, 2021, p. 20).

conference and my experiences with it could be written off in isolation, it represents a tangible moment in which the issues I witnessed at McMaster University intersected with each other.

I have spent a long time coming to terms with my experiences at McMaster University – my mental health reached a new low having to complete my degree alongside navigating the reprisal my family faced for lodging a formal complaint against the department. To make matters worse, my mother's health worsened, and my father passed away four months before I was able to graduate. I questioned the point of continuing my education when it felt like my own work achieved little to no visible change, while the loss of my father and my mother's deteriorating health made me question if I had my priorities straight. Without the constant support of my family and my accommodations made through Student Success Services, my post-secondary journey would have ended around the same time my mother and brother left the academy behind. My mother and brother pushed me to continue my education and reminded me that my father would have wanted me to keep going. As for affecting change, I learned that my discontent with the status quo could be used as motivation to keep moving forward. I was the only member of my family to make it out of McMaster University with a degree, and I intended to do something about it by continuing my education by pursuing a Master's degree in Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies at Trent University.

I had my apprehensions about applying to grad school. I had to tell myself that my experiences at McMaster University were just unfortunate circumstances and push forward. Trent University provided the opportunity to continue my education closer to home than other options, and the clout of having established the first Indigenous Studies Program in Canada in 1969 made me cautiously optimistic that my experience at Trent would be better than what I had experienced at McMaster. More than that, I assumed that Trent University would be "in the trenches" of

emergent Indigenous thought since it has had the longest time to develop its Indigenous Studies department compared to other universities - it was created twenty-three years prior to the creation of McMaster University's equivalent. While Trent University's description of the program did not outline the expectations of the Indigenous Studies component of the program and instead focused on promoting the Canadian Studies portion of the program (Trent University, 2023a), the undergraduate program description outlines engagement with a wide variety of topics "including politics, women and gender, history, culture, languages, law and governance, social and economic conditions and development, Indigenous theory and practice and infusing all of this with a foundation of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and Practices based on thousands of years of oral and written histories" (Trent University, 2023b). I was excited thinking that I would have the opportunity to hone my understanding of complex topics in the field and have nuanced discussions among colleagues given that I would be in a graduate program. As a prerequisite for the PhD in Indigenous Studies at Trent, I thought the program under the direction of the Frost Center would provide me with the experience to contribute meaningful work to the field. The learning goals and outcomes provided in the course syllabus for the core colloquium's fall term were promising. The learning goals and outcomes included,

> understanding the origins and development of Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies as both distinct and overlapping disciplinary formations; exposure to Trent's historic role in the formation of these disciplinary traditions and practices; recognizing key concepts and approaches in Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies more generally; considering the relationship of research to community concerns, including research methods and ethics; [and] enhancing critical reading, writing, and research skills in ways that contribute to the timely and successful completion of a thesis/MRP project. (Appendix B)

With the exception of the combination of Indigenous Studies and Canadian Studies in a single course, the stated goals and outcomes for the first term at Trent made me cautiously optimistic. I applied to the program and was accepted. The COVID-19 pandemic spurred lockdowns shortly after I applied to Trent and continued into the fall, leading Trent to run its programs online. This development allowed me to stay home and assist my family as I worked towards continuing my education. These circumstances made me feel hopeful about my time at Trent.

My discontent with Indigenous Studies grew after I entered the Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies Master of Arts program at Trent University. While those enrolled for Canadian Studies had access to a wealth of course options addressing various relevant topics within the field, the Indigenous Studies side of the program had two options to choose from that were explicitly Indigenous in focus – Indigenous thought, and Indigenous-Settler relations (Appendix C). My experiences in the Indigenous thought and the Settler-Indigenous relations course were comparable – I did not learn much more from the courses than I had already learned through my undergraduate degree. Instead of being able to dive deeper into Indigenous content and build on the skills I had gained during my undergraduate degree, most of the Indigenous content was geared to the part of the cohort that was not there for Indigenous Studies – this in effect made the program feel like a rehash of my undergraduate degree instead of further developing my academic skills or my knowledge of relevant information regarding Indigenous Studies.

Similar to my undergraduate classes, the learning environments in the graduate program were tense and not balanced to mitigate privilege within an inherently colonial space. Whereas Settler students were accommodated to learn introductory Indigenous Studies content, they also brought their ignorance to the table. Indigenous students among the cohort were forced into situations where they shared the role of professor in dealing with the Settler students' ignorance.

The dynamic was worse than what I had experienced in my undergraduate degree – it seemed as if there was a sense of entitlement on behalf of a few of the Settler cohort, particularly in the Indigenous thought course where they dominated class discussions to suit their interests. The asynchronous delivery of the course made communication between students difficult and the hands-off approach of the professor in these discussions led to some Indigenous students using their responses to address the ignorant comments and entitled behavior occurring in the class. Instead of correcting behaviour, the Settler students in question took offense and made themselves out to be the victims in the situation. The escalation in the conflict led the professor to intervene and removed the rest of the discussion prompts intended for us to engage with for a participation mark. While the professor may have talked with these students in private, their frustration became apparent as it bled into their presence within the core colloquium at the start of our second term.

The core colloquium was divided into two parts – the first term was instructed by an Indigenous professor and the second term was instructed by a Settler professor. The first term went well as the Indigenous professor assigned content and assignments that meshed Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies together (Appendix B). The assigned readings were varied and manageable. The professor also fostered a learning environment that prompted open discussion in which each student had space to contribute. The second term felt like a different course as it seemed like there was a lack of communication between the professors in how the course was to be run as there was no continuation of the learning environment established in the first term combined with a shift in focus on content (Appendix D). While the weekly topics were relevant, the amount of assigned readings each week was overbearing compared to the first term. In class, the Settler professor rarely let students speak without interrupting them and often put words in their mouths. Notably, when an Indigenous student spoke about their experiences, the Settler professor used

their experiences working in another Indigenous community to challenge the legitimacy of the student's experiences. The abrupt change in style led some of my colleagues and myself to doubt our ability to engage the course as well as we had in the first term. We agreed that the lack of Indigenous content was troubling, so we raised our concerns with the new professor. They advised us if we wanted to see more Indigenous content, we would need to find it ourselves and send it to them. In other words, it was expected of the Indigenous students to do the work to find relevant materials to engage with the course developed by the university without any sort of credit or compensation.

This arrangement did not last as the professor then expressed a racist sentiment under the guise of a devil's advocate argument. They equated the land scrips system used to undermine Métis land rights to a government handout that was unjust, claiming that their Settler grandmother would have killed someone for an extra five dollars. My peers and I brought these issues up to our program supervisor and they intervened on our behalf by taking on the role as our new professor and overhauling the course content. While the program supervisor rearranged the course, the issues with two Settler students in particular reached a breaking point. After having agreed to speak out about the previous professor, these students left the main group and held separate classes with the removed professor after their own ignorance was challenged during the first class run by the program supervisor. This arrangement allowed for a less tense learning environment to exist among the students, but also allowed for Settler normativity to continue without further intervention behind closed doors. As far as our cohort knows, the Settler professor faced no repercussions for their behavior, while our new professor had to deal with the fallout in their wake and those of us that spoke out worried about possible reprisal for our self-advocacy. My experiences within the Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies Masters program contradicted the

image of Trent University spearheading truth and reconciliation efforts that it has been projecting since the release of the TRC's final report.

During my time at Trent, life at home conflicted with my academic journey. My Uncle passed away in the summer of 2021 right before I started my graduate studies. Mom got breast cancer and got it removed at the start of 2022 and has since recovered from the surgery. I drive Mom to her dialysis appointments in Ohsweken four times a week and she is there for four hours each time alongside other people from our community. I do not know how much time I have left with my Mom, but after seeing her in the dialysis unit with everyone else in the same situation as her, I cannot help but think that going to university for Indigenous Studies may have been a mistake. I have difficulty seeing the relevance of the field in the daily life of my family and community. It seems that other fields of study are more relevant to affecting positive change in our lives and Indigenous Studies may be a catalyst for diverting academics away from causing effective, positive change. At times, it feels like the Indigenous Peoples referred to in Indigenous Studies are a fictional ideal or subject that me, my family, and those around me are not part of or welcome in. Meanwhile, Settlers have been welcomed into these spaces and use our experiences as bottomless resources to exploit for personal growth. We are told to have blind faith in these interventions while we are rendered irrelevant to our own lives. If Indigenous Studies is meant to improve Indigenous lives, then its tendency to reinforce our erasure needs to be challenged.

I have retold my experiences here as they provide insight into how Indigenous Studies can reinforce Settler normativity and support the ongoing processes of Settler Colonialism. These experiences have led me to question the influence Settler Colonialism has had on the field of Indigenous Studies beyond my own experiences. While some may brush off these events as minor occurrences, I believe them to be microcosms of systemic issues that have been created and

maintained through the development of the field. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the scholarship making it possible to link my story within a broader context. In the next section, the literature review will explore Settler Colonialism's presence within Indigenous Studies, identify how the field assists Settler Colonialism in its pursuit of securing title to land, and consider what progress has been made to navigate the parasitic relationship between the field and the academy.

Literature Review

This literature review is organized into three sections pursuant to the research questions outlined. It begins by providing a comprehensive overview of the concept of Settler Colonialism. It examines key sources and themes related to the creation and maintenance of Settler Colonialism, offering a clear definition and foundation for understanding the phenomenon. This is followed by examination of the ways in which post-secondary education contributes to the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. It discusses relevant sources and themes that highlight the power dynamics, exclusionary practices, and reproduction of settler hegemony within educational institutions. It also provides insights into the specific mechanisms through which post-secondary education perpetuates Settler Colonialism. The literature review then explores the strategies employed by Indigenous Studies scholars to navigate and challenge the influence of Settler Colonialism within the academy. It examines sources and themes that discuss decolonizing methodologies, intellectual promiscuity, and Indigenous interventions in education, and gives examples of how Indigenous studies can actively resist and disrupt the impact of Settler Colonialism.

RQ1: What is Settler Colonialism in North America?

The state uses its asymmetric power to ensure it always controls the processes as a mechanism for managing Indigenous sorrow, anger, and resistance, and this ensures the outcome remains consistent with its goal of maintaining dispossession. (Simpson, 2018, p.45)

To explore the influence of Settler Colonialism within the academy in North America, its primary objectives and strategies must be understood. Settler Colonialism, a term popularized by Patrick Wolfe (2006), describes the social structure that seeks to secure permanence on lands occupied by other nations. Removal of Indigenous Peoples becomes a foundational pillar of Settler

Colonialism as Indigenous ties to land challenge the sovereignty of the Settler states on occupied territories. The literature examined in this section provides insight into how Settler Colonialism maintains and re-imagines itself to succeed in the removal of Indigenous Peoples from their lands. Removal can and has been pursued physically, psychologically, and symbolically, which results in the marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, including in education. The literature examined here will provide a baseline understanding of Settler Colonialism that will then be utilized later in this paper.

Settler Colonialism refers to a set of practices, ideologies, and systems that enable Settler permanence in territories occupied by Indigenous Nations (Beenash, 2017; Carey & Silverstein, 2020; Cote-Meek, 2014b; Whyte, 2018; Wolfe, 2006). In securing permanence, access to land becomes the primary goal of Settler Colonialism (Carey & Silverstein, 2020; Wolfe, 2006). By already occupying the land and having separate forms of governance that granted sovereignty over those lands, Indigenous Peoples and their nations posed a barrier to colonial rule and expansion (Carey & Silverstein, 2020; Cote-Meek, 2014b). It is in this distinction that differentiates Settler Colonialism from colonialism: securing permanence on land takes precedence over exploiting Indigenous labour, although the exploitation of Indigenous labour can be used a tactic to meet the primary goal of Settler Colonialism (Carey & Silverstein, 2020; Wolfe, 2006). Over time, Settler Colonialism adapts its methods to maintain progress towards the elimination of Indigenous Peoples.

Whyte (2018) challenges the perception of Indigenous Peoples as dependents in Settler Colonial states by exploring the language around parasites. Whereas the state presents Indigenous Peoples as a parasite on the Settler society, Whyte identifies the parasitic nature of Settler Colonialism itself. Settlers created a parasitic relationship with Indigenous Peoples over time as

Settlers stole and accumulated land and resources from Indigenous Peoples. Echoing Wolfe's analysis, Whyte claims that the desired outcome of Settler Colonialism is to replace Indigenous Nationhood with a new Settler polity; the parasite replaces the host (Whyte, 2018). In this new society, Indigenous Peoples are eliminated through erasure, assimilation, and/or attrition while the Settler reaps the privileges of ongoing oppression – including, as Barker (2012) and Stein (2018) also state, the ability to distance themselves from their roles in rectifying historical injustice. Through the manufactured irrelevancy of Indigenous lives, Indigenous populations could be managed with minimal to no scrutiny.

To enable the physical removal of Indigenous Peoples from their land, a set of interdependent ideologies were developed and embraced to provide individual actors justification in expanding the colony. Wolfe identifies these ideological justifications as "the logic of elimination" (2006, p. 387). Smith (2012a) identifies that an important concept driving the logic of elimination is the perception of Indigenous Peoples held by the Settler majority. Through the process of racialization (Moreton-Robinson, 2016b), Indigenous Peoples were divorced from their humanity through the production of knowledge, creating a hierarchy that places the Settler above the Native. Wark (2021) and Beenash (2017), like Smith, argue that racialization also enabled Settler benevolence as a logic of elimination – the good of mankind is invoked as the main, infallible argument driving Indigenous removal from contact to the present day. Cote-Meek (2020) and Moreton-Robinson (2016b) discuss how the deliberate misrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples as dependents and threats to society fuel Settler benevolence and apathy. Tactics such as genocide, assimilation and attrition become palatable to the Settler majority as the ends become seen to justify the means.

Settler governance is also crucial to keeping the Settler Colonial project on track, thus incorporating the logic of elimination within its initial assertion of sovereignty on Indigenous lands. The initial claims to ownership made by European sovereigns on Indigenous lands served as the metaphorical gauntlet being laid down – Indigenous governance and ties to land were to be seen as lesser than the claims asserted by the colonizers. This became the foothold for Settler normativity (Smith, Funaki, & MacDonald, 2021) and would serve as the basis for all relationships between the Settlers and Indigenous Nations – Settlers came with the *intent* to subsume and rule or eliminate the populations of the land they sought to own (Steinman, 2016, emphasis added). This can be seen in the creation and application of the Doctrine of Discovery in the 15th century, where anyone not Christian was deemed to have no soul and was therefore not human. This provided legal and moral justification to render foreign lands *terra nullius*, or lands inhabited by no one, which were ripe for settlement and expansion. The dehumanization facilitated through the doctrine provided a moral defense and imperative for acts of genocide and deception to occur in the interest of the colonizing nations and religious orders. The claim of terra nullius also works to undermine the existence of other governments that predate contact with Settlers. Once the claim to authority was made and footholds for settlement were secured in North America, compliance with Settler authority needed to be achieved among the local populations. Whyte (2018) outlined the process in which Indigenous Peoples were transformed into dependents. Indigenous Peoples were to be pressured into moving for colonial expansion through racialized coding as burdens and threats to Settler order. The racialized constructs of savage and burden provided the state and its citizenry justification to use exclusion and violence to remove Indigenous Peoples from their lands without legal or moral consequences for their actions (Whyte, 2018). Once the Indigenous Population had been reduced, the Settler government could secure permanence on Indigenous

lands through the expansion of colonies and through the management of what Indigenous Peoples remained.

Once the era of frontier genocide reduced Indigenous Nations to manageable, dependent populations, Settlers adapted their tactics by utilizing covert methods to reach Settler Colonialism's primary goal. Smith (2012a) and Stein (2018) articulated that Imperialism, the ideology that informs the basis of Settler Colonialism, adapts to survive in its current political environment. In the same vein of Imperialism, efforts to achieve Settler Colonialism's primary goal adapt to reflect its political climate. Wolfe (2006) argued that assimilation was and remains an effective form of removal than the more visible and optically poor attempts at genocide as it does not contradict the rule of law and the myth of Settler benevolence. Cote-Meek (2014b) and White (2018) echoed Wolfe's claim in that this shift to remove contradictions within the logic of elimination further emboldens Settlers to deny or ignore historic and ongoing injustices faced by Indigenous populations. Nichols (2014) discussed how the term settler contract has been adapted to articulate a fictional history regarding the foundation of the state's laws to override Indigenous title to land. Coulthard (2014) linked these strategies to the overarching goal of keeping Indigenous communities and their land bases open for exploitation, enabling what Stevenson (1998) saw as the rebranding of Indigenous Peoples as a renewable resource for the Settler economy. Brunette-Debassige (2021) identified the adoption of neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism into the structure of Settler Colonialism as recent adaptations. While the language and tactics that justify Settler Colonialism change, the outcomes remain the same: Settlers are able to profit from the state of dependency they have created within Indigenous populations while retaining progress towards the physical and symbolic elimination of Indigenous Peoples.

According to Stein (2018) and Coulthard (2014), the language of Settler Colonialism can shift in response to Indigenous resistance, co-opting the message of any given movement to prevent meaningful change. Moreton-Robinson (2016b) identifies how after race was disproven as a scientific fact, anthropologists used language around cultural authenticity to promote racialization. Carey and Silverstein (2020) make note of this within policy reforms, in which various Settler-States present a policy that makes no major shift in the oppressive relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the State. As policy reforms fail to improve Indigenous lives in Settler-Colonial states and Indigenous Peoples speak out against these reforms, Indigenous Peoples are then cast as ungrateful recipients of Settler benevolence. White (2018) argues that the Settler majority is then led to assume that the state and citizenry have done more than enough to address the historical injustices faced by Indigenous Peoples. Wark (2021) discusses how land acknowledgements have been adopted by various sectors across Canadian society and have been used to replicate the Settler myth of benevolence. Critical to the Settler myth of benevolence is the depoliticization of Settler identity, in which the Settler distances themselves from historic injustice and legal responsibilities to retain their social privileges enabled through the removal of Indigenous lives (Mayeda et al, 2020; Guinan, 2016). Tuck and Yang (2021, p.3) called these actions "Settler moves to innocence." The perception of Indigenous Peoples as burdens to society is further entrenched in the minds of Settlers as they adapt to their political climate and have to adjust their methods, promoting resentment and apathy among the Settler population. As systemic change is prevented, Indigenous Peoples express frustration with the lack of tangible progress, which in turn invokes Settler rage and apathy as they perceive the actions of Indigenous Peoples as validation for the stereotypes they have reinforced for generations. This enables the systemic issues crafted through Settler Colonialism within Indigenous communities to worsen.

Cote-Meek (2014b) addresses the internal dynamics that Settler Colonialism enables within Indigenous communities. The ongoing colonial violence pressed on by Settler Colonialism created the conditions for poverty and ill-health to thrive in Indigenous communities (Cote-Meek, 2014b). Indigenous Peoples can adapt to the views of their oppressors, in which they internalize the beliefs of their own inferiority (Cote-Meek, 2014b). Smith (2012a) also notes that Indigenous Peoples can embrace Settler normativity and find some degree of individual success by participating in systems that enable our oppression. Pyke (2010) describes how Settler Colonialism allows for the integration of individuals of an oppressed group into higher social status to maintain control over that group and maintain the status quo. Moreton-Robinson (2016b) discusses how the racialized construction of Indigeneity has forced Indigenous Peoples to navigate the understanding of 'self' to decide between being authentic to themselves or to play into the constructions made for them to be heard and recognized by those with power and/or make a living. Both options are favorable to those invested in maintaining Settler Colonialism.

Settler Colonialism continues to be maintained in modern society and the literature explored here highlights the processes and outcomes of this reality. Racialization (Cote-Meek, 2020; Moreton-Robinson, 2016b) continues to be a driving force motivating an overall lack of systemic change in ideological institutions critical to the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. Stein (2018), Moreton-Robinson (2016b), Pyke (2010), Carey and Silverstein (2020), White (2018), and Wark (2021) identify how controlling the optics of the injustices faced by Indigenous Peoples is further essentialized as Settler Colonialism progresses. Critical to maintaining positive optics in the operation of these ideological institutions is the strategic inclusion of Indigenous content. Indigenous Peoples have been encouraged to share and sell their knowledge and culture to the Settler masses, resulting in loss of control in its dissemination and enabling cultural appropriation

(Smith, 2012a). This assists in the politics of distraction (Brunette-Debassige, 2021) as cultural immersion and celebration are prioritized over tangible forms of redress. Cote-Meek, Carey and Silverstein (2020), Barker (2012), Nichols (2014), Stein (2018), Steinman (2016) and Whyte (2018) discuss how Settler Colonialism cannot be adequately addressed while the politics of distraction remain unchallenged. Education becomes a self-sustaining pillar of Settler Colonialism as knowledge of Indigenous Peoples can be consumed to enrich Settler's lives while also assisting in the symbolic and physical removal of Indigenous Peoples and securing title to land (Carey & Silverstein, 2020; Steinman, 2016; Wolfe, 2006). These dynamics are enabled through the operation of educational institutions like post-secondary institutions within Settler states.

> *RQ2: What role does post-secondary education play in Settler Colonialism?*

> *The power relations in which Indigenous scholars are enmeshed are always in tension as these relations constrain, enable, and circumscribe our capacity for self-identification as well as for applying and producing Indigenous knowledges. (Moreton-Robinson, 2016, p. 115).*

Settler Colonialism depends on the unhindered functioning of various ideological systems to maintain order. Education remains a critical ideological system that upholds Settler Colonialism. Through the policing of knowledge and the cyclic production of arbiters over that knowledge, the academy retains influence over how the world is perceived by society. The literature examined in this section provides insight into how post-secondary institutions have assisted in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism through knowledge production, the devaluation of non-Western ways of knowing through the creation of the Other, and gatekeeping access to their institutions.

Educational systems play a role in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism through the production of knowledge. Brunette-Debassige (2021) states that the university established itself as the authority over knowledge production that would provide ideological utility that could be used in the progress and maintenance of the state (Brunette-Debassige, 2021). The creation of disciplines provided the structure in which knowledge was to be validated and compartmentalised in the university (Andersen, 2016). Critical to the establishment of the university was the Eurocentric understanding of self and the Other. Smith (2012a) and Stein (2018) noted that epistemological understandings of self and the Other were cemented through the education of Settler societies and that the modern citizen remains shaped by these fundamental Eurocentric concepts. A hierarchical relationship is normalized within this binary – those that are seen as fully human are recognized as citizens and everyone else are made to be dependents that the citizenry can control (Smith, 2012a, Stein 2018). It is with this understanding of self and superiority that Settlers are then able to shape and control understandings of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledges that promote the elimination/erasure of Indigenous life and justifies the annexation of Indigenous territories.

Simpson and Smith (2014) recount how anthropology became a primary field of study in the regulation of Indigenous Peoples. The proliferation of "salvage ethnography" (Simpson & Smith, 2014, p. 5) assisted in the pursuit of Settler permanence as it made careers for Settler academics through the exploitation and misrepresentation of Indigenous lives. Anthropologists studied Indigenous life, and through their work, racist notions of authentic Indigeneity were constructed and legitimized through the university. Anthropologists effectively made themselves the experts of Indigenous culture, which enabled job security for themselves and prestige as their expertise would be called upon in other research and within legal cases (Simpson & Smith, 2014).

Williams (2016) recounted how William Fenton, an American anthropologist, misrepresented the divide among the nations within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy as a break from authentic Haudenosaunee culture and signaled that the Confederacy was no longer the functioning government it once was. While anthropologists advanced their careers, their work also assisted the State in justifying their attempts to eliminate Indigenous Peoples from their land.

Moreton-Robinson (2016b) explains how early anthropological discourse defined Indigenous Peoples as a race based on physical attributes. The scientific disapproval of race led to a change in discourse among anthropologists – instead of using physical markers as the primary way to determine Indigeneity, they manufactured a definition of authentic Indigenous culture, which essentializes specific behaviours to signal authenticity (Moreton-Robinson, 2016b). With this slight change, a person is seen as Indigenous when they behave in ways that anthropologists recognize as legitimate – the ability of each Indigenous nation to define their own membership is not considered. The utility of anthropology's definition of Indigeneity has proven beneficial to the State as their courts have drawn on it to undermine Indigenous rights.   "Moderate livelihood" regarding hunting and fishing, as well as several land claims in the west, where proof of land use or cultural practice is used to determine the validity of land and rights claims, are examples of this happening in Canada. The Van der Peet (1996) SCC decision is a clear case in the anthropological reification of 'frozen' culture. Dorothy Van der Peet of Sto:lo Nation was charged for selling ten salmon her family caught for $50, and the conviction was upheld by the Supreme Court, who laid out a 3-part "distinctive practices" test for determining rights: whether a certain practice in question was an "integral" part of the culture occurring before colonization and that continuity is established to the present (Elliot, 1997). The judges decided that exchanging salmon for money was not an integral traditional practice, and the trade occurring with Hudson's Bay Company was not

sufficient continuity, being determined to be different from tradition (Elliot, 1997). The rights of the Sto:lo Nation were confined by the Supreme Court's anthropological notion of authenticity as "pre-contact." Racist ideas of legitimacy have functioned to position "authentically" Indigenous culture as frozen in time in the past, serving the economic and political interests of the Settler state.

Using the racialized notions of Indigeneity, the federal government of Canada used the academy and the idea of progress to pursue the assimilation of Indigenous Peoples through enfranchisement in the *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857 (Nichols, 2014). Enfranchisement sought to eliminate all legal distinctions between Indigenous Peoples and colonists through the removal of Indigenous rights from Indigenous Peoples and replacing it with the citizen rights recognized by the state. Nichols (2014) explains how enfranchisement was first used as a barrier to civic engagement as Indigenous Peoples had to meet specific requirements to be seen as civilised and thus worthy of the rights of a British - and later, Canadian - citizen. The failure of voluntary enfranchisement led to the application of compulsory enfranchisement in the *Indian Act* of 1876. With this adaptation, Indigenous Peoples that sought to participate in Canadian society could be automatically enfranchised, including those that obtained a university degree (Nichols, 2014). The change from voluntary enfranchisement to compulsory enfranchisement reflected the state's shifting awareness of its need to secure permanence - removal of Indigenous Peoples in greater numbers would allow for the legal question of Indigenous title to land to be extinguished on a shorter timeline (Nichols, 2014). The adaptation of enfranchisement also worked in tandem with the Residential School System as multiple generations of Indigenous Peoples were simultaneously cut off from upholding their modes of governance. This dynamic created the conditions for low Indigenous participation in the academy while Settler scholars promoted and profited off of this positive feedback loop.

Drawing on the work of other Indigenous academics, Brunette-Debassige (2021) summarize the impact of anthropology's construction of Indigeneity within the academy itself. The misrepresentation of Indigeneity assisted in the promotion of Western knowledge as superior to Indigenous Knowledge and ways of knowing. Maracle (2017), Moreton-Robinson (2016) and Coulthard (2014) identify how Indigeneity as an anthropological construct allows the Settler state and its citizens to continue to control various aspects of Indigenous lives that pressure Indigenous Peoples to conform to Settler desires, such as access to and ownership of land and limiting who is recognized as Indigenous in Settler law. Moreton-Robinson (2016) and Cote-Meek (2014) note how the conflation of race and Indigeneity has also led Indigenous Peoples to utilize racialized knowledge to access and assert power within the academy, in which those that posture themselves within Settler-constructed Indigeneity will find personal success. The academy has limited how Indigenous Peoples are able to understand and speak for ourselves while the Settler state and its citizens are able to profit and grow from the racialization of Indigenous Peoples within the academy.

As pillars for Settler Colonialism, post-secondary institutions must control their optics to maintain the status quo. In Canada, the release of the Truth and Reconciliation's final report in 2015 has led to a proliferation of initiatives in post-secondary institutions to assist in the process of reconciliation (Brunette-Debassige, 2021). Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) question the efficacy of new Indigenous-focused programming in partnership with universities as they are funded by stakeholders that have conflicting priorities with the interests of the Indigenous communities they are working with, reflecting Stein's (2018) analysis of the academy's economic interest in supporting the development of the state through the displacement of Indigenous lives and subversion of Indigenous dissent. Building upon the discussion around land acknowledgments

in the previous chapter, Wark (2021) argues that land acknowledgments have been distorted from their inherently political context to ease Settler guilt and support the myth that colonialism is over through their implementations within post-secondary institutions, embodying what Smith, Funaki and MacDonald (2021) call "speech acts,"[3] in which claims to support systemic change are made but are not made enforceable within their jurisdiction. These institutional efforts reflect what Brunette-Debassige called politics of recognition (2021, p. 47) and politics of distraction (2021, p.77), in which Indigenous rights are subsumed through limited change and engagement with work that prevents actors from addressing systemic issues while the optics of social justice are maintained. The land acknowledgements created by Pride Toronto, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and Trent University (see Appendix E) are examples of speech acts and Settler moves to innocence as defined by Tuck and Yang (2012) in the previous section as they each depoliticize the importance of Indigenous nationhood in relation to Settler Colonialism. Even these seemingly progressive initiatives and institutions have all participated in this subsuming of Indigenous rights. Brunette-Debassige (2021) noted how systemic issues in each level of the operation of institutions reinforce themselves and act as barriers to any attempts to change longstanding practices and behaviours. These examples show how the university reinforces Settler Colonialism through the co-optation of change that results in enabling the Settler to profit while limiting the involvement and agency of Indigenous Peoples in the interests of maintaining the status quo.

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[3] Speech Acts: Austin (1962) explained that speech can be used to facilitate action. Land Acknowledgements are speech acts as they posture the organization as progressive supporters of Indigenous Peoples. While land acknowledgments reinforce the moral perception of the organization, what is said (or omitted) from each Land Acknowledgement can assist or hinder Indigenous rights.

Despite the hostile nature of racialization, Indigenous Peoples have participated in the academy since its inception in the Americas. Brunette-Debassige (2021) and Newhouse (2008) discussed how even though the university was a site of assimilation in the formation of Settler states, Indigenous Peoples went to some of the first universities to gain skills and knowledge to participate in the emerging economy. Employability presented a way out of the systemic issues created and compounded by Settler Colonialism and continues to motivate Indigenous Peoples to pursue their education in the present day. The field of Indigenous Studies was developed with the intent to address the issues caused through the creation and maintenance of Settler Colonialism (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022; Warrior, 1992). As Indigenous Peoples push for change and greater involvement within post-secondary education, the academy has adapted to mitigate their impact on its operations. Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) recount how the Canadian government and the academy adapted to the end of compulsory enfranchisement in the *Indian Act* in 1951. The Department of Indian Affairs began to fund Indigenous centers for higher learning in the 60s but defunded them as soon as they began to produce students that used their education to legally challenge the Canadian state (Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat, 2022, p. 16). The political activism of the 1960s also led to an increase of Indigenous students enrolling in universities in Canada, leading to the federal government placing a cap on post-secondary funding and further denying educational treaty rights for Indigenous students (Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat, 2022). Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat attributed the increase in enrollment to the need for Indigenous communities to build professional capacity to respond to the state's interference through educational systems and through child welfare, while the state responded by using the academy to limit Indigenous participation in higher education to prevent systemic reform (Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat, 2022). Pedri-Spade and Piawanakwat assert that their account of Indigenous

participation within the academy in Canada has shown that the state remains invested in civilizing Indigenous Peoples and providing Settlers the tools and skills necessary to manage modern Indigenous populations (Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat, 2022). If a university or program fails to conform to what Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat identify as ordoliberalism, where the market dictates governance, those institutions or programs get defunded like the University of Sudbury's Indigenous Studies program was in 2020 (Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat, 2022, p. 18). To maintain the barriers faced by Indigenous Peoples seeking post-secondary education, the academy plays the role of gatekeeper to weed out radicals and ensure the production of an ideal Indigenous graduate that embodies the academy's ideals and investments.

Indigenous Peoples face barriers as they enter the academy and as they attempt to complete their degrees. These barriers, including but not limited to finances, discrimination, and familial responsibilities, are compounded on each other, and increase the chances for Indigenous students to drop out of their respective programs (Brunette-Debassige, 2021; Fanshawe College, 2021). Brunette-Debassige's (2021) research reveals the interdependent nature between academic success and Indigenous professional development in which the barriers that Indigenous academics face reduce the number of graduates, thus limiting the pool of potential Indigenous employees to draw from when hiring staff and faculty. Interviews conducted by Mayeda et al. (2021) reveals that while the students they coded with privilege entered post-secondary programs with more social and financial support, they were rarely made to feel as if they do not belong within their institution. Conversely, the students they coded as underprivileged had to navigate their responsibilities to their communities and the hostile perceptions held of them by their colleagues (Mayeda et al., 2021) while Cote-Meek (2014b) and Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) identify the need for underprivileged students to learn and adapt to the power structures within the institution to find

personal success. Davidson et al. (2018) and Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) note that post-secondary institutions have engaged these issues through deficit-based approaches which problematize the student instead of examining what is causing these outcomes within their operations. The refusal to address systemic issues that determine Indigenous educational success assists in the maintenance of social and economic disparities within Indigenous communities as potential Indigenous graduates are weeded out of their programs and the power and knowledge to create needed change is kept out of their reach.

While Indigenous Studies was envisioned as a field to assist Indigenous lives in addressing the systemic inequalities caused by Settler Colonialism, the field has changed over time to better reflect the interests of the academy. Cote-Meek (2014) identifies the role the institution plays in authenticating Indigenous voice in the curation of curriculum, while Moreton-Robinson (2016) highlights how some Indigenous academics have assisted in this process by limiting intellectual engagement to Eurocentric understandings of culture, enabling cultural entrapment. Cultural entrapment replicates anthropology's preoccupation with culture by placing cultural analysis above other forms of analysis, rendering the presence of other oppressive influences invisible (Moreton-Robinson, 2016). Cote-Meek (2014) notes that the academy promotes cultural entrapment through the prioritization of cultural revitalization in curricula and policy reform. This approach assists in the depoliticization of Indigenous contributions to the academy as intersecting axes of oppression are trivialized and/or ignored, allowing the academy to avoid addressing their complicity in the oppression of Indigenous Peoples (Cote-Meek, 2014). Pedri-Spade and Pitiwanakwat (2022) posit that the depoliticization of Indigenous content and policy changes secures and maintains funding for the institution to function as the calls for radical intervention in the past result in the defunding of Indigenous education. Moreton-Robinson (2016b) discusses

how Indigenous professors that teach in ways that question entrenched Indigenous perspectives supported by the institution are labelled as radicals among their colleagues, limiting their career prospects in the academy. Davidson et al. (2018) argue that this gatekeeping has allowed the academy to maintain the status quo. The depoliticization of Indigenous Studies and the increase of interest in the field due to the TRC's final report has led to the inflammation of pre-existing issues within the administration of the academy, which then manifests within Indigenous Studies classrooms.

Indigenous Studies classrooms provide insight into the problems caused through the depoliticization of the field. Cote-Meek's (2014) research reveals how shared classrooms that address Indigenous-centric topics replicate non-reciprocal relationships between Indigenous students and Settler students. The interviewees in Cote-Meek's research discussed the expectation of being experts on the topics being discussed in the class because they are Indigenous students (Cote-Meek, 2014). This led the Indigenous students to either engage with the students that asked them questions or remain silent, both of which put stress on the Indigenous student as their identity becomes associated with the response they provide (Cote-Meek 2014). While Brunette-Debassiege (2021), Simpson (2018) and Smith, (2018), present refusal as a radical political act, the power imbalance held by the Settler in these interactions allow them to interpret our acts of refusal on their own terms. While refusal can be deployed as a strategy to reclaim personal agency in environments where it is difficult to assert, it only serves to delay the knowledge and experiential exploitation the Settler wants. This dynamic enables the replication of non-reciprocal Indigenous/Settler relationships as the Indigenous cohort enriches the experience for the Settler cohort through their emotional labor or silence in the classroom. While Cote-Meek (2014) provides examples from one group of Indigenous students' experiences, these perspectives become more

relevant as institutions task Indigenous Studies with fulfilling their commitments to answering the TRC's *Calls to Action.*

The literature examined here reveals the role post-secondary education has and continues to play in Settler Colonialism. The production of knowledge and the tools used to understand the world we live in allow people to accumulate political power and, in the Settler Colonial context, this power is then managed to maintain the status quo (Smith, 2012a). Stein (2018), Wark (2021), and Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) call into question educational institutions and current practices as they operate within Settler Colonialism's limited modes of possibility. Current educational dogma is predicated on the belief that the methods that have led to the current operation of post-secondary institutions have resulted in best operational practices; that there are no alternatives to be discovered (Stein, 2018). The processes that we engage within educational institutions need to be put into question to reveal how they may maintain the structure of Settler Colonialism instead of challenging it (Stein, 2018). Finding new ways to consolidate power that has been historically taken from Indigenous Peoples is necessary to undermine Settler Colonialism in post-secondary education. As a leading field exploring the impacts of Settler Colonialism that is also limited by its influence, Indigenous Studies may provide insight into strategies to navigate Settler Colonialism within the academy.

> *RQ3: How can Indigenous Studies navigate Settler Colonialism within the Academy?*
>
> *The degree of Indigenous peoples' agency within existing university structures relative to settler colonialism however raises ongoing questions about how much the Euro-Western academic system continues to control Indigenous agency. As Graham Hingarora Smith asserts "developing sovereignty and self-determination in an institution where we do not have power just doesn't ring true. We need to know the terrain on which we are struggling.*

We need to know the limits and capacities of what can be achieved in particular sites. I think we need to make strategic concessions to win what we can, but the critical understanding is that this is only one site of struggle – we ought to be developing transformation in many sites. (Brunette-Debassige, 2021, p. 212)

Indigenous Studies has had to navigate the machinations of Settler Colonialism since its inception. The literature gathered in this section explores how Indigenous Studies in Canada was created and maintained to exist within a Settler Colonial institution while also attempting to stay relevant to Indigenous lives outside of the academy. The challenges faced by these scholars and their contributions to progressive positive change act as a breadcrumb trail to follow to understand what next steps need to be taken.

Indigenous Studies (formerly known as Indian/Eskimo Studies, Native American Studies, or Aboriginal Studies) was created in response to the political upheaval leading into the 1960's caused by Indigenous activism at the time (Morris, 1986). The National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) released their position paper entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education* in 1972 in the wake of the 1969 White Paper, an assimilationist federal policy put forward by Jean Chretien and Pierre Trudeau that sought to remove all legal distinctions between Indigenous Peoples and Canadian citizens from Canadian law (Newhouse, 2008). After nationwide protest led to the 1969 White Paper being rejected, Newhouse recounts how the NIB's position paper served as an ideological foundation that would be drawn upon in the development and growth of Indigenous education in Canada over the 30 years following its publication (Newhouse, 2008). The crisis in Kanesatake[4]

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[4] The crisis in Kanesatake occurred outside of Oka, Quebec, in 1990. The Mohawks of Kanesatake blocked the main road into the reserve to protest Oka's expansion of a 9-hole golf course that would disturb one of the Mohawk's burial sites. One police officer was killed during this conflict, and members of Kanesatake that fled for safety were stoned by citizens of Oka as they passed through town. The Canadian Military deployed over 4000 troops to quarantine the reserve and pressure an end to the standoff.

in the summer of 1990 led the Canadian Federal Government to establish the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) in 1991, which submitted its findings in 1996. The RCAP called for education to be recognized as a foundational pillar for Indigenous self-governance and recommended that access to the development of Indigenous educational systems and to mainstream educational systems be strengthened for Indigenous Peoples to build capacity within their communities (Cote-Meek, 2014). Each of these moments contributed to a political climate that supported the development of Indigenous Studies in North America.

The political climate in North America in the late 90s assisted Indigenous advocates in establishing Indigenous Studies as an academic field. While Morris (1986) notes that Indigenous Studies was created to respond to the needs of Indigenous communities, Fontaine and McCaskill (2022) discuss the goals stakeholders considered in the development of the first Indigenous Studies Program in Canada at Trent University in 1969. The stakeholders identified three main principles for the discipline: building academic capacity among its students to operate within an Indigenous context, involvement in Indigenous communities to encourage advocacy to address social injustices, and respect cultural revitalization occurring at the time through incorporation and recognition of traditional Indigenous teachers (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022). Moreton-Robinson (2016a) attribute the origin of Indigenous Studies in the United States to a discussion at Princeton University in 1970. The field would differentiate itself from other disciplines through the endogenous study of Indigenous culture, history, and politics grounded within Indigenous methodologies (Moreton-Robinson, 2016a). In 1999, the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education (WIPCE) released the *Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Education* to identify the goals of Indigenous education and advocate for changes within society that will make achieving those goals a possibility (WIPCE Council, 1999). The *Statement* called

for resources to be provided to Indigenous education systems, the recognition of Elders as teachers, and the commitment to protect Indigenous languages. The *Statement* also recognized the specificity of Indigenous cultures in relation to the utilization of Indigenous pedagogy, reinforcing the importance of ties to land within Indigeneity (WIPCE Council, 1999). Smith (2012, p.111) also provides a comprehensive framework to guide what she called the Indigenous Peoples' Project. The Indigenous Peoples' Project outlines the primary goals for Indigenous research within the academy to support: survival, recovery development and self-determination. Smith notes that the Indigenous Peoples' Project is radical and political in nature and while coalitions that work towards achieving the goals of the Project are welcome and desirable, there is validity in rejecting coalitions with groups that prevent or delay work towards reaching its goals. Smith also observes that Indigenous Peoples are in a perpetual state of survival that has a tendency to prevent effective long-term strategy planning as we are forced to respond to immediate crises (Smith, 2012, p. 121). The combined international effort from various Indigenous voices provided the rationale for Indigenous Studies to be supported as a discipline within Canada with explicitly political objectives.

The presence of Indigenous Peoples within the academy has evolved alongside the expansion of Indigenous Studies. Brunette-Debassige discuss (2021) how the work done by Indigenous Peoples have parallels with equity and diversity initiatives within the academy while also pursuing unique goals such as advocating for Indigenous rights across political contexts, implementing treaty agreements, responding to reconciliation initiatives, supporting local Indigenous communities, and promoting Indigenous languages and knowledge in research and curriculum. Fontaine and McCaskill (2022) identify resistance, reconciliation, and renewal as the three overarching ideas guiding Indigenous Studies at Trent University, mirroring the ideas that

motivated the inception of the discipline while also providing a tangible example where the operation of the department, student success in Indigenous Studies, and positive progressive change are made interdependent. In other words, the success of Indigenous Studies is dependent on the support provided by other Indigenous actors within the academy, while students pursuing a degree in the field need to see confirmation that their work has a desirable, achievable end that reflects the ideals of the program.

Indigenous education remains a driving factor in the growth and development of Indigenous Studies and Critical Indigenous Studies. Morris (1986) identifies the need for a proliferation of various Indigenous academics to address socioeconomic issues and to keep Indigenous priorities at the forefront in the workplaces in which they find themselves. At the time, Morris (1986) believed that few post-secondary institutions supported their Indigenous Studies Programs to increase Indigenous participation in the development of the field. Warrior (1992) identifies a disconnect between the theorizing among Indigenous Studies scholars within the academy and the theorizing occurring within Indigenous communities, noting the depoliticization of calls for decolonization within post-secondary institutions. In comparing the work of Forbes and Deloria, Warrior (1992) emphasizes the need for Indigenous Studies to foster coalitions with Indigenous communities to organize political action that navigates the variance of social class among those involved. Morris' (1986) and Warrior's (1992) observations remain relevant to the critical examination of educational practices and outcomes that modern authors have problematized in recent adaptations within Indigenous Studies.

Critical Indigenous Studies emerged in response to the perceived shortcomings of Indigenous Studies. Moreton-Robinson (2016a) identifies the relationship between the academy and Indigenous Studies as the primary factor that led to the creation of Critical Indigenous Studies,

in which, as they argue, the objectives of the field are shaped to the interests of the institution. Simpson and Smith (2014, p. 9) note the calls for intellectual isolationism in the emergence of Critical Indigenous Studies and advocate for research in the field to embrace what they termed "intellectual promiscuity." Similarly, Andersen (2016) summarizes the critiques of the production of knowledge in Indigenous Studies and identifies agreement on three key ideas essential to work done within the scope of Indigenous Studies: the knowledge produced in the field must be beneficial to Indigenous Peoples; that its uses insider knowledge; and it needs to be committed to interdisciplinarity. Andersen (2016) also argues that understanding whiteness is critical within Indigenous Studies as it fosters the proliferation of cultural density within the field while minimizing the reproduction of racialized knowledge. Cultural density is a form of analysis that recognizes that cultures are not static and explores what factors influence cultural adaptation (Andersen, 2016). Simpson and Smith (2014) further articulate that intellectual contributions from other fields within the academy and those occurring among Indigenous communities outside of the academy are both essential resources to be utilized within Critical Indigenous Studies. Coulthard's (2014) analysis of the politics of recognition can also be applied to the development of Critical Indigenous Studies as some Indigenous scholars have pursued recognition from the state while invoking rhetoric regarding self-determination under the umbrella of Indigenous Studies. Critical Indigenous Studies was envisioned as an intervention into the assimilative adaptations of Settler Colonialism within the academy as it attempts to reinforce the original goals of Indigenous Studies prior to the co-optation of its objectives.

The overall goals of Indigenous Studies also assist growing calls for genuine decolonization of the academy. Brunette-Debassige argue that the political goal of decolonizing the academy is to decentralize colonial ideologies and dismantle power dynamics that hinder

Indigenous educational sovereignty (Brunette-Debassige, 2021). Mitchel, Thomas and Smith 2018, p. 351) assert that decolonization in practice is founded on four principles, including that decolonization is grounded in an Indigenous lens/worldview; it holds Settler faculty and students responsible for learning how to respectfully engage with Indigenous Peoples; it requires overhauls of education curriculum, policy and institutional spaces; and it is dependent on individual actors and institutional commitments to make effective changes. In her analysis of gender and Indigenous resurgence, Simpson (2018) discusses the need to promote, support and empower gender diversity and expression within decolonial initiatives to undermine the heteropatriarchal order used to delegitimize Indigenous ways of life and destabilize Indigenous political orders. Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) also identify the need for genuine decolonization to include anti-racist practices such as addressing the erasure of Afro-Indigenous presence and history within the academy. Karuka (2017) discusses how Black radicalism aligns with Indigenous radicalism throughout history and how these shared sites of contention can serve as a framework to generate new alternative methods to engage the conditions maintained through Settler Colonialism with what they called radical imagination. Noting the trend for universities to rush their efforts to "Indigenize" their institutional spaces and practices, Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) suggest that genuine decolonization takes concerted effort and time to achieve. While Indigenization can assist in working towards genuine decolonization in fostering better relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in the academy, Simpson and Smith (2014) assert that coalitions dedicated to advocating for greater systemic change are required to ensure genuine decolonization within the academy that tackles white supremacy, capitalism, and Settler Colonialism. Simpson and Smith (2014) note that Indigenous Studies should focus on dismantling Settler Colonialism and there is space and shared interests for allied scholars to work in the field

to assist in the pursuit of the field's goals. While institutions have failed to engage in what Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) call decolonial-Indigenization, Indigenous Studies can use its presence in the academy as a foothold (Andersen, 2016) to pursue genuine decolonization by holding academic institutions accountable through the advocacy of its administration (Morris, 1986), and through the development of an allied coalition of researchers (Simpson & Smith, 2014). Indigenous Studies can take advantage of this foothold by promoting the production of quality research that assists in achieving the field's stated goals.

Indigenous Studies provides an intellectual frontline to study and address Settler Colonialism. Madison and Nakata (2020) and Mitchell, Thomas, and Smith (2018) argue that the hierarchy between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples needs to be addressed directly as superficial interventions do not disrupt power imbalances that have been refined since contact. Settler Colonialism remains dependent on the promotion and proliferation of ambiguous discourse to delay effective radical change, which has manifested through the co-optation of once-radical language and decolonial practice as noted by Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022), Wark (2021), White (2018), Stein (2018), Andersen (2016), Coulthard (2014) and Tuck and Yang (2012). Maddison and Nakata (2020) argue that using the term Settler allows for critical, honest engagement with the power dynamics at play within a Settler Colonial context and disrupts the naturalization of a national identity. Maddison and Nakata (2020) identify the utility of the term Settler in its ability to cause discomfort through exposing power imbalances and unearned privilege in location to sense of self, which can either push individuals to advocate for change or engage in Settler moves to innocence (Tuck and Yang, 2012) to distance themselves from accountability. Smith, Funaki and MacDonald (2021) claim that exposing how Settler Colonialism operates within micro and macro contexts provides insight into how Settler Colonialism may be

interrupted as it reveals the political climate in which these discussions are occurring. Intellectual interventions into Settler Colonialism through Indigenous Studies are dependent on the field's ability to define the terms of its contestation.

Scholarship from Settler Colonialism Studies provides a well of resources that can assist Indigenous Studies in fulfilling its goals. Carey and Silverstein (2020) identify the inherent relationship between Settler Colonial Studies and Indigenous Studies. While the field of Settler Colonial scholarship has been recently shaped to exclude Indigenous voices, Carey and Silverstein, like Wolfe (2006), point out that the field of Settler Colonial Studies could not exist without consideration of the roles that Indigenous Peoples play within the functioning of Settler Colonialism. Despite the recent turn in Settler Colonial Studies in which it has begun to replicate Settler Colonialism rather than challenge or eliminate it, there is still validity in Indigenous interventions in the logics of elimination. As Barker (2012) Stein (2018) and Steinman (2016) reveal, Settler Colonialism is ever-present in our lives as Indigenous Peoples. To avoid the dynamics of our own oppression only results in proliferating its existence (Stein, 2018). Settler Colonialism implicates every Settler and Indigenous Person within the society it has crafted – our current ways of living are directly influenced by its existence (Barker, 2012). Merely imagining a better future will not create the conditions required to change the existing relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Settlers. To create a future that is free of the oppressive structure that is Settler Colonialism, it must be addressed directly.

The essentialization of Indigenous lives within the field enables unique opportunities and strategies to be found and/or developed in the production of useful knowledge within Indigenous Studies scholarship that interrupts Settler Colonialism. Smith and MacDonald (2021) argue that resistance from within the margins allows for a greater degree of critique. Maddison and Nakata

(2020) and Row and Tuck (2017) call for engagement with Settler Colonialism using a critical lens to address the reality we as Indigenous Peoples live in and avoid assisting in its reproduction. Cote-Meek (2020) argues that the window of opportunity created through resistance from the margins assists in the deconstruction of racialized notions of Indigeneity while providing more agency in the direction of research agendas as Indigenous Peoples can speak and write for themselves instead of being spoken for through research. The prioritization of Indigenous lives throughout work done within Indigenous Studies establishes a precedent within the academy in which a foundational aspect of self-determination is respected in both the production of knowledge and in the daily operations within a given institution.

Systemic change depends on the actions of actors within the system. Strategic concessions that disrupt the power imbalances between the academy and Indigenous Peoples must be conceptualized and reinforced, while refusal needs to be utilized in circumstances in which potential harm cannot be mitigated. Wark (2021) and Simpson (2014) discuss the merits of refusal within academia in countering the pressures that lead to concessions in the academy. While Simpson (2014) presents refusal as a radical shift that requires a clean break from participation with oppressive structures, Wark (2021) articulates how not every actor in the system can exercise refusal. Wark (2021) claims that these actors must navigate their position in the institution by understanding where and when their voices are respected and use that knowledge to make strategic refusals. Actors within the bureaucracy of Indigenous Studies Programs and those developing the academic field are forced to make choices that address the pressures and interests of their home institutions while also working towards the goals of the programs and the field itself. The political power and agency to act on that power places Indigenous academics in a unique position to

advocate for change closer to the sources of systemic oppression and others with the power to make greater change.

Increasing Indigenous student admissions and retention are both essential to the growth of Indigenous Studies presence in the academy and achieving the stated goals of the field. Cote-Meek (2020) identifies the need for institutions to implement changes that increase access and success for Indigenous academics, including increasing the admissions of Indigenous students, increasing Indigenous hires across administration and as professors, and removal of barriers to conducting research for Indigenous scholars. Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) argues that institutions that are committed to redress will develop initiatives that facilitate such changes and privilege the Indigenous nations that have claim to the land in which their campuses are located. Mayeda et al. (2020) and Mitchell et al. (2018) agree that the Indigenizing of physical space will assist in the creation of an institutional climate which is safer for Indigenous Peoples to interact with while the administration is pushed to commit to greater institutional change. Research conducted by Fanshawe College (2021) and Indspire (2018) echo Cote-Meek's and Mitchell, Thomas and Smith's (2018) suggestions. The Indigenous students interviewed by Indispire, a Canadian charity formerly called the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, also identifies the need for Indigenous counsellors that actively reach out and support Indigenous students to reduce dropout rates (Indspire, 2018). The prioritization of Indigenous voice within Indigenous Studies would serve to bridge a gap between theory and practice occurring within the academy that in turn provides a tangible example of the relevance of the field.

Classrooms become potential sites of genuine decolonization through Indigenous Studies programs. In their call for safer spaces within post-secondary institutions, Mitchell et al. (2018) identify the potential for classrooms to be sites that can uplift both Indigenous students and

professors while also facilitating the decentering of Settler classmates that enter these spaces. Mayeda et al. (2020) note that institutions must implement systemic changes alongside the efforts of individuals made within the system to embrace depowerment. Cote-Meek (2014) claims that educators must understand how systemic issues are maintained through their own positionality, the use of pedagogy within the course being taught, and the curricula. Classrooms that discuss Settler Colonialism and that seek to uplift and make Indigenous students feel safe and supported need skilled professors to ensure the wellbeing of each participant (Mayeda et al., 2020). As Cote-Meek (2014) notes, professors teaching in these spaces must also be prepared to handle racism within the classroom to maintain a safe and effective class. Indigenous Studies classrooms represent a microcosm of the systemic change required across each level within post-secondary institutions and provide a tangible context in which the essentialization of Indigenous lives affects systemic change.

The content of Indigenous Studies needs to adapt to reflect the goals and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples while facilitating the decentering of Settler participants. Brunette-Debassige (2021) and Andersen (2016) call for the adaptation of Indigenous Studies curriculums to be community-driven to include and reflect the local Indigenous communities and nations it serves. Indigenous languages, ties to land and culture are emphasized in the literature as key to understanding Indigenous ways of knowing (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022; Justice, 2018; Andersen, 2016; Simpson, 2011; Smith, 2012b, Newhouse, 2008,) and each can be utilized and promoted in the pursuit of addressing modern issues in ways that reflect the communities seeking change. Andersen (2016, p. 15) highlights the institutional benefits that such adaptations would enable, including the creation of a "competitive edge," that would provide credibility and legitimize the field in pursuing departmental status. In strengthening the permanence of the field

in ways that the academy recognizes, opportunities for addressing issues associated with Western education are created as local Indigenous communities are respected and included in the development and implementation of these changes.

Tallbear (2016), Hokowhitu (2016), and Moreton-Robinson (2016) argue that one such opportunity is engagement in intellectual promiscuity that transcends false binaries prevalent in the field. While reflecting on her time within Indigenous Studies and working within her community, Tallbear noticed a disdain and distrust of the academy and Western methodologies. From Tallbear's (2016) perspective, efforts to reclaim and assert sovereignty are undermined if Indigenous communities do not understand the science needed in maintaining a modern nation. Tallbear (2016) calls for intellectual promiscuity and engagement, rather than rejection, of the sciences to address modern issues. Tallbear (2016) also stresses the importance of academic rigor through interdisciplinarity that she saw was absent from the field. She noted how nonhumans and ties to land were not articulated as important beyond their use as narrative devices (Tallbear, 2016). Hokowhitu (2016) problematizes the categorizations put on Indigenous Peoples and the preoccupation that Indigenous Studies scholars have with justifying those boundaries. Moreton-Robinson (2016) shares Hokowhitu's and Tallbear's concerns as the pursuit of Indigenization within Indigenous Studies has led to reductive explanations of Indigeneity which result in reinforcing racialized categorizations and knowledge. Nichols (2014) argues that discourse within Indigenous Studies needed to move beyond the racialized mischaracterizations of Indigenous Peoples to understand how those constructions exist to limit Indigenous agency. It is hoped that Indigenous Studies can redirect discourse about Indigeneity to reflect the goals of the field rather than the interests of the institution.

Indigenous Studies has evolved since its inception in the 1960s and has adapted to serve the academy's interests to maintain its presence within its halls. This compromise has led to the decentering of Indigenous lives from perceptions of Indigenous life and culture within the field. While articulating the need for Indigenous Studies scholarship to challenge fixed notions of Indigeneity, Simpson and Smith (2014) identify how interdisciplinarity allows Indigenous Studies scholars to question and challenge entrenched beliefs within Indigenous Studies that may be harmful to its growth. Tallbear's (2016) call to embrace intellectual promiscuity and Andersen's (2016) promotion of Indigenous density within the field work in tandem to allow Indigenous Peoples to redefine their existence in ways that reflect reality rather than Settler interests, which in turn support the established goals of the field. While scholars such as Fontaine and McCaskill (2022), Heath-Justice (2018), Guinan (2016), Hokowhitu (2016), Simpson (2011), and Newhouse (2008) emphasize the importance of spirituality and culture behind the work to be done within Indigenous Studies, the work of Brunette-Debassiege (2021), Moreton-Robinson (2016), Tallbear (2016), Cote-Meek (2014), Coulthard (2014), and Tuck and Yang (2012) contend that Indigenous life is complex and does not always intersect with the ideals of traditionalists and those ideals can also be used to further oppress Indigenous lives through the pursuit of recognition and the interests of the state. Making Indigenous lives essential rather than prioritizing observations of life/culture provides a strategic goal that allows Indigenous Studies to remain a distinct field within the academy while also providing space for Indigenous scholars to tackle Settler Colonialism on multiple fronts while breaking out of the limits of cultural entrapment.

The sources examined across this literature review provide insight into Settler Colonialism, how post-secondary education has supported Settler Colonialism in North America, and how Indigenous Studies can navigate its presence within the academy. While progress has been made

in the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and content in the academy since the field's inception in the 60's, the direction of Indigenous Studies has been co-opted to prioritize the interests of the academy over the needs of the field. As evident throughout the history of Indigenous-Settler relations in North America, any progress gained by Indigenous Peoples must be circumvented to maintain the status quo. As an educational system that is both critical to the functioning of the state and controlled by stakeholders with vested interests in the maintenance of the status quo, the potential for progressive change that disrupts the power imbalances between the state and Indigenous nations is limited within the academy. This makes being an Indigenous academic complicated as our work can assist or challenge the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. Our social dislocation has set us up for exploitation - we can comply and find a degree of individual success that may improve the lives of a few people closest to us, but if we work towards systemic change that empowers more than a select few, we are then perceived as a threat and our social security within the academy is taken away or used to silence us into submission. The academy maintains the parasitic relationship between Indigenous Nations and the Settler state as Indigenous academics are manufactured to meet the needs of the host rather than ourselves and our nations.

Discussion

The literature review provides a framework to analyze my story and examine how Settler Colonialism influenced its outcomes. My engagement in critical self-reflexivity allows for strategic risk taking that engages microcosms of systemic issues with the intent of instilling progressive change while navigating the potential fallout that discussing faults within an institution may cause. I use my experience to establish how life paths are influenced and limited by the presence of Settler Colonialism and how the production of Indigenous graduates within Indigenous Studies has been strategically developed to assist in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. As an Indigenous Student pursuing a degree within Indigenous Studies, I must rationalize my existence and participation in a field that has an active role in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. I share and analyze my experience as a method to spur conversation around the disconnect between the ideals held by an institution or field and the reality of daily practice occurring within them. It is the intent of my work to give space to conversations that need to occur to facilitate systemic change.

Settler Colonialism's impact on the political agency of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy also needs to be considered within my analysis of my family's history. Since clan families are the core unit that upholds the functioning of our traditional government, the efforts of Settlers to separate and break down family ties worked to directly hinder the functioning of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. From the arrival of the Dutch, to the proxy war between Britain and France, followed by the establishment of the United States of America and Canada, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy adapted and made compromises while under duress. With the establishment of borders between nations and the normalization of European culture, law and expectations, Haudenosaunee families were dispossessed of land and dispersed across Canada and

the United States. The establishment of capitalism and the subsequent embrace of neoliberalism within North America has facilitated the disconnection between clan families and their participation and representation within traditional governance. Even without the duress caused through Settler Colonialism, Williams' (2018) retelling of the Great Law sets a precedence regarding the freedom of the individual to take care of their own matters. The duress exerted through Settler Colonialism co-opts the idea of freedom found within the Great Law and pressures individuals to participate within the Settler order to survive. From this perspective, exploring how each of our families have ended up where they are and hypothesize how our efforts to survive and our ideas for intervention are limited and influenced through the continued maintenance of Settler Colonialism is necessary.

My positionality is a byproduct of Settler Colonialism. My family's experiences were microcosms of the dynamics created through the establishment of the Canadian state and through its maintenance. Trauma passed down through my family amplified the social and economic issues facilitated through displacement and assimilation discussed by Carey and Silverstein (2020), Beenash (2017), Smith (2012), and Wolfe (2006) in RQ1. The Residential School system indoctrinated my great grandfather into Christianity, which he then enforced among his children later in life and would manifest in punitive measures. The murder of my grandfather at the hands of other Indigenous men in a bar in Detroit draws parallels with the patriarchy imposed on our communities where men were expected to become the breadwinners for their nuclear families while alcohol consumption became normalized to deal with trauma. The murder of my grandfather meant my mother grew up without a father present in her life. Mom would witness the cycle of abuse within the family as she grew up and imitate coping mechanisms that those around her used to deal with the pain they were experiencing. Mom turned away from drinking and smoking in her

late teens and stepped up to support her mother and her siblings. While this story can be used through confirmation bias to support the racialization of Indigenous Peoples (Moreton-Robinson, 2016b) and reinforce Settler normativity (Smith, Funaki and MacDonald, 2021) by presenting us as dependents and threats to society at large like Brunette-Debassige (2021), Cote-Meek (2014), Smith (2012), Stein (2018) and Whyte (2018) outline in RQ1, I argue that each of these outcomes would have been radically different if the intersecting pressures exerted through the maintenance of Settler Colonialism were not present.

The point here is that the trauma and current socioeconomic issues faced by Indigenous Peoples across Canada in some degree can be linked through state interference, public perception, and societal refusal to amend systems that amplify the conditions established throughout the history of Canada. My family's experience is not a unique experience - other Indigenous families may have experienced less harm while others have experienced worse than we did. Our experiences were not an exception to the rule but instead one of several possible outcomes influenced by state interference.

My mother and my father's relationship can also be linked to the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. They were partners for several years and chose to wait until after the Indian Act was amended to no longer discriminate on the basis of gender in April of 1985 to ensure that Mom would not lose status for marrying the person she loved. Dad's decision to go into law enforcement led to the relationship coming to an end as the worst aspects of my father were amplified by the job. This is more of a parallel to draw on between the historical role law enforcement has had in destabilizing Indigenous families. The economic consequences of my parent's divorce added another stressor to the issues already faced by my family. Our family van was repossessed and Mom became an Avon saleswoman to support our family. Mom fell back on Christianity to make

sense of what she was experiencing and find support to help her take care of her mother, myself, and my brother. While various factors can contribute to ending a relationship, the impact on our family replicated the desired outcomes of Settler Colonialism. My family was stretched to its limits to survive - Mom needed to find a job to support us, while she needed some sort of support or motivation to keep going. Where Christianity had been employed to eliminate our identity through our grandfather in Residential School, it also projected itself as an answer to life's problems. Our health issues also led us to become dependent on healthcare provided by the state - without it, Nanny would not have lived to 2004 and my mother would have passed away in 2017 when her body began to shut down. Settler Colonialism was crafted to facilitate outcomes like those my family faced - forced participation through duress undermined our social cohesion enough for the state to control the optics over our image in the eyes of the public and frame us as parasites to the rest of society like Whyte (2018) discuss in RQ1. In other words, each of our individual efforts to survive have been co-opted to justify our elimination. Duress allows the state to misrepresent our efforts to survive as consent for land dispossession and the maintenance of a capitalist economy which enables further exploitation of lands and peoples.

The impacts facilitated through Settler Colonialism also influenced my childhood and teenage years. While Mom tried to keep us involved in the community in Oshweken through child support services, summer programming and youth basketball, the physical distance between our home and the community combined with cultural differences led me to internalize the view that I was not part of this community in a recognizable way. While I could not name what I was experiencing at the time, I can now identify that the growing sense of not belonging in the community and my insecurity with my identity amplified the loneliness that I was experiencing with my mother having to work most of the time and my father being absent most of my life. In a

way, what I had internalized replicated the racialization of Indigenous Peoples at large within Canada as discussed in RQ1. Any exposure with Settler perspectives of Indigenous Peoples worked as confirmation bias to justify my loneliness.

When I began my post-academic journey at Six Nations Polytechnic, I was able to learn more about my history and connect my experience to the history of Settler Colonialism in Canada. I learned that my anger, grief and suicidality were common emotional responses to the maintenance of Settler Colonialism within our communities. In a way, I was able to see that I was not alone which allowed me to find purpose within the academy. Cote-Meek's (2014) interviews with Indigenous students reveal how the academy can be a site of cultural resurgence as it can be the first place an Indigenous student is presented with their history and information that can bring clarity to their lived experience. Cote-Meek's research also presents the academy as an opportunity for Indigenous students to gain skills that can be applied within their home communities and contribute to progressive change. I felt these impulses as I went into university - it felt like hope. It initially motivated me to continue to learn and participate in the political climate that was fostered at the time.

In retrospect, I think my interest in political advocacy in my first few years at McMaster University was grounded in personal development. I was learning more about myself and our history while also witnessing how Indigenous activists and academics were able to gain attention and influence across different sectors in society. What I internalized alongside other Indigenous students is what Simpson (2018) calls influencer activism in the wake of Idle No More. The echo chamber within the academy presented the politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2014) as the only valid method of being seen and heard in a meaningful way. Indigenous activists and politicians were uplifted in classrooms as the examples to follow in the era and spirit of reconciliation, while

the university implemented land acknowledgments and put Indigenous Peoples in symbolic positions of authority. As an Indigenous Student just learning about these topics and not having learned about the functioning and maintenance of Settler Colonialism, the interest in and promotion of reconciliation and newsworthy protests made it feel like progressive change was occurring and it was our place in Indigenous Studies to become its advocates. In hindsight, it seemed as if we were facilitating the exploitation of hope that has become prevalent within reconciliation discourse. While we advocated for and through the politics of recognition, the systemic issues within the department and classrooms remain unchanged. Our early attempts at advocacy assisted in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism rather than challenge it.

My family's experiences with the Indigenous Studies department pushed us further away from the designated Indigenous spaces on campus. While the infighting between Indigenous staff, faculty and students prevented our ability to form coalitions to speak to the latest movements popular at the time, it forced us to step back and reexamine our own participation in the pursuit to have voice and recognition on campus. It was through conflict that we were able to learn about the politics at play behind the symbolic actions and speech acts performed within and around the university. The nepotism in the provision of Indigenous student services and the accusations of lateral violence provided insight into the possibility of a discrepancy between the public image of the institution and how its daily operations were conducted within the Indigenous Studies Department. Pyke's observations on internalised oppression (2010) manifested within Indigenous Studies spaces where the functioning and reputation of the institution was prioritized over the inner workings of its Indigenous Studies Department and the harm it had been exerting through its daily operations. This became evident through the resolution of our formal complaint against the department - no changes were to be made on the record within the Indigenous Studies Department,

yet the stress exerted by the department in this process forced my mother and brother to quit their respective programs. This was not lateral violence - this was a hierarchical exertion of power on a group of people who did not have the same level of political agency and institutional support to protect themselves. The institution's ability to defend its operations at the expense of dividing Indigenous Students mirrors Settler moves to innocence (Tuck and Yang, 2012) as the Settler-led institution distanced itself from responsibility to address the conditions it had allowed to manifest among Indigenous Peoples they empowered and Indigenous Peoples attending their institution.

The issue with Indigenous students not being given priority in the hiring process for teaching assistant positions within Indigenous Studies compounded with the issues occurring among Indigenous students at McMaster University. While our issues with the Indigenous Studies put us at odds with other Indigenous students, staff and faculty, Settler students did not have to navigate the barriers that we experienced. This example provides insight into a microcosm of Settler Colonialism maintaining itself - Indigenous Peoples are pressured to vacate space - both physical and symbolic - while those spaces are to be made accessible and commodifiable to Settlers. Complacency with the status quo would have enabled our ability to be welcomed in these spaces, but this compromise would have allowed this exploitation to continue. This was a strategic compromise that had measurable concessions that revealed the hierarchical power imbalances normalized through Settler Colonialism - we were made out to be part of the problem and pressured to leave spaces designed for us in hopes that our advocacy would allow future Indigenous students to be supported to a greater degree than we were. This dynamic expects the advocate to compromise their own status for a chance that the institution will make changes - changes that may or may not address the issue that caused the initial complaints. This strategy mirrors state-led attempts at eliminating Indigenous rights through enfranchisement and the exploitation of hope in

improving quality of life through complacency and provides an example of the limits of engaging in the politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2014) within the academy.

While I stayed away from the Indigenous Studies department to avoid further conflict, my classrooms also became sites of discomfort. Beyond the conflict between my family and the department bleeding into these spaces, the shared space and ratio between Indigenous students and Settler students created discomforting educational spaces amplified by post-TRC interest generated by reconciliation discourse. In my first few years, I felt uneasy as it seemed like I knew less than everyone else around me about Indigenous topics or about being Indigenous. I learned as I continued in my program that there was a degree of performance at play within these classrooms that resulted in different educational experiences based on identity and willingness to play along with the politics facilitated in these spaces. Part of the expectations crafted in these environments are facilitated through the lack of supervision and group work prevalent in the courses I completed. From my experience, this dynamic creates undue stress for Indigenous students as there is an unspoken expectation for us to know the content and play the role of both teacher and student. Considering the Settler students' perspective, the desire to know and learn from Indigenous Students can lead to the replication of misinformation as the Indigenous student may not know the correct information. This can also lead to the students to conflict when disagreements arise. This complex dynamic requires attentive professors that can intervene and guide discussions to be productive and mitigate potential harm, but in my experience, this learning environment was rarely fostered. It was bizarre to see Settlers in class explaining to students how to properly insert "Indigenous voice" in their work in one instance while in others Indigenous students had to make up for the lack of the professor's or teaching assistant's presence. After spending years learning about land dispossession and the economic exclusion of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, it was

confusing to see comparable practices occur in classes where this content is taught. In other words, Settler Colonialism could be observed within these spaces as various social factors worked to privilege Settler participation and consumption while Indigenous students must make strategic decisions regarding their own success and wellbeing while learning about our community's history and practices that were used to punish our families in the past.

My experience with the MIHM Conference also makes more sense when using Settler Colonialism as a frame for analysis of my education and Indigenous Studies in the university. The hierarchy of expertise established through the academy as discussed by Brunette-Debassige (2021), Cote-Meek (2014b), Coulthard (2014), Moreton-Robinson (2016), Smith (2012a), and Stein (2018) in RQ2 was reinforced to silence questions and criticism of performance, platforming and spectacle that have been normalized within reconciliation discourse and found to be lacking in creating lasting change. The student organizers had no voice when addressing our concerns - the Indigenous academic at the head of the event spoke for them and dismissed the criticism, effectively ensuring that the conference would continue to exist and meet the expectations of the host institution. This can be seen as an extension of Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat's (2021) concerns with Indigenous-focused programming in partnership with universities that have economic interests at odds with the interests of the Indigenous communities they are working with or claiming to support.

In the case of the MIHM Conference, the university worked in tandem with the Canadian government and the health care sector to repackage tragedy into spectacle. With the inclusion of Minister Bennett and the use of tragedy to signal change and an end to racism in the healthcare system, the experience and involvement of a few select Indigenous voices were used to dispel criticism of Minister Bennett's prior record of denying the application of international human

rights in the protection of Indigenous Peoples within Canada through the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal as well as her effort in attempting to destroy student records from St. Mary's Indian Residential School to prevent further legal challenges raised by former students of the school. As students, we were made to be irrational while the Indigenous academic in charge ensured the platform for Minister Bennett was not destabilized. Where the establishment of the academy once worked to exclude Indigenous voices from the academic elite, this experience exposed me to the possibility that Settler Colonialism has adapted to allow Indigenous Peoples to become gatekeepers to protect the overall structure.

My experiences in graduate school also replicated the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. The course selection within the program signals the research interests of the institution in which the program is located. The combination of Indigenous Studies with Canadian Studies in Trent University reflects Brunette-Debassige's (2021) observations regarding the institution's need to maintain control over knowledge production to assist the operation of the state in RQ2. The combination of courses implies that Indigenous Studies is dependent on Canadian Studies to retain relevance. This becomes more apparent when considering the elective courses available to enroll to support what is covered in the core colloquium. In the course selection for the Indigenous Studies portion of the split graduate program, courses that explicitly keep Indigenous topics in focus were limited to engagement with Indigenous-Settler relations and Indigenous thought. Combined with the multicultural approach in the delivery of the core colloquium, there was little opportunity to discuss pressing modern issues within Indigenous Studies unless they had to also do with Indigenous-Settler relations and Indigenous thought within the limits of the contexts those courses engaged those topics. These topics and limits of engagement with them reinforce cultural entrapment as discussed in RQ2. Like the research produced in the era of salvage anthropology,

the limited scope of topics signals how Indigeneity is to be recognized and acknowledged in the eyes of the academy. Instead of drawing on overtly racist characterizations that were common in early anthropology, the promotion of acceptable displays of culture and obedient engagement with the state's efforts in reconciliation are heralded as the ideal displays of Indigeneity in our political climate.

By forcing Indigenous Studies to coexist with Canadian Studies, the integrity of Indigenous Studies is challenged as its relevance is dependent on its utility to Canadian Studies. This inadvertently sends the message that the institution is not prepared or willing to let Indigenous Studies exist as its own program, yet the Master's program itself is a prerequisite to the PhD Indigenous Studies program at Trent University. In a way, this combination of disciplines serves as a sieve for prospecting students and which ones will be able to move upward within the institution and produce Indigenous Studies content that reflects the interests of the institution. The combination of Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies reflects Canada's paternal relationship with Indigenous nations and their preoccupation with the surveillance and assimilation of Indigenous Peoples through education.

Combined with the core colloquium's content, these courses provided Settler students with agency to explore Indigenous Studies content to shape the learning environment to meet their educational expectations. Meanwhile, the Indigenous cohort had to make sense of the limited topics available to engage in and navigate the learning environment that became progressively hostile as the first term went on. Our advocacy for our own wellbeing led to decisive action that resolved immediate issues within the core colloquium, but systemic issues were also reinforced through the segregation of the class and the lack of transparency regarding steps taken with the racist professor beyond being asked to step back from teaching the entire cohort. The limits on

intellectual engagement signaled what kind of Indigenous academic was welcomed in the academy and we had to reckon with that expectation. Our efforts at exerting refusal (Brunette-Debassige, 2021; Smith, 2018; Simpson, 2014) allowed us to experience a safer learning environment, but Settler normativity was also allowed reinforce itself through the segregated classrooms as the removed Settler professors and students could engage their interests in problematic concepts without any intervention. Our experiences contradicted the narrative of progress and inclusion stemming from initiatives in response to the release of the TRC's final report.

The gatekeeping the program facilitated through both direct and indirect means can be compared to the era of voluntary enfranchisement discussed by Nichols (2014) as the benefits of institutional advancement are used to pressure Indigenous academics into conformity and complacency within the academy. Combined with the pressure of upholding responsibilities and navigating other circumstances at home that Fanshawe College (2021), Indspire (2018), Moreton-Robinson (2016), and Cote-Meek (2014) identify as barriers to Indigenous student success in the academy, the learning environments facilitated in the graduate program and throughout my undergraduate degree limit agency for Indigenous students while enabling the Settler cohort in an unequal distribution of transmission of knowledge and recognition.

My experience in graduate studies ran contrary to the goals and ideals behind the creation of Indigenous Studies as discussed in RQ3. Where Indigenous Studies was envisioned by its creators as an avenue to pursue social justice for Indigenous Peoples, the literature I examine and my own experience suggest that the field has been co-opted to assist the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. The recent calls to commit to interdisciplinarity by Tallbear (2014), Anderson (2016) and Moreton-Robinson (2016) were not reflected in the provision of the program as limits to potential engagement constrained Indigenous engagement and knowledge production. While

Andersen (2016), Simpson and Smith (2014), and Coulthard (2014) identify the necessity for Indigenous Studies to critically engage with whiteness and Settler Colonialism, Settler normativity and whiteness were engaged through the program in such a way that our Settler colleagues could distance themselves from being labelled a Settler while maintaining all of the privilege and power that their identity entails within the classroom. In other words, two separate constructs were developed to interact with - "Settlers" and "Indigenous Peoples" - not as accurate representations of lives and participants in existing structures of power, but as fictions to ascribe and distance each learner from their own social locations. This in turn asks the Indigenous student to give up their identity once again in the name of objectivity, where the Settler student is given another out to shirk responsibility in the pursuit and application of authentic, adequate redress. The asymmetrical exchange of knowledge, experience and agency mirrors the exploitative repurposing of Indigenous lives and land throughout the development and maintenance of the Settler state.

With more time for their own discussions, the normalization and entrenchment of Settler expectations is enacted. Similarly, Settler withdrawal into silence following critique allows those students to remain comfortable, not have to change, or be challenged, and thus also acts to uphold status quo in the classroom. This makes programs attractive in terms of Settler enrollment, retention, and other financial incentives for the university writ large by appealing to the majority. It also benefits administrators and institutional VIPs, lightning workload by not encountering direct pressure to make any changes to courses. Instead, I have seen how it has been left up to Indigenous students to advocate for adjustments to be able to access what should be basic course content and classroom facilitation. This dynamic has been extremely detrimental to me as an Indigenous student. I have mentioned emotional labour and advocacy, but that does not capture the impact of objectification experienced in the classroom. Indigenous students get essentialized, seen as static,

turned into a topic, into something gazed upon by settler students, and expected to perform in a very specific way.

I learned that a specific kind of Indigenous student is welcomed and protected in this environment while the other is pushed to the sidelines due to a set of intersecting factors that appear in the research explored in RQ2. The ideal Indigenous Student reflects the hyper-prioritization of culture found within the field, promoting and enabling cultural entrapment, which refers to the boundaries placed on the exploration of Indigeneity by the oppressor, the difficulty in breaking out of those boundaries, and our complicity in reinscribing them (Moreton-Robinson, 2016b). Cultural entrapment limits our ability to create change that is recognized as Indigenous by the academy. While the literature examined in the previous chapter clearly identifies issues that limit agency within Indigenous Studies and problematizes cultural entrapment, many of the sources double down on traditionalism in their advocacy for change. Further complicating these claims are the lack of tangible methodologies or ideas present to enact change on the basis of traditionalism. Instead of providing examples for future generations of Indigenous students to follow to continue to work towards improving our overall quality of life, authors like Simpson (2018) and Guinan (2016) invoke culture as the undefined answer to the problems facilitated through Settler Colonialism. Other authors like Hokowhitu (2016) and Kovach (2015) insist on refusing to engage with Western methodologies or Settler Colonialism at large and instead suggest that strategies that have yet to be identified and developed must instead take priority within Indigenous Studies research. Difference is signaled and essentialized within these perspectives as Western methodologies are generalized as wrong or unhelpful while Indigenous methodologies are liberatory, yet Indigenous methodologies are rarely defined or are identical to established Western methodologies like those found within anti-oppressive practice. This leaves Indigenous academics

like me in a position of being seen as somehow less "authentic" in many ways, while also being no less "Other" on the university campus. We are forced to replicate the limits of cultural entrapment or risk being labeled as rebellious by the institution and or as colonized by other Indigenous Peoples. Navigating Settler Colonialism within Indigenous Studies is thus predicated on our ability to break out of the constraints of cultural entrapment.

Effectively engaging Settler Colonialism requires utilizing decolonizing methodologies (Smith L., 2012a) that can be replicated or modified to suit the needs of future Indigenous academics to maintain collective momentum towards progressive change. Understanding how an individual is implicated and located within the structure of Settler Colonialism provides critical information about potential sites in which actions can be taken to interrupt the status quo (Smith L. , 2012a; Steinman, 2016). Barker (2012), Stein (2018), and Steinman (2016) discuss the hierarchical relationship that exists within solidarity movements that include Indigenous Peoples. Effective solidarity efforts acknowledge this hierarchical relationship and recognize that each person has a different role and responsibility to uphold due to where they are located within the hierarchy of Settler Colonialism (Stein, 2018; Steinman, 2016). While the pillars of Settler Colonialism negatively impact the lives of various groups of people, Settler Colonialism is first predicated on the removal of Indigenous lives from Indigenous lands. As Barker (2012) notes, Indigenous Peoples are willing to assist others in their efforts to address injustice if those that we are assisting return the favor by addressing our own oppression.

Due to Settler Colonialism's targeting of Indigenous lives, there needs to be understanding of the need for Indigenous leadership in the direction of interventions in Settler Colonialism. Since Settler Colonialism functions on the removal of power from Indigenous Peoples, decolonizing methodologies require an equitable redistribution of power in the creation of the tools and plans to

undermine the structure (Barker, 2012; Smith L., 2012a). This infers that there are times and places for Settlers to take a step back in their support of Indigenous Peoples as Indigenous Peoples take the lead (Smith L., 2012a; Steinman, 2016). There are complex ideas and lived experiences that can only be adequately addressed by Indigenous Peoples ourselves (Steinman, 2016). Interrupting Settler Colonialism requires a fundamental overhaul in how Settlers and Indigenous Peoples approach assisting one another – it requires a flexible nuance to cripple any given part of the structure.

Indigenous interventions in Settler Colonialism will inevitably emerge in unorthodox manners. Barker (2012), Carey and Silverstein (2020), Cote-Meek (2014b), Maracle (2017), Smith (2012a), Stein (2018), and Steinman (2016) identify in each of their respective works that the actions that Indigenous Peoples take in challenging Settler Colonialism do not always fit in to predefined and recognizable methods. Steinman's (2016) research utilizes multi-institutional politics to understand Indigenous resistance in relation to Settler Colonialism. Stein (2018) notes the need for Indigenous resistance to Settler Colonialism to embrace ideas of justice that are outside the definition of modern liberal frameworks of justice as these frameworks can only address the violence and injustice that they are willing to acknowledge. Indigenous interventions need to address Settler Colonialism on multiple fronts and with methods that do not replicate the harm that established the system in the first place.

Guerrilla tactics are then required to challenge the structure of Settler Colonialism. As Stein (2018) notes, subversive action needs to be taken by individuals within the institutions that maintain Settler Colonialism alongside the actions taken by the grassroots to maximize pressure towards positive, tangible change. Coordination here is key, and the respect and knowledge of knowing when to lead and when to support each other becomes influential in the outcome of the

concerted effort. Indigenous interventions in education can assist this process. Setinman (2016) identifies how Indigenous academics have pushed for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge across multiple fields of study within post-secondary institutions. Cote-Meek (2014b) also discusses alternative educational models in which the student's place in learning about the colonial past in North America is not distanced by an objective gaze, but instead incorporates each student by locating themselves in the history to come to a greater realization of what responsibilities they have in addressing colonization. While this has led to some changes, other Indigenous Peoples instead find value in focusing on their own community and refuse to be exploited by institutions and individuals that are seen to remain harmful to the community (Steinman, 2016). Each of these approaches, while not perfect, are still valid and contribute towards the disruption of Settler Colonialism.

The redirection and commitment of Indigenous Studies to assist Indigenous lives by directly addressing Settler Colonialism will unsettle the academy and generate risks to the physical space each Indigenous Studies department holds within academic institutions. Andersen's (2016) claim that Indigenous Studies needs to entrench itself in the academy by fortifying departmental status on university campuses will become more apparent as the field begins to effectively engage with systems of oppression that identify the roles that their host institutions are implicated in. As Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) discuss in their observations around the defunding of the Indigenous Studies department at Laurentian University, defunding programs and departments is not out of the realm of possibility when the academy considers how to respond to uncertainty posed by these programs. Indigenous Studies currently must exist between two extremes to avoid being defunded - the field must not become too generic and aimless in which its graduates have no career prospects after graduation; and the field must not become too radical to the point where institutions

are forced to make systemic changes to respond to the pressure that work from within Indigenous Studies begins to produce. Pedri-Spade and Pitawanakwat (2022) recall how the Canadian government began to reduce funding for Indigenous students after the height of radical activism in the 1980s when Indigenous graduates used their education to begin to effectively push legal challenges against the state. Indigenous Studies departments must then navigate these limitations while taking risks towards supporting radical progressive changes. Whereas defunding due to irrelevancy can be invoked in response to insular political pressure provoked by Indigenous Studies departments and programs, the shift towards reconciliation-era performative support from defunding programs/fields can be challenged more effectively if there is evidence that the department's efforts in gaining concessions to support Indigenous lives led to the defunding of said programs and departments.

The current state of Indigenous Studies can be compared to longstanding efforts by the Canadian state to assimilate Indigenous lives into the Canadian body politic. Like the early era of Residential Schooling in which Indigenous students were taught skills to fulfill menial work, the output of Indigenous Studies reflects the practice of gatekeeping Indigenous Peoples from contributing and participating in sectors of society which have agency to affect societal change from within its structure. Culture used as the primary lens for analysis through Indigenous Studies continues to render Indigenous lives irrelevant to discussions while the production of recognized Indigeneity allows for Settler academics to engage in profit from the field. Instead of exploring and addressing how Indigenous lives are the explicit targets of assimilative policy and practices in Canada, Indigenous Studies has been facilitating a degree of separation between Indigenous thought and Knowledges and living Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous thought and Knowledges are packaged to be commodified and replicated without the presence of actual Indigenous Peoples. As

the exploitation of Indigenous lands and life continues, the field's preoccupation with authenticity and cultural expression assists in the manufactured irrelevancy of Indigenous Peoples, therefore enabling future exploitation and ensuring that a renewable resource - methodology and knowledge - will exist despite the continued physical and ideological disappearance of Indigenous lives.

Indigenous Studies departments and research within the field must navigate the limitations set around its existence to begin to pursue radical progressive change. The desire for enabling what Brunette-Debassige (2021) calls Indigenous educational sovereignty can be further advocated for within the current limitations of the academy. Indigenous Peoples can benefit from greater access to post-secondary education and building critical capacity with relevant skills to lead interventions into the social issues created and maintained through Settler Colonialism. Reconciliation discourse allows for concessions to be pressured in easing access to the education and skills that can be used to participate successfully in Canadian society with the intent and ability to undermine the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. At the same time, advocates for Indigenous self-determination and self-governance need to build capacity to provide a viable, feasible alternative to the Canadian state. This should be an easy concession to achieve as it does not radically disrupt the status quo on its own. It does, however, put us closer to a crossroad where Indigenous Peoples can have greater agency to pursue our needs and wants. To reach that crossroad, Indigenous Studies needs to reassert its objectives as a field and its purpose within the academy. From a Haudenosaunee perspective, our political discourse and oral histories provide precedence for this intervention.

As the source of recognition and production of graduates in Indigenous Studies for the academy, these departments directly influence the outcome of each student and career prospects within the field itself. From a Haudenosaunee perspective, the retelling of the Great Law of Peace by Williams (2018) provides precedence for enacting strategic interventions into Settler

Colonialism's operation and maintenance through Indigenous Studies departments. The Great Law was created amongst war and oppression and the Peacemaker worked from within the nations that would become the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to create systemic change. This example of intervention serves as inspiration and validation for engagement within the social constructs that are actively harming us in the interest of mitigating and reducing that harm. Whereas the Peacemaker used the Circle wampum to represent the protection and belonging that would strengthen the Confederacy as a new form of governance (Williams, 2018, p. 317), the same principles can be invoked to justify the establishment and maintenance of systemic supports for Indigenous Peoples in the academy facilitated through Indigenous Studies departments. Like the roles and responsibilities between clan families established in the Great Law of Peace, relationality can be incorporated into policy to ensure the embracement and protection of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty within the institution they are located.

The White Roots of Peace and goal of ending cycles of violence can also be strategically applied to promote interdisciplinarity and solidarity between Indigenous Studies and allied/adjacent fields of study. As a possible site of intervention for Indigenous scholars that have experienced the loss and duress enabled through Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Studies departments can provide critical support that assists Indigenous and allied learners to achieve their educational goals and push toward greater systemic changes by building critical capacity through coalition building that is guided to address the maintenance of Settler Colonialism.

At the same time, Indigenous Studies departments provide a frontline for advocacy with the administration of the academy that finds precedence in the Great Law of Peace. As systems built on the dispossession and assimilation of Indigenous Peoples in North America, the administration of each institution wields power accumulated through the maintenance of Settler

Colonialism. Indigenous Studies departments allow for staff and faculty to use their hierarchical location within the academy to push for strategic changes that progress towards genuine decolonization. In the Great Law of Peace, the Peacemaker confronted Thadadaho with the belief that any given person was capable of rational thought and having a good mind. The Peacemaker worked with the power that Thadadaho wielded and reflected it within the creation of the Great Law of Peace. This part of the Great Law of Peace provides an example of strategic engagement with systems of power that have been established through exploitation and harm.

The challenge of applying interpretations of the lessons found within the Great Law of Peace to Indigenous Studies' relationship with the academy is dependent on how the field and its actors define a good mind and if they can build critical capacity to be heard and listened to by the academy. The Peacemaker was also dismissed by Tadadaho until he had gathered a critical mass of support to challenge the status quo controlled by Tadadaho. If Indigenous Studies can build capacity and successfully advocate for systemic changes within the operation of the academy, the field will begin to no longer assist in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. Each actor - student, staff and faculty - needs to have confidence that the risks of supporting systemic change can be mitigated to a manageable degree. Each of the nations demanded this of the Peacemaker as he sought their support - as nations under duress, they needed to ensure the safety of their communities if they were going to stop engaging in the status quo at the time. While the Peacemaker used reason and/or spiritual power to achieve those requests, Indigenous Studies will need to clearly articulate its support of its students, staff, and faculty as the field begins to focus on addressing Settler Colonialism. The policy reform and institutional commitments that could be made to reflect this change in direction will also need to reflect the importance of maintenance and renewal found within the Great Law of Peace and Haudenosaunee diplomacy in general. This

allows the field to maintain momentum and cohesion among its actors as these institutional commitments and their clear goals are repeated and reflected upon on a regular basis. Unlike reconciliation-based speech acts, decolonization-based speech acts would name the direct causes of systemic issues that are present in the academy and acknowledge the responsibility and agency Indigenous Studies has in addressing those issues.

My experiences at McMaster University and Trent University showed me how Indigenous Students have been manufactured into a resource for Settler consumption through Indigenous Studies. While the founding ideals of social justice provided a radical foundation for Indigenous Studies to build on in the 60's (Fontaine and McCaskill, 2022; Moreton-Robinson, 2016a; Smith, 2012; Morris, 1986), the field has been guided away from its inherently political origins. The lack of critical examination of racism and privilege within Indigenous Studies classrooms prevents genuine decolonization from occurring within the academy (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018; Andersen, 2016). The redirection of the field to explicitly engage the maintenance of Settler Colonialism through the prioritization of Indigenous lives would create new opportunities to affect radical progressive change from within the limits set by the academy. The privileging of Indigenous lives rather than generalized life and culture removes the distance between the academy and the individuals and communities impacted by its operations and provides a defining trait that makes Indigenous Studies stand out from other disciplines in the academy. While traditions and cultures have been engaged in ways that have constrained the field within the limits of cultural entrapment, they can also be utilized to pressure systemic changes that meet the challenges established and maintained through Settler Colonialism. This is the radical potential of the field - it can become a network that guides academics into positions in which they will be the most effective in disrupting and undermining the maintenance of Settler Colonialism.

Conclusion

What I learned, through the acuteness of personal choice and action, is that critical research can be emancipatory - or not - depending on where you want to take it (either way, it's political). (Kovach, 2015, p.45)

"One respondent, when asked what is the ideal outcome of an indigenization policy, wrote,

> *'Best possible outcome: an academic system which is sufficiently cognizant of the nature of social power and oppression to not repeat the horrors of the past. Most likely outcome: an annual intercultural powwow.'"* (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018, pg. 222).

My family and I have never had the opportunity to not engage with Settler Colonialism. We had and continue to need to engage with Settler Colonialism to meet basic needs. Keeping a roof over our head and the lights on while also addressing our compounded health issues has kept us in a multigenerational pursuit of survival like many other Indigenous Peoples. Meanwhile, the focus on privileging Indigenous Knowledges and Indigenous ways of knowing within Indigenous Studies has not provided a clear framework for myself, my family or other Indigenous Peoples with similar social circumstances to follow and enable ourselves to challenge the operation and maintenance of Settler Colonialism with the intent to contribute to the collective goal of its destruction. Instead, it has been developed to reinforce cultural entrapment (Moreton-Robinson, 2016) that strengthens racialization and creates unrealistic expectations that we must meet to be recognized as Indigenous by the state, Settler society, the academy, and the Indigenous actors that reinscribe these beliefs. Living within the limits of Settler Colonialism positions us as both witnesses and informants to observe and report on how the structure of Settler Colonialism

maintains itself. The challenge is then to speak to those experiences in ways that navigate an existing establishment that is invested in our erasure. We need to know what we are dealing with to prepare ourselves to propose feasible alternatives to move away from the status quo. This requires a fundamental redirection of Indigenous Studies to meet the immediacy of Indigenous lives.

My experience within the academy thus far has revealed a disconnect between the ideals of Indigenous Studies and the realities of daily operations within the academy. Through a cross-examination of my experience and relevant literature, I argue that this disconnect is manufactured to support a positive feedback loop in which Indigenous Peoples and Knowledges can be commodified to support the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. My experience provides insight into the production of a graduate in Indigenous Studies and how institutional processes and supports can fail Indigenous students who are pursuing decolonial-indigenization. The interpersonal dynamics I witnessed uphold capitalistic interests in securing the ideological utility of Indigenous Studies as a discipline and controlling the physical presence and autonomy of Indigenous Studies departments and programming.

Indigenous Studies' presence within post-secondary campuses renders visible the intellectual battlefront that we as Indigenous Peoples are forced to negotiate in the interest of survival. The shifting nature of Settler Colonialism dictates finding value in new resources to make them exploitable by the Settler majority. Where access and title to Indigenous lands is still the primary focus of Settler Colonialism, finding ways to control the narrative around Indigenous rights and existence become critically beneficial to the Settler Colonial project. The creation of an educational system that allows the Settler to be the primary benefactor of Indigenous Knowledges, history and culture also allows the Settler to define what it means to be Indigenous. Uncritically

developed Indigenous Studies Programs (ISP) that do not address this exploitative reality inadvertently recreate the conditions for the exploitation of Indigenous Peoples as Indigenous Knowledge is divorced from Indigenous lives. The manufactured irrelevancy of Indigenous lives enables the logic of elimination and serves to allow Settler Colonialism to reach its longstanding goal. Understanding the objectives of ISPs and their current operations will reveal Settler Colonialism' pervasiveness in their programming, revealing targets that can then be addressed to prevent further Indigenous erasure.

The pressures exerted on Indigenous and allied academics to drop out or move away from Indigenous Studies compounds with the legacy of oppression that has facilitated social and economic insecurity for Indigenous Peoples and allowed Settlers to prosper on stolen land. While Settler professors are given space to replicate oppression and maintain Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Studies professors and administrators must keep students in line. Conflict within Indigenous Studies departments can be framed through the racialization regarding civil disobedience and infighting, which allows the academy to distance itself from these programs and remove them should they become a liability for the home institution. The systemic issues enabled through the academy's conflict of interest in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism are not to be addressed as they challenge the core operation of each institution. Considering the impacts of this disconnect with the interest of Settler Colonialism in mind, the contradictions and differences in student experience and agency reflects the state's longstanding efforts to control and disappear Indigenous Peoples from public consciousness. As long as Indigenous Studies prioritizes the needs of the academy over the goals of the field, the field will remain exploitable by Settlers and made increasingly irrelevant to Indigenous Peoples. The contradictions between institutional speech acts and daily practice in the academy must be addressed directly to reveal the intellectual limits of

engagement and contestation possible within Indigenous Studies. As a smokescreen that protects systemic issues, the contradictions between Indigenous Studies' aspirations, the academy's speech acts, and their production of graduates provide the first sites of intervention for Indigenous Studies to critically address through its existence.

The language used to justify adequate interventions needs to be applied in proper context and go beyond pandering to what Simpson and Smith (2014) articulate as a politics of recognition. Politics of recognition assume that systemic issues are permanent features of society and are thus impossible to address, so the pursuit of minor changes that provide limited improvements take priority (Simpson & Smith, 2014). The invocation of decolonization has been a prominent example of this dynamic as it has been used by Indigenous academics such as Fontaine and McCaskill (2022) and Simpson (2017) to argue for intellectual separatism and focusing on vaguely defined notions of cultural revitalization to address systemic issues. Meanwhile, institutions invoke this rhetoric to maintain the optics of progressive change while refusing to address systemic issues in their day-to-day operations, engaging in what Brunette-Debassige called a "politics of distraction" (Brunette-Debassige, 2021, p. 48), which takes advantage of the politics of recognition through the misdirection of educational goals within Indigenous Studies. Clarity and focus create utility within our work for other Indigenous Peoples and ally scholars by limiting Settler Colonialism's ability to co-opt and render our interests irrelevant.

While I carry a degree of privilege that many other Indigenous Peoples do not have, I also have experienced a degree of loss and harm that positions me in a place of unbelonging. It is a place where I cannot see myself in what I am told is my community or alongside the academics in the field I am pursuing a degree in. At the beginning of my academic journey, it felt as if there could be a place for me to gain skills and contribute towards facilitating systemic change. Now,

after reflecting on my own experiences, I feel lost. I have been taught to have hope that change is on the way and that my education will prepare me to be a part of that change, but the experiences I have been exposed to in the process of becoming a graduate student in Indigenous Studies makes me question my purpose and presence within the academy. As I reflect on the passing of my mother after having spent the last three years taking her to dialysis and also seeing many of my community members hooked up to machines to stay alive, I wonder how much work within Indigenous Studies translates to improving our lives outside of the academy. The preoccupation with traditional culture in Indigenous Studies reinscribes othering through the validation of a subsection of Indigeneity, while reconciliation discourse facilitates further exploitation of what value our culture provides elsewhere. Meanwhile, Indigenous Peoples that do not fit into the expectations maintained through cultural entrapment are left to their own devices to find ways to resist being assimilated through irrelevancy. To use the symbolism of the Guswentah, I feel like I have fallen in the river between the two ships and neither vessel has stopped to bring myself and everyone else left in their wake back aboard. I am forced to make a choice as an individual to sink or swim and there is little else to work with to stay afloat, let alone find a way out of this situation. Regardless, this location forces me to tread water, understand that I am not the only person in this situation, and use what privilege I have to assist us to get out of it.

What I have learned is that Indigenous Studies can become a frontline to reveal and challenge the operation and maintenance of Settler Colonialism. With the intent to work towards a field and institutional space committed to naming and addressing Settler Colonialism openly without fear of reprisal from the academy, Indigenous Studies can invest in providing more support for Indigenous Students to build capacity within its departments. Ensuring that the targets of Settler Colonialism within the academy have a critical mass of transferable skills and knowledge

effectively disrupts efforts to limit our agency and erase our relevance within our own lands. Where reconciliation initiatives keep the hierarchy of Settler Colonialism intact, the prioritization of Indigenous lives with a critical focus on Indigenous Students serves as a radical equitable intervention in the redistribution of power within the academy. While there is a movement to seek change through alternatives to the academy, the validity of such movements and the relevancy of the field itself can be tested through the commitment to prioritize Indigenous lives within Indigenous Studies. Haudenosaunee political thought provides the impetus to seek change through the established systems before considering further radical changes. Considering the possibilities of radical imagination (Karuka, 2017) may provide insight should the academy prove itself to be fully invested in the maintenance of Settler Colonialism. Future research thus needs to test the limits of cultural entrapment within the academy and consider how Indigenous Studies can assist Indigenous Students in a greater capacity and to a greater degree than what currently exists. This would require understanding the needs of Indigenous Students that access Indigenous Student Services and engaging those that do not access existing services. Through the pursuit of the reprioritization of Indigenous lives through the assistance of incoming and current Indigenous students with the intent of building capacity within the field and its departments, we can discover if the academy is willing to extend its rafters and allow for the growth of critical engagement with Settler Colonialism through Indigenous Studies or if we are not to break free from the limits of cultural entrapment and disrupt the status quo.

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Appendices

Appendix A: 2021 Indigenous Health Conference - poster schedule with speakers from Eventbrite page

Notice to Readers

Author: Evan Jamieson-Eckel
Title: Navigating Erasure: Exploring the Limits and Potential of Indigenous Studies within the Settler Colonial Academy through Haudenosaunee Critical Self Reflexivity

Content Removal Notice:
Appendix B pages 105 to 116 have been removed due to copyright.

Description:
Lacombe, M. & Lackenbauer, W. (2020). CSID 5000: Frost Centre Core Colloquium [Course Syllabus]. Trent University.

Appendix C: Screenshots on October 10, 2023 of Trent University CANADIAN STUDIES & INDIGENOUS STUDIES M.A. Program Options Thesis Based Option and Course-Based Option

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Program Options

Thesis Based Option and Course-Based Option

The M.A. in Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies offers students two options to complete the degree: a one-year course- and research-based M.A. or a two-year thesis-based M.A.

Masters candidates can choose one of the following two options:

1. Thesis-based M.A.(normally to be completed within 24 months)

- 2.0 credits including CSID 5000Y, "Core Colloquium", and two other graduate half-credit elective courses from CSID offerings.
- A written and defended thesis on an approved topic. Theses will be supervised by a committee consisting of a primary supervisor, who must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member of the Frost Centre, and two other committee members from the Frost Centre. Students are required to pass an oral defence of the thesis conducted by the committee and an external examiner.

2. Course-based M.A.(normally to be completed within 12 months)

To be completed within 12 months, this degree requires the same amount of work as the two year option, albeit structured differently. The workload is compressed into one calendar year. Students who select this option must be prepared for the intensive period of study it demands.

- 3.0 credits including CSID 5000Y, "Core Colloquium", and four other graduate half-credit elective courses from CSID offerings.
- A written major research paper, to be examined by a supervisor and one other Frost faculty member, from a different academic unit or program from the

CANADIAN STUDIES & INDIGENOUS STUDIES M.A.   WELCOME   THE EXPERIENCE   PROGRAM   FACULTY & RESEARCH   COMMUNITY   CONTACT

supervisor. Further details are available in the posted policies.

Elective Courses:
CSID 5101H – Graduate seminar in Indigenous thought
CSID 5171H – Indigenous Settler Relations
CSID 5202H – Culture, heritage & the arts
CSID 5210H – Perspectives on the Canadian North
CSID 5301H – Policy, economy & the state
CSID 5401H – Environment & place
CSID 5501H – Identities & social movements
CSID 5701H – Feminist, gender & women's studies

Part-time students in the thesis-based MA are expected to complete their course requirements in eighteen months. Part-time students in the course-based MA are expected to complete their course requirements in two years.

All students must attain at least a B+/77% in their work. Additional requirements appropriate to the candidate's field may be specified by the supervisory committee.

For more information, consult the Trent University Graduate Academic Calendar or contact the Frost Centre Administrative Assistant frostcentre@trentu.ca

The two-year thesis M.A. option has proven to be an excellent preparation for doctoral studies — Frost Centre M.A. graduates can be found excelling in Ph.D. programs across the country with many of them having noteworthy scholarship and publication records even before completing their doctoral programs.

Students interested in integrating community-based education and research into their degree program should visit the Trent Centre for Community Research

THE CAMPAIGN FOR
MOMENTOUS CHANGE
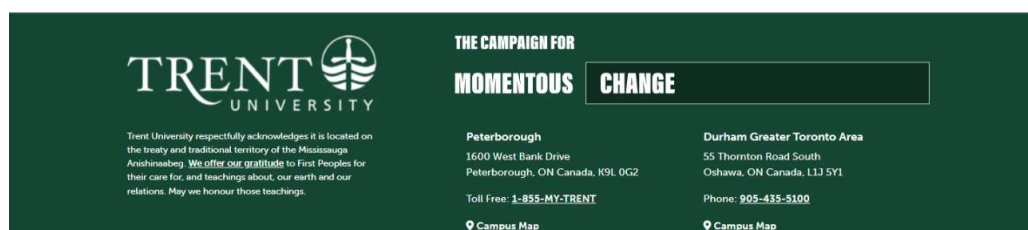
Trent University respectfully acknowledges it is located on the treaty and traditional territory of the Mississauga Anishinaabeg. We offer our gratitude to First Peoples for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.

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Campus Map

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55 Thornton Road South
Oshawa, ON Canada, L1J 5Y1
Phone: 905-435-5100
Campus Map

Appendix E: Pride Toronto, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and Trent University land acknowledgements.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT
What is that? Let us journey together...

Take a moment to connect with the land that you are currently standing on.

Now introduce yourself spiritually; build a relationship with Mother Earth that provides for all our relations.

No matter what part of Mother Earth our family originates from, we all have a relationship and responsibility to the land.

Let's build a healthy relationship together.

CHI MIIGWECH

Pride

Source:www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/pride-toronto-indigenous-land-acknowledgement-1.5188127

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is located on Indigenous ancestral lands on Treaty One Territory. The Red River Valley is also the birthplace of the Métis. We acknowledge that the water in the Museum comes from Shoal Lake and are grateful to the First Nations that care for that water.

Source: humanrights.ca

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on the treaty and traditional territory of the Mississauga Anishnaabeg.

We offer our gratitude to the First Nations for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations.

May we honour those teachings.

Source: www.trentu.ca/we-offer-our-gratitude