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DE-SETTLERING OURSELVES: CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

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Abstract: This article explores the complexities of settler relations within the context of an academic conference hosted by Indigenous hosts and inclusive of Indigenous ceremony and content. The authors explore a range of questions related to their settler identities as participants in the conference. How are we as settlers to engage in a conference entitled "CYC in Action", held at an institution constructed on Indigenous land, and dedicated to the promulgation of Western thought and culture? How are we to encounter the ghosts of those Indigenous peoples destroyed and removed from this very geography? How are we to be positioned in relation to our Indigenous colleagues who are reclaiming fragments of this colonized space through ceremony, buildings, and the introduction of sacred objects and totems? Should we adopt the studied neutrality of scholars, the moral high ground of activists, or the inclusive posture of the "good" settler? Do we find ways to be comfortable in the space? Is it an option to seek to be comfortable? Is our "Whiteness" as settlers our passport to enter Indigenous space and claim a right to be there as "friends"? Under the contested relation of a conference taking place on stolen lands that includes both the thieves and the survivors of the theft, who is the host and who determines the conditions of inclusion?

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It is with humility and some degree of ambivalence that we have engaged in this writing. The three of us attended the recent Child and Youth Care (CYC) in Action conference at the University of Victoria, and we found ourselves both moved and troubled by the experience. We were moved by the clear focus on justice and equity in the conference content and by the centrality given to Indigenous leadership. We were also taken with the number of women leading events, workshops, and activities, as well as the plenary presentation on Afro-Canadian CYC.

We were ambivalent about how we were to manage ourselves respectfully as settlers in relation to the vital work being done by our Indigenous colleagues and colleagues of color, whose work has been so marginalized in the CYC literature and so little acknowledged in our professional conversations, conferences, and meetings. It was humbling to be reminded of the legacy of theft (land and culture) that has been our settler legacy thus far, and to seriously entertain the possibility of decolonization through land repatriation and the institution of sovereign relations with Indigenous peoples. Similarly, we were reminded of the necessity of reparations for the horrors of slavery and colonialism to people of color, as well as the imperative to provide ever-increasing spaces for non-cisgendered voices and women's ways of knowing.

These reminders are powerful, but for us, in the end, they are insufficient. It is useful to be humbled, to be reminded of our accountability to our colonial past and present practices, and to strive to step aside to make room for our non-settler colleagues. However, to the degree our thoughts and actions skim along the surface — so that we are more concerned with being polite, saying the right things, reiterating the right ceremonial greetings without acknowledging (if only to ourselves) how the irony of our very presence on Indigenous land saturates our experience — then our actions do little towards actual decolonization or even the de-settling of our cultural and social positioning (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

We would suggest that, as settlers, attending the Indigenous ceremonies at the beginning and ending of the conference, accepting invitations to join in the dancing and drumming and to witness sacred blessings, listening to Indigenous elders speak to us, and learning to identify our status by the land we occupy is to start in the middle of a highly painful and contested set of relations. It is to skip to the part where we, as settlers, appear to belong here, as though we could personally bypass the still-extant historical effects of our people on this land and on our Indigenous friends and colleagues. We settlers are quick to forget, and quick to insist on being forgiven. It is as though we want to be the "good" settlers and not be associated with the "bad" settlers, to leave our history at the door and join with our Indigenous colleagues in moving forward on an equal footing.

However, we would argue that there is no equal footing to be found and that it is offensive and dangerous to forget that there can be no quick reconciliation, indeed, no reconciliation at all, without a massive reconfiguration of the North American settler colonial regimes. It is convenient to think that if we are polite and respectful, we can get a pass for the lives we live at the daily

expense of our Indigenous friends and colleagues. For us, we want to acknowledge that there is no pass, just spaces of truce in which settlers and Indigenous peoples can open dialogues of possible reconciliation.

Perhaps we as settlers need to ask the settler equivalent of the question posed by Jen Deerinwater (2017). She asked herself "what it means to be a Native Woman in White, colonized, feminist spaces" (para. 1). We might wonder, "What does it mean to be a settler in Native spaces?" This question is not one we have seen asked very often, if at all. Ironically, just as Whiteness can be understood as an all-pervasive but invisible identity (McIntosh, 1988), being a settler can allow for an assumed centrality of identity that ignores Indigenous contexts except as an interesting (perhaps even compelling) historical and cultural anomaly (Arvin et al., 2013). Our presence on the land is assumed to be natural and uncontested. Our struggle for equity and justice is founded in our citizenship in a settler state that can control its borders and manage the landmass within which it exists. The nation-states of Canada and the United States of America confer on us rights and privileges to enter a space, claim it as our own, and do with it what we will according to the laws and mandates that are the colonial legacy of "disappear[ing] the Indigenous peoples that are there" (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 12).

How are we as settlers to engage in a conference entitled "CYC in Action", one that was held at an institution constructed on Indigenous land and dedicated to the promulgation of Western thought and culture? How are we to encounter the ghosts of those Indigenous peoples destroyed and removed from this very geography? How are we to be positioned in relation to our Indigenous colleagues who are reclaiming fragments of this colonized space through ceremony, buildings, and the introduction of sacred objects and totems? Should we adopt the studied neutrality of scholars, the moral high ground of activists, or the inclusive posture of the "good" settler? Do we find ways to be comfortable in the space? Is it an option to seek to be comfortable? Is our "Whiteness" as settlers our passport to enter Indigenous space and claim a right to be there as a "friend"? Under the contested relation of a conference taking place on stolen lands that includes both the thieves and the survivors of the theft, who is the host and who determines the conditions of inclusion?

As progressive scholars with publications, pedagogy, activism, and, of course, conference presentations on feminism, radical youth work, anti-capitalism, anti-racism, human rights, and so on, how are we to see our work in the context of Indigenous space? Certainly, there has been a significant and cogent critique of settler discourses that focus on obtaining more rights and privileges for settler women, LGBTQ people, young people, and even non-Indigenous people of color. Often, these struggles occur within a context that naturalizes the fact that they occur on occupied land. It is profoundly problematic that these struggles are founded on a colonial logic that obscures, ignores, and absents the foundational struggle for sovereignty for people indigenous to this land. As Arvin and her colleagues (2013) put it:

> Indigenous communities' concerns are often not about achieving formal equality or civil rights within a nation-state, but instead achieving substantial independence

> from a Western nation-state — independence decided on their terms. The feminist concerns of white women, women of color, and Indigenous women thus often differ and conflict with one another. In other words, within the context of land and settler colonialism, the issues facing Indigenous women, as inseparable from the issues facing Indigenous peoples as a whole, are resolved via decolonization and sovereignty, not (just) parity. (p. 10)

If we, as settlers, are to honor the space reclaimed (however provisionally) within the confines of an academic conference, what is our obligation to that reclamation? How loudly do we speak? How much knowledge do we claim? How do we honor our inclusion in this effort at ceremonial decolonization of that most Western of institutions, the university? In the edifice of the institution, are there spaces, cracks, interstices, where the weeds that open capacities for desettlering can take root? Can we find a way to respectfully step beyond the inside and the outside of the ceremonial circle without inadvertently exercising the colonial mandate so deeply woven into our very subjectivity? Are we capable of the kind of sober restraint necessary?

In their work on breaking the spell of capitalist sorcery, Stengers and Pignarre (2011) pointed out "the necessity of casting the circle, of creating the closed space where the forces [we] have a vital need for can be convoked" (p. 138). They were discussing the possibility of neo-pagan witchcraft having a role in challenging and undoing the pernicious effects of global capitalism, which puts us in mind of two provocations and worries.

In the first, we wonder whether the minor traditions of European peoples that were eviscerated and dispersed by the colonial project, such as older women's ways of knowing, have a role to play in desettling our colonial modes of subjectivity. That is to say, are there traditions and cultural heritages that existed alongside and even contested the colonial imperatives of Rome, the Ottoman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the British empire, and American imperialism? We are thinking of the tribal societies of pre-Roman Europe that revolted and overthrew the Roman empire. Those tribal peoples are referred to by Western history as barbarians who destroyed the "civilization" of the Roman Empire, a "civilization" premised in sheer brutality, enslavement, and exploitation of all the people they encountered (Frederici, 2005). From the 12th to the 15th century, tribal peoples fought and struggled against the inheritors of the Roman legacy, the church and the feudal state, in an ongoing series of revolts and heresies in which hundreds of thousands died resisting the imposition of an emerging colonial logic. Of this fight for lived sovereignty across the land we now know as Europe, Western history recounts two stunning defeats at the hands of the inheritors of the Roman legacy: the victims of the inquisition and the thousands of women who were burned as witches (Federici, 2005). We wonder if the emergence of immanent feminist modes of spirituality might well be residual echoes of an alternative non-colonial logic that might offer a mode of desettlering. Of course, there are many traps here, including a narcissistic investment in stepping aside from our colonial accountabilities, of saying, "See — we were also oppressed, we have also suffered cultural and physical genocide in our history as a people, we are just like you."

This perversity of thought is far too prevalent and must be resisted and contested at every turn. However, if we as settlers are to challenge the logic of our colonial inheritance, we are skeptical that it can be done by the adoption of anyone else's cultural legacy. We are not the inheritors of Indigenous wisdom. It does not belong to us. If it is shared with us, it should serve as a guidepost back to our own neglected and forgotten pre- and anti-colonial knowing. Without a doubt, the road to actual decolonization and desettlering is, as Noel Ignatiev and John Garvey (2007) said, the destruction of the White race, we need to eliminate ourselves as White. To do that, we must research diligently all of the lineages that betray our Whiteness. In the vernacular of Stengers and Pignarre (2011), perhaps this is the circle we need to cast, the closed space that excludes our own Whiteness. But not through denial of our privilege and accountability; instead, through an investigation of the ways in which we can go beyond who we imagine ourselves to be.

The second provocation and worry about casting a circle of closed space concerns the geo-existential space of the conference. We wonder about the circles within circles being cast. Who is included and who is excluded from the multiplicity of circles being cast in the opening and closing, as well as in the individual workshops and the conversations between and after? The casting of the circle as evoked by Stengers and Pignarre (2011) seeks to produce a closed space.

Indeed, it seemed to us that the Indigenous conveners of the conference deployed the various ceremonies interspersed from beginning to end to make every effort to cast a sacred circle of care, and paid diligent attention to the forces being convened by all who attended, inclusive of the legacies of land, ancestors, and culture. It was to some degree a closed space, in the sense of making every effort to exclude colonial, racist, misogynist, and homophobic interjections. To this end, the conveners centered and valorized a multiplicity of forums for the narratives and practices of multiple intersecting groups: Indigenous peoples; feminists; queer, critical, and post-humanist theorists; and Afro-Canadians and other people of color, as well as other liberatory and desettlering and decolonizing voices. The circle cast created a space "where the forces [we] have a vital need for can be convoked" (Stengers & Pignarre, 2011, p. 138).

However, it was also a semipermeable circle, into which well-intentioned settlers brought large and small gestures of privilege and disrespect, both in workshops and private conversations. In every instance that we were aware of, these racist, misogynist, or homophobic comments or practices were not intentionally hurtful. These settlers were what one of us called "wanna be good guys" (Skott-Myhre, 2018), unconsciously expressing the ongoing centrality of Whiteness that continues to permeate the field of CYC. That said, these relatively small explosions of privileged behavior within the overall context of the powerful circle cast threw White shrapnel[1] that had outsized painful effects. On witnessing such inadvertent attacks, we understood the call that was made in the plenary session for all-Black spaces (Jean Daniel, 2019) and the desire for all-female, all-Indigenous, and all-queer circles to be cast exclusive of "wanna be good guys".

[1] We are referencing the work on gender shrapnel by Ellen Mayock (2016).

Without a doubt, the conference was a powerful intervention that was an overt refusal of the erasure of Indigenous and other marginalized and disenfranchised voices, but there remains the question of who is including whom (Arvin et al., 2013). Even within a circle cast with sacred care and attention, settler logic can still emerge in which the settler sees their attendance as a gesture of goodwill through which they are including the "other" in their field of expertise and knowledge. It is almost as though through their participation the settler sanctions and gives permission for the conference to proceed. Conversely, we suppose that there were settlers who, by their absence, felt they could minimize or diminish the casting of the conference circle as a significant intervention in the field of CYC, as an overtly political space of decolonization and liberatory practice.

For us, the question of the circle as a space of inclusion or exclusion returns us to the question of how we are to handle ourselves in Indigenous spaces. Are we polite guests who support our colleagues as Indigenous, women, queer, and people of color? Or, do we engage in proactive activities that strive to desettle our practices and identities? Arvin and her colleagues (2013) challenge us to "craft alliance(s) that directly address differences" (p. 19). They ask us, as settlers, to seriously think about our reasons and purposes for working with Indigenous communities. They suggest that our Indigenous colleagues also take into account the complexity of bringing settlers into their communities of practice. There is undoubtedly trepidation (or should be) on both sides, but there is far more potential for damage and re-traumatization for our Indigenous colleagues than for the settlers.

It is in that context that we want to acknowledge the fear that can lead settlers to less than full engagement with the processes of desettlering and decolonization (Kouri & Skott-Myhre, 2016). Of course, there is the ever-present threat of losing land and levels of social and cultural privilege. However, even among those for whom these threats seem well worth the price there is an existential fear and shame that can negatively impact our capacity to engage fully as allies and even friends. As Stengers and Pignarre (2011) said:

> Fright may happen when we realise that despite our tolerance, our remorse, our guilt, we haven't changed all that much. We continue to take up all the space, to occupy all the places. When we ask our victims to pardon us, we like to think of them as "ours", as if the people that we had destroyed were without history, innocent and peaceful lambs, as if we had been the only active powers in a world which merely provides us with the decor for our own crimes. Of course, decolonisation has largely been sabotaged by the putting into place of new modes of exploitation, but how short-sighted and simplistic the slogans that we credited as "words of truth" were, idealising the victims and refusing to take into account anything other than our own guilt: the right to self-determination or the struggle for national liberation. Forgetting in the process that terms like "right", "nation" even "liberation" are ours, always ours. And finding it normal that our truths should be taken up by those who had been our victims. How do we make room for others? (p. 63)

Stengers and Pignarre (2011) go on to suggest that we cannot answer our fear with guilt. As Western subjects, guilt is an ever-present retreat from accountability. Instead, they tell us that "fright calls for creation" (p. 63). We need to learn new habits and routines and abandon our familiar modes of practice and knowledge. To do this, we need to understand how colonial modes of power have shaped us. The process is not terminated in the past nor even in the present. Not only do systems of power connect across axes of identity, but they are also conjugated over time. As Eve Tuck, an Unangax[2] scholar, and her colleague Wayne Yang (2012) argued, the violence of settler colonialism "is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation" (p. 5). Lorenzo Veracini (2008) argued that settler disavowal of Indigenous histories is used to discredit Indigenous political rights and sovereignty and anachronistically position Indigenous peoples as entering settler space after the onset of colonization. In a later work, Veracini (2011) called this disavowal of Indigenous presence and history a "non-encounter" that structures settler colonialism. As a structure, he added, settler colonialism erases the distinction between colony and metropole and works toward self-fulfillment as a settled state. A decolonized account of time and history, however, is about the persistence of Indigenous life, land, and culture through time. It is also an account that calls colonialism the genocide it was and continues to be.

As settlers, it is up to us to question our neocolonial governments and challenge their claims on legitimacy, which are based on false accounts of temporal priority (Kouri, 2015). More importantly, it is also up to us to attend to Indigenous peoples' accounts of time and recognize the legitimacy of the political systems that have endured attempts at colonial erasure. While this accounting of our set of relations as settlers calls us into the present moment with its implications for possible futures, we can only truly access the creative capacities of desettlering and decolonization to the degree that we leave behind Western teleological notions of progress and historical imperatives. It is essential to understand that when we enter the circle cast as Indigenous space, we are entering a space of radical temporal alterity. Time is not the same.

In her examination of former prime minister Steven Harper's June 2008 "apology", Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2016a) discussed the temporality of recognition, arguing that recognition of historical injustice leaves open the innocence or rightness of the past by making the truth of atrocity a revelation in the present. In a speech that many called a non-apology, Harper indicated that the residential school system was a mistake, but did not name the genocide that transpired or any criminal or political intent.

Far from redressing settler colonialism, such forms of recognition obfuscate historical harms and also obscure the ongoing dispossession and violence of colonialism. Simpson (2017) criticized the government's position for dismissing historical injustice as a fait accompli, and argues that settler narratives enact "notions of a fixed past and settled present" (p. 18). She instead theorized refusal as a longstanding form of Indigenous resistance and politics. According to Simpson

[2] Tuck is an enrolled member of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Alaska.

(2016b), refusal "maintains and produces sociality through time" (p. 329) and is acutely aware of the conditions of production:

> Refusal holds on to a truth, structures this truth as stance through time, as its own structure and comingling with the force of presumed and inevitable disappearance and operates as the revenge of consent — the consent to these conditions, to the interpretation that this was fair, and the ongoing sense that this is all over with. (p. 330)

Refusal is, therefore, an intervention into the narratives and politics of the past and present that aims to open a "sociality through time" that is not bound to the settler regime.

Joanne Barker (2018) explained that the attempt to set things right in "the future is *never* about the future" (p. 215, italics in original) but instead is about reclaiming the past and present. It is about Indigenous people reclaiming the lands upon which their histories are told, retold, and made meaningful. Barker criticized the imperial and democratic utopic vision of a perfected future that can be achieved through eradicating the remaining terror and anarchy of the present. Barker has held out an alternative, Indigenous vision of a future woven with the "alterity of Indigenous reckonings of territorial and by (non)human relational interdependence now" (p. 215). Tuck and Yang (2016) go further to explain that "justice is a colonial temporality, always desired and deferred, and delimited by the timeframes of modern colonizing states as well as the self-historicizing, self-perpetuating futurities of their nations" (p. 6).

How do we, as settlers, listen to these Indigenous voices, these refusals, and these objections to our lives, our attempts at recognition, and our very presence? As majoritarian people, not only are our engagements with alternative forms of knowledge laden with ethical dilemmas around respectful engagement, appropriation, and issues of identity, but the very consciousness-raising that makes oppression visible to us often comes at the expense of others. These problems are particularly fraught in Indigenous–settler relations as Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and symbols are increasingly fetishized and commodified. As settlers hoping to bring about material change, we require new forms of listening, taking action, and relating to Indigenous peoples and cultures.

Roderick Haig-Brown (2010) contrasted deep learning with appropriation, arguing that the former takes years of immersive education in Indigenous contexts. Such deep learning is in line with cultural protocols, done through lasting relationship, and connected to the places where the knowledge was generated and lives. Appropriation, by contrast, is mediated by power imbalances, takes without permission, is dislocated from context, and shows no recognition for context, intellectual or cultural property, or continuity. If we are to seriously engage in the circles cast as Indigenous space, we would argue that it is essential to enact a settler ethics that is not appropriative, imitative, or disconnected, but instead accountable and respectful.

For us to connect with the creativity that exceeds our fright, it is necessary to be honest and vulnerable in our failures. To go beyond fear is to articulate a politicized praxis of working with the affects of failure, crisis, and engaging the unknown. As we reflect on the conference, our omissions of our accountabilities to the Indigenous space become more visible. In our panel on radical youthwork, we can now see there was a tendency towards inclusion, rather than acknowledgment. In the workshops and papers that we gave, we have to wonder how accountable we were to the circle cast. Our reflections on these things have driven our attempts here to articulate our humility and our celebration of what happened there.

As we think about the conference and our participation, we acknowledge the profound impact of Western scholarship on our work. At times, that impact is detrimental to our processes of desettlering our work. While as settlers it can be important to reconfigure Western concepts and ideas to undo colonial patterns of thought without leaning too heavily on Indigenous literature and scholarship, settler ethics are also about how we attend to Indigenous and other marginalized voices. Kathy Snow (2018) explained that researching Indigenous contexts as a settler ally requires clarity of intention, motivation, processes, and roles. Snow also emphasized the importance of being able to sit with discomfort yet continue to commit time, energy, and resources to sustain allyship in the face of resistance. While deep self-reflection is invaluable to personal transformation, it is the messy and complicated work of embodied allyship that produces webs of living relationships capable of resistance and change.

For us, settler ethics is an ethical, embodied, affective, relational, and localized process of relating and acting with Indigenous peoples, with other settlers, and with the conditions of active colonialism that sustain our current world order. In Indigenous spaces such as the conference, this requires that we actually "arrive". The concept of arrival, which is derived from the CYC literature (Garfat & Fulcher, 2011; Krueger, 2007), calls on us to be fully present in mind and body in the encounter with others. Being fully present is a challenging and complex set of practices that requires that we be attentive to how we feel in our bodies, how we are affected by and affect others, and the thoughts that arise as we act and feel. It calls on us to be immanently attentive and responsive to the circle of care, resistance, and concrete material change that is the imperative of living allyship.

We acknowledge that we enter Indigenous spaces composed of elements and locations. To overcome our fright and engage in ethical, creative desettlering includes taking our own locations as White cis male settler, White cis female settler, and mixed-race cis male settler as the starting point for an analysis of our subjectivities, actions, and thoughts. This is work that should precede entry into Indigenous spaces. It should be a kind of taking inventory of our colonial subjectivity so that we know where it all is and how it works before we inadvertently trouble Indigenous spaces with our colonial ambivalences and messy sets of guilt, shame, reactionary acts, and settler-splaining. In short, we propose that before engaging in the circle cast by our Indigenous colleagues, we attempt to undo the overlay of colonialism that continues to wedge contradictions between ourselves and the horizon of an ethical life. Our learnings from working with young people in

various contexts can inform us about the importance of arriving into people's lives. We might remind ourselves how those young people that we have engaged in our work have taught us how colonialism continues to cause harm in their lives. We can learn as settlers to reflect on how we continue to be complicit in perpetuating the current world order in our work. If we pay attention, the lived space of our work with young people is saturated with racialized, gendered, and colonial experiences that perpetuate a system we as settlers continue to benefit from. While these experiences can bring guilt and shame, they also bring heightened awareness and ethical incitement that can move us to creativity over fear.

The process of ethical desettlering calls for ongoing self-reflexivity that goes well beyond Western narcissistic forms of self-care or self-actualization. We are concerned that our tendency as Western settlers includes hundreds of years of assuming the world and other peoples were there for our benefit. We have exploited and appropriated without mercy species, other humans, and geographies. It is far too easy for us to fall into patterns that call for others to care for us in our interactions with Indigenous colleagues, people of color, and women. We need to reverse the polarity. We do not require self-care as much as we require learning to care for all of us. We do not require self-actualization as much as we require actualizing an equitable world for all persons, species, and lands. Some would argue that to do this, we need to care for ourselves and become all we can be as evolved human beings. We would argue that these ideas are saturated with a peculiar variety of Western psychosis that holds us aside from the rest of the world and isolates us within the individual body in painful loneliness and isolation. Entering the circle cast as Indigenous space as desperately lonely and isolated individuals is likely to skew all our relations into complexities of emotional and cultural exploitation.

To prepare ourselves as Western settler subjects to enter Indigenous conference space, we might well consider scrutinizing the ways that our Westernized settler identity informs our research and how our affects and emotions, interests, and investments are involved in knowledge generation and action. Of course, this would be easier and probably more effective if we as settlers engaged in forums where we collectively worked on the processes of desettlering.

However, the very premise of the problem, which is rooted in toxic masculinist rugged individualism, can preclude such possibilities. Indeed, attempting such scrutiny can alienate us from our settler peers and bring about backlash and even blacklisting within segments of the CYC community. We regard this as a predictable outcome of confronting our shame. Despite this, we would suggest that we not turn to Indigenous people, women, or people of color for support and healing. It is our work to do, and we have already taken so much.

We, as settlers, must find ways to discuss, account for, disrupt, analyze, unsettle, and challenge settler identities. We need to work toward new ways that CYC settlers can get together to explore and amplify how we are challenged to undo our heteronormative, racial, class, and colonial attachments and, through our work, open onto new practices of supervision, solidarity, and peer collaboration (Kouri & Smith, 2016; Reynolds, 2010a). It is our work as settlers to find ways to

connect our lines of creative desettlering with the circles cast by our non-settler colleagues and friends.

Carrie Gaffney (2016) argued that allyship begins with identity as a means of locating power and standing with people or groups who are experiencing oppression. This "standing with", however, requires commitments to complex, ongoing processes that resist institutional power, silence, and violence. It means holding one another accountable for ensuring material change for colonized peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012) and opening doors only to get out of the way so that Indigenous people might determine their processes, responses, and paths of transformation. Desettlering includes showing up, making connections between different forms of oppression, supporting resistance and resurgence, and working with other settler people on our forms of witnessing, being present, taking action when appropriate, and representing our relationships. Indeed, as Karlee Fellner and colleagues (2016) have noted, "a key difference in ethical professional practice between non-Indigenous and Indigenous counsellors is that the latter observe the same traditional ethics both inside and outside the office" (p. 138). Living a life outside our places of CYC work and research that is congruent with our ethics is precisely a learning we might carry with us as settler CYC workers.

To prepare to enter Indigenous spaces, we might well investigate how our work might be grounded in principles and processes whereby settlers become accountable for their embodied subjectivity within reiterations of colonialism. After years of working in Indigenous academic and practice contexts, we have become aware of how the axioms of colonialism are so ingrained that they can perpetuate themselves even when settlers are seeking to be allies. One example, particular to our conference reflections, is how settlers can advance their academic and practice careers by knowing and speaking about Indigenous issues. With the privileges of access to higher education and safer spaces for critical debates, White settlers quickly advance their academic knowledge of Indigenous issues and can reiterate the language of decolonization. With the power and privilege of access to publishing in academic journals, settlers often have greater access to speaking about Indigenous issues than Indigenous people themselves. The reiteration of colonialism is nearly impossible to prevent, particularly in hyper-colonized spaces of privilege like research universities and professional practice settings. We need to be always mindful and name how colonialism and capitalism will appropriate even efforts to contest them.

Reynolds (2010b) talks about imperfect allies, noting that there will always be mistakes when allies attempt to buffer the effects of power and to be mindful of the space that those in power take up. It is up to allies to work with other people in power and prevent the continual usurpation and misuse of power and space, thereby making greater space for those who are oppressed to speak and seek justice. Practices of solidarity and building cultures of critique are two ways in which Reynolds inspires us to think about how our conversations with young people and each other can be more fully connected with justice movements.

We have much to learn from allyship, activist, and solidarity literature and practice. Deep, self-reflective, collective reflection and community action are necessary aspects of undoing settler comfort and privilege as we consider entering Indigenous space. Smith et al. (2016) explained that allies have two main characteristics. First, they desire to support social justice and eliminate inequalities by promoting the rights of nondominant groups. Second, they offer support through meaningful relationships with those who welcome their support, and they show accountability to those people. Allyship is aspirational and a designation that is given rather than claimed. Smith and colleagues warn that settlers must avoid appropriation, taking leadership, interfering, seeking emotional support, or having expectations. By focusing on our undoing of and intervening in the reiteration of colonial subjectivity, we might well begin to stop interfering in the spaces and processes of Indigenous decolonization.

Leanne Simpson (2011), Nishnaabeg writer, academic, and musician, explains that ideas of social movements or political mobilization are inadequate in theorizing Indigenous resistance and resurgence because they are founded on Western epistemology and ignore Indigenous politics and culture. She explains that "at their core, Indigenous political movements contest the very foundation of the Canadian state in its current expression, while most theories of group politics and social movements take the state for granted" (p. 16). Simpson explains, in line with Audra Simpson's refusal, that what is needed is not settler sanction, recognition, funding, or "a friendly colonial political climate" (p. 17). What is needed are Indigenous Elders, languages, lands, and vision.

In light of this statement, we reiterate that settlers need to develop our own practices and spaces out of the way of such a movement, to work at undoing our systems of capture and domination, and to move our people to a place of readiness for accountability and transformation. We need to critique reconciliation talk that absolves us of the difficult work of unmaking ourselves, our state, and our globalized markets. Simpson (2016b) suggests that interrogations of violence be directed to the perpetrators rather than the victims of harm. As settlers, we must take up this work and analyze how we have perpetrated, and continue to perpetuate, colonial violence through our institutions, policies, and practices. We must make the workings of our settler subjectivities, states, and institutions visible and take action to change the conditions of everyday life for Indigenous and racialized peoples. Moreover, we must call other majoritarian people into the practice of naming and transforming ourselves.

As we reflect on the complexities of the conference in all its richness and ambivalence for us as settlers, we want to end with an acknowledgement. One of the central persons casting the circle that was the conference was Shanne McCaffrey, who cohosted with Martin Brokenleg. Throughout the conference, Shanne brought us continually back to the importance of ceremony and sacred investment in our collective effort together. She did this with both grace and humor. Her work and thought as an Indigenous scholar and practitioner have informed us deeply and profoundly as we have reflected on the circle she cast at the conference. One of us (Scott Kouri) had the opportunity

to speak at length with Shanne during his undergraduate and graduate studies, and we would like to close with her reflections.

Shanne lives a Cree and Buddhist philosophy, and she brings this approach into her work, openly upholding the practical importance of spirituality in CYC theory and practice. Pertinent to our work of desettlering and our sense of the loss of European spiritual immanent practice, Shanne acknowledges the traumas of spiritual devaluation and the undermining of Indigenous healing practices and cosmology through colonization. Shanne sees Indigenous cultural and spiritual revitalization as necessary for healing and good relations on this land. She demonstrates how spiritual and cultural healing is necessary for all children, youth, families, and communities that are affected by colonization, including Indigenous peoples, settlers, and people with other relations to this land. Spiritual and cultural revitalization was a central organizing principle of the conference and a key element in casting the circle that gave rise to this writing.

Also directly relevant to our writings here about the importance of affect to the process of desettlering is Shanne's teaching about the importance of working with people's suffering. She explains that suffering is related to attachment to temporary things — ego, place, ideals, environments, and contexts. If we can release attachment, we can move with greater strength, and lessening attachment to the ego can lead to the growth of humility. Furthermore, Shanne teaches that everyone experiences suffering, and if suffering is worked with in a good way, it can often become medicine that people can use to help others. Cree and Buddhist teachings say that pain and suffering "come to settle in" our spirit as medicine. This attentiveness to suffering as medicine means that, in CYC, conversations about personal, familial, and community suffering and healing need to have a more prominent place. Shanne stresses the need for collaboration in regard to transforming suffering into healing, both within the academy and between academics and community members. She also expressed a hope to see more conversations about suffering, healing, and spirituality in CYC.

In our reflections about the conference, we have attempted to stress the importance of locating and situating ourselves as settlers. In Shanne's teaching, she shared what she called her blanket metaphor. Blankets, she said, are sacred for many Indigenous peoples, as well as for people of many other cultures. Shanne used the idea of a blanket to conceptualize a person's identity as part of a historical and cultural context. She explained that we all walk with a blanket, a tapestry that is a rich symbol of our historical and cultural context. Some people you meet, Shanne said, understand your blanket and its symbols and therefore understand your story; some people, however, do not see your blanket. According to Shanne, for CYC practitioners as people providing care to others, the crucial questions are, "How can we work to see your blankets? How can we work as interpreters of blankets?" Similarly, in our teaching, if we do not recognize students' strengths, then we do not see their blankets, their spirits, or their stories. In our reflections here we are suggesting that for settlers to enter Indigenous space, we need to learn to see our blankets as well as the blankets of others with clear and sober eyes.

Finally, Shanne brings to her work the Cree laws connected to having good relations with other humans, plants, and animals. Her teachings focused on how and why one does not do harm, and how to go about specific kinds of takings in a good way when they are necessary. She described the strong connection she feels between Buddhist and Cree teachings regarding living in mutual relationships with other humans, plants, trees, animals, the land, earth, and water. Shanne privileged teachings that are shared orally, and she explained the importance of being with people and taking the time to teach in a personal way.

It is on this last point that we complete our reflection. Our attendance at this conference and its circle-casting of what we have termed Indigenous space has opened an entire ecology of relationships and practice. It is our hope that these kinds of engagements open us to the world as it is: a rich, vibrant set of mutual relations infinite in capacity for worlds to come and founded in worlds we sometimes fail to see. We would argue that our settler ways blind us in ways that are toxic to ourselves and others. This writing is a call to our fellow settlers to join us in working together to be able to arrive in other circles as real allies to shift the world in actuality through sovereign relations and land reparation.

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