
TRACING THE MOTHERLINE
Earth Elders, Decolonising Worldview,
and Planetary Futurity

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Abstract

On Earth Day in 1970, at the birth of the global environmental movement, it looked like there was hope. Almost half a century later, as we contemplate the Anthropocene, it appears that our hope may have been misplaced. Year by year, the socioecological issues afflicting our planet have only worsened under the direction of westernised corporate and governmental powers. Perhaps it is time for a culture change?

This thesis proposes that the contemporary socioecological concerns humans share regarding our collective future hinges upon a renewal of our Earth ethic. I take indigenous and traditional voices seriously, and in doing so, collate some very old advice for *how to live well* with each other and Earth. Following their advice, I recommend that humans without secure cultural and ecological context apprentice to Elder guidance, as offered from their multiple, yet emplaced, positions with/in indigenous and traditional Earth minded land bases and cultures. Many Elders recommend that humans reindigenise to Earth in specifically emplaced ways, by committing to some worldview concepts that are very different from those that westernised peoples are accustomed to. Traditional and indigenous Elders, teachings, and elements of worldview conceive of the human being as a responsive, moral, intuitive, perceptive, and instinctual being that is a part of a complex web of kincentric relations. Respectful engagement with Elder wisdom, long ignored, is our first step.

In pursuing planetary futurity, I engage with these voices in order to trace a path toward a renewed Earth community. Traditional human values of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, redistribution, and reverence, as based upon relationships, can be reignited as guiding principles in our communities, but only if we engage in processes of unlearning and remembering who we are as humans. To this end, I outline a framework for worldview transformation, as a component of necessary decolonisation and rematriation processes.

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Authors Note on Style and Form

The first-person plural - we, our, and us – is a deliberate element of this thesis that reflects three theoretical-political positions. Firstly, this is the language of *planetarity*, as forwarded by postcolonial Indian scholar, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2003). It signals the necessity to figure ourselves as planetary – rather than continental, global, or worldly – and to adopt planet-talk (another framing of Spivak's strategic essentialism, 1993, 1999) as a reminder of our collective inhabitancy as planetary creatures in an undivided nature. Secondly, first-person plural is an indigenous convention, and its use is recommended in the shift from an *I*-hermeneutic to a *we*-hermeneutic as the foundation for expressing the relational character of Earth communities. The *we*-hermeneutic expresses resistance to the reliance on subject-object noun relations and the individualistic tone determined by the English language, as argued by scholar of Native American and Indigenous Studies, Jace Weaver (1998). Thirdly, universal (but not reductionist) species-level language follows the *new tribalism* found in the spiritual activism of the late Chicana writer and theorist, Gloria Anzaldúa (2002). Anzaldúa adopted this stance to overcome the oppressive assumptions linked to markers of physical appearance, location, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and so on, and argued for a commonality which does not ignore (or render irrelevant) specific identities. She attempts to make evident the conditions within which they are, or are not, useful.

Whilst a common and historical academic convention has been to employ first-person singular or third-person, many of the authors and speakers I have cited articulate their ideas in first-person plural. In accordance with this, third-person gender-binary language such as 'he-his' and 'she-hers' are only used as shorthand following the more specific identifiers of name, field of expertise, location, tribal self-designation, or other details that are relevant to situate the voice of the speaker and their particular points of view. First-person plural signifies *inclusive*, rather than exclusive, collective human kinship across geographical and temporal boundaries, and is an expression of opposition against a linguistic monoculture in which pronoun use choice is an extension of political projects which have been historically oppressive.¹ Consider, for example, the oppressively constructed use of

¹ As noted by Seneca author Barbara Alice Mann, not all iterations of first person singular pronoun carry the same individualistic tendencies that are assumed when employed in the English language: "the Eastern Woodlands Seneca have a collective 'I,' 's/he,' and 'you' . . . [t]hat is, is I am speaking and say 'I,'" I mean all my living relatives and my ancestors; 's/he' means all his/her living relatives and ancestors; and 'you,' means all your living relatives and ancestors" (Four Arrows 2018).

pronouns to infer gender ascriptions. These are often assumptions that are based upon voice or physical appearance (Gustafsson Sendén *et al.* 2015). Such requirements of the English language are not representative of ‘natural’ categories, but have a history that might be usefully explored (Corbeill 2015). It is my hope that the subject-object relationship and noun-centricity required by the English language is disrupted by the presence of this ‘we’, and that this radically inclusive strategy may help erase the possibility for readers to make the distinction that *this does not apply to me*.

It is a given that ‘we,’ as a planetary community, do not all situate ourselves in similar relation to the topics covered in this thesis; therefore, I do not assume that each and *every* instance of ‘we,’ ‘our,’ and ‘us,’ will resonate with the peculiarity of one’s own position as reader. First-person plural is, nonetheless, a consciously used marker of the responsibilities I think we share as human beings and for the future of Earth.

My second note on style and form is specific to my transcription of all personal identifiers or affiliations to particular communities, kin groups, or landbases. Decolonisation must attend to proper names, however the use of historical materials does not always make this possible. When referring to source materials, I use a range of identifiers which may appear as multiple signifiers for a single community of peoples. For instance, I have employed the terms First Nations, Aboriginal, Indian, American, Indian, Amerindian, Indigenous Native American, Inupiaq, Inupiat, Inuit, Alaskan, and so forth, *as they have appeared* in original source material. All terms are in reference to those with long-term ancestry within the land mass divided into the North Canadian Arctic region, Canada, and the Americas (referred to by indigenous peoples as Turtle Island) and who identify, or have been identified, under any of these terms.

Where examples are from various local traditions are discussed, due deference is extended to the integrity of that particular tradition. However, the correct and self-determined terms of designation are often obscured or neglected as an outcome of biases, ignorance, or assumptions held by scholarly researchers. Distortion also occurs in translations. Consider, for example, that a single individual could be referred to (correctly and/or incorrectly) *in scholarship* as Ojibwe, Ojibwa, Ojibway, Chippewa, Anishinaabekwe, Anishinabe, Anishinaabe, Anishinaabeg, or as part of the Algonquian language group, among others, yet English spellings and grammatical uses are often misidentifying, and the same individual could self-identify differently, or in multiple ways.

Where there are adequate numbers of indigenous scholars publishing in the subject areas I have researched (for instance, in Aotearoa, where I am based) the correct identifiers are easily accessible. Where there is a lengthy tradition of second-order representation (such as in

ethnographies on the greater Americas), the correct self-identifiers are difficult to ascertain retrospectively. Names connote power relations, and with the use of historical materials for this thesis I must add the disclaimer that any transcription is faithful to source, with self-designation of identification added if this has been possible to discern. I take full responsibility for any errors in representation.

Moreover, I follow the late Oglala Lakota Native American activist, Russell Means (2008), in his statement on this during his famous July 1980 speech to the Black Hills International Survival Gathering in the Black Hills of South Dakota. At this event, he stated that all terms which name Native American peoples, other than precise tribal names, are European in origin, and are therefore insufficient and inaccurate. This same rubric applies to all written and oral material I have gathered from other traditional ecological Earth-keepers or indigenous communities in parts of the world beyond Turtle Island. All italics appear as used in source, and I italicise words in all local or indigenous languages. Although in Aotearoa, local English convention does not italicise Māori words that have entered common use, I have italicised *all* words derived from more-than-English languages and provided context in the interests of writing for an international audience. In addition, I have chosen not to capitalise either indigenous or western in this thesis in order to emphasise the point that peoples, places, and historical circumstances involve proper names that ought to be used, and drawing sharp divisions through capitalisation of either increases the power differential so in need of critique.

Where I refer to ‘traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented communities’ I am not generalising, but referring to those communities who identify Earth minded ecologies to be central to their traditions, and have related practices. Not all such communities self-identify as indigenous, but do hold traditions of Earth practices, whilst others prefer the word indigenous as their marker of identity. Not all traditional ecological communities are indigenous, and not all indigenous communities are ecologically-oriented communities. The examples I have gathered in this work derive primarily (although not exclusively) from communities who have self-identified as holders of this ecological framework, link their worldview with peacemaking practices and the future of the planet, and recognise it as possessing continuity with other traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented cultural complexes that exceed temporal and geographical separations. I have specified context for the use of the phrase ‘traditional and indigenous ecological’ throughout this thesis.

The third note on style is with regard to the extensive use of footnotes. I have employed these to give biographical information about a person or to clarify information about a word, movement,

idea, group of people (or provide other necessary clarifications). A footnote has also been used where I have decided that there is additional support or context needed for a point or quotation, most especially when the point could be considered contentious. In some instances, information in the footnotes provide an avenue for further pedagogical exploration of a key theme or idea that I investigated as a part of the research process, but decided not to elaborate upon within the thesis. I include them in order to provide openings for those readers who are interested in a particular idea as a directive towards suitable sources, and to demonstrate the depth of my research. Lastly, as the argument I present in this thesis has a political dimension and diverges from a number of conventional scholarly assumptions, inferences, and disciplinary norms, I also determined that it was prudent to demonstrate the depth of my research and understanding in a comprehensive manner that is appropriate to pursuance of a doctoral degree.

The fourth note on style and form is specific to the citation style. Whenever traditional or indigenous knowledge, comments, or other information has been orally transmitted to a scholar, author, or journalist (or which is referred to in audiovisual material) I have cited this in-text using the format (in Authors Name). I have also tracked all second-order citations in published materials to first-order (primary) sources wherever possible, and included these in the reference list.

I have not formatted this thesis using APA citation style. In this, I have taken a direct lead from Irish-Cherokee scholar Wahinkpe Topa (Four Arrows), who has initiated a symbolic protest against using the APA (American Psychological Association) style in his most recent book (2016c).² He argues:

In keeping with Indigenous research approaches that are decolonizing and aware of neoliberal and unethical systems, I have abandoned my 30-year use of APA citations in protest of its support for the CIA's illegal torture policies (p. 23:fn.21).

As the dominance this style has over the work of academic authors warrants further consideration, I join Four Arrows in this political and ethical objection (see Ackerman 2015). By way of compromise, and as I need to provide a degree of familiarity in citation style for the purposes of an academic work

² Four Arrows is the English translation of the name given to Professor Don Trent Jacobs by the Oglala Lakota People in a sacred relative-making ceremony. Four Arrows is of Irish-Cherokee heritage, is a Lakota Sun Dancer and the former Dean of Education at Oglala Lakota College on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. His early work is published under the name Don Trent Jacobs.

(and as reference software limits my choice of base styles), I have significantly modified a non-APA base style, altering and personalising the design, and augmenting with footnotes.

A final point on citation: many audiovisual, newspaper, e-books, e-journals, and online sources do not have pagination. Where pagination or paragraphing is given, I have included this information; however, many direct quotations I use end simply with (*Author Year*) or (*Year*). I mention this here to clarify that the absence of page numbers in these instances is neither error, nor omission.

Please note: Indigenous/First Nations/Aboriginal Australians need to be aware that this thesis contains the names of prominent Aboriginal people who are no longer living. I have chosen to include these names because those to whom the names refer have significant legacies, whereby their respectful inclusion in this work was considered to be essential and in keeping with their life's work.

Giving Thanks

I offer my first breath of gratitude to those who have held and keep holding the wisdom of the blue-green planet Earth that carries us all. To those individuals and communities whose knowledges have been denied, eradicated, suppressed, unrecognised, misrepresented, dismissed, and not taken seriously, by the generations of scholars within the academies of higher learning, and by the everyday people of the world's nations, this work is dedicated to you.

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My gratitude is also extended to those who did not support me – in this endeavour, or in general. I thank those who did not believe in me, who forgot or ignored our mutual obligations as humans-in-relation, who withheld assistance in times of need, and who sometimes deliberately conceived of obstacles, often seemingly insurmountable, for me to overcome. Just as the stone in the river becomes smoother through turbulence and its story becomes infinitely more interesting, this resistance has added innumerable and valuable layers to my experience in life, despite its acquisition via discomfort. Thank you for the contrast: for reminding me to remain open and to be without fear, to be tenacious, to speak my mind and live in accordance with my values, to remember courage in the face of adversity, and, for whatever the reasons, known only to you, contributing what you had to give. Thank you for teaching me, even if it was ultimately to take a different turn. Without you, also, this work would not be what it is.

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I offer this work to our collective Elders and to our future generations (to whom these ideas properly belong), on behalf of a world we share with the countless other beautiful beings who aren't interested in writing theses for humans, some of whom grace this dwelling place with their presence, and remind me always of our deep connections with myriad species other than our own. I am grateful.

Un-Customary Greetings

It is traditional in a wide range of cultural contexts to engage in customary greeting protocols, as a way of self-situating according to kin relationships (including relations with place, ancestors, other beings, and traditional practices). These greeting practices allow people, ancestors, and places in common to be identified, they demonstrate transparency in terms of one's own motivations, and establish trust and reciprocity that begins from a place of recognition, and mutual respect. There are protocols attached to the conduct of both the visitor and the host which attract degrees of formality dependent on the context. The time it takes is a part of getting to know one another, without which communications from the heart are unlikely to be able to proceed.

Likewise, the protocols in social scientific research, which have been influenced progressively by feminist and critical race theory in the last three decades (e.g. Coburn *et al.* 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2004, 2015; Stanley, L. and Wise 1983, 1993), also require a degree of 'positioning' with respect to the research, largely to demonstrate that a researcher is aware that there is no objective stance possible regarding the process, nor topic/subject of research.

I have to admit that I have always struggled to perform in both of these tasks, the first for the reasons I will outline below, and the second, because my 'identity statements' as linked with biological sex, gender, level of ableness, physical appearance, ethnic background, religious beliefs, sexuality, historical and geographical location, social class, status, political allegiance, and so forth, are just not all that meaningful as distinct identity markers. Nor do they 'say' much about me that is conclusive, especially with respect to the biases I may, or may not, hold. Who I am has been shaped by intense personal effort, most recently through education, to *undo* as many of the identities ascribed to me as possible, and make treaties with the ones I cannot change. To complicate matters, those markers that appear salient in the context of my ascribed and relational identities with others, however fictionalised, are remarkably impervious to change.

I came into this world within what used to be called 'the Antipodes' – the foot of the 'British Empire' – in a postcolony called Aotearoa New Zealand. I was born to second generation immigrants with neither a distinct, nor singular, identity. I was raised predominantly by my grandparents through the 1970s and 1980s (a period of great social change), in an extended family setting in the central migrant area of Auckland: a bustling and colourful city. My grandfather was part Fijian, raised by his Swedish grandfather in Fiji and according to turn of the century values. My grandfather never

reflected on ‘race’ in any way; in fact, he denied having any Fijian blood at all until sometime in the late 1980s.

My grandmother grew up with her father on a farm in Australia, where she mothered her two younger siblings from the age of nine. My grandmother typically woke at four am to work the farm and do the housework, after which she rode a horse to school, returned, cooked dinner for her father and brothers, and put the children to bed. It was an era when Aboriginal Australian peoples were commonly shot for ‘loitering’. Living as she did in a farming community without much progressive thought, my grandmother was raised to be vigilantly racist. My grandfather, ashamed of his heritage, told her he was ‘dark Scots’.

My dark-haired and olive skinned mother, born shortly after my grandparents’ migration to Aotearoa, married a tall, blonde, Viking-like youth and (I think, unconsciously and unwittingly) immediately produced me: the successfully ‘whitened’ postcolonial project – a blonde-haired, blue-eyed child. My parents have a different story – a very short and violent one. The only relevant part is that it ended with me arriving at my grandparents’ house, aged about eighteen months, alongside my very young and brutally beaten mother. My grandmother took over my immediate care and I nestled into a different life with my grandparents, punctuated with recursion between home and Australia, between mother and grandparents, each time to a different state and a different school.

My grandparents home was a place of many people, constant noise, constant conflict, utter confusion, and (as is often the case in unexamined postcolonial chaos) emotional violence and alcohol abuse. Thankfully, home was directly opposite a beautiful public library and, in the absence of siblings, this was the place where I continually found answers to the questions that could not be answered at home. This history, challenging as it was, is a blessing I carry with enormous gratitude.

Of course, none of this is appropriate in the context of a customary greeting. I was born *already colonised*. I possess no clear blood memory or place to which I might *whakapapa* – to use a genealogical word borrowed from the indigenous Māori Nations of my country.³ I have no such word that can mean anything close to the same thing and the English language is only tongue I know.

³ *Whakapapa* is a Māori term that is used to refer to kinship ties, as both a noun (my whakapapa, or family tree) and a verb or process (as in, I whakapapa to that river). In Aotearoa New Zealand (unlike many other countries) indigenous words and concepts are used cross-culturally, with respect, as recognition of indigenous sovereign status (despite the fact that New Zealand is still annexed to the British Crown), and as recognition of *tangata whenua*, which refers to Māori guardianship of the land. Furthermore, the use of te reo Māori is encouraged and taught in schools. The adoption of appropriate words, such as the use of Māori greetings, is not considered to be cultural appropriation.

The long processes of migration, westernisation, and assimilation at work in my own ancestry have converted, distorted, and erased all histories that might have aided me in knowing to whom, and to where, I belong. Concepts such as authenticity, tradition, and bloodlines are twice-signified by discomfort *and* a sense of liberation. I know only that I lack any ancestral memory of a relationship with place, and have no knowledge of how to find, nor kill, nor be properly respectful toward, my own food.

What would I say if I were asked to introduce myself in a traditional manner? The story of my grandparents represents just one strand of my history, but which strand defines my ethnicity? Thanks to three separate lines of ancestry, all unrelated, I look Swedish, but I am not; nor am I Fijian, Australian, Scottish, American, Irish, English, German, French, African, or typically Pākehā.⁴ I really do not have ‘an ethnicity’ (from *ethnos*, meaning ‘of a people’, singular), but am the outcome of many sets of kin, variously bound to different places. Like many people, I cannot pick just one strand and say *there*, that is the ethnic line I belong to.

A further problem arises if I consider sex/gender: how does one map gender roles out of a 1950s upbringing that took place during the 1970s and 1980s? I am not even sure where to begin with that. I appear to be biologically female, but it is not as if I have had extensive testing to identify what specific arrangements of gendered gene expression I have, or how these XY combinations map to my seemingly heteronormative sexuality. I say seemingly because I fit awkwardly into the categories of ‘woman’ and ‘married’, yet both labels are a technical fit. Class is no easier: I have been deathly poor and well-cushioned, at different moments and for different reasons. So what social class did I belong to, and which one do I belong to now? I grew up in an immigrant area, as working-class, yet my socialisation seemed oriented towards constructing our family as ‘better’ than an awful lot of people. The reasons for this are still quite mysterious to me. I am fortunate to now live in a good warm house, with lots of wildlife and very old trees, yet the poverty of student life does not equate with the class mobility that is supposedly bequeathed by the accumulation of degrees.

Customary greeting practices refer not to ‘markers of identity’, but the relationships, roots, and branches by which the individual is situated, and their position is expressed relative to their ancestors, living Elders, main occupation within the group, and extended kin, as located by relationship to a place and particular landmarks or key species (kin) of that place. None of these have much to do with

⁴ Pākehā is the name given by Māori to the white settlers of/in Aotearoa New Zealand, and their descendants, among which I can be counted, at least in part.

ethnicity, skin colour, gender roles, sexuality, level of education, or social class. Critically, the communities in which these protocols are usual emphasise and value different aspects of identity, as linked by common contexts.

So, *what would I say if I were asked to introduce myself in a traditional manner?* Do I just give my first name, say where I live and what I work at, and be silent? For that is how ‘introductions’ go according to westernised norms – you say what you do in the world – not, these are my ancestors, this is my role in the community I belong to, this is how my kin connects with yours, and these are the landmarks that will help you find where I come from, should you need to place me. My voice definitely comes from *somewhere*, but it also comes from nowhere in particular.⁵

Traumatic as it is to read her recollections, Potawatomi educator and botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer (along with far too many others), can point to her grandfather’s experience in a residential school and say, *there*, that is where we lost touch with our traditional Potawatomi teachings (2013). With absolute respect for her account of her experiences, I cannot locate my familial moment of loss in this way. Settler or immigrant identity (as described in the academic literature) does not leave much room for this realisation; in fact, it forces the uncomfortable act of ‘speaking from nowhere’, whilst simultaneously demanding positionality. Mixed-ethnicity or post-European settler-immigrant scholars have not yet readily embraced their own colonisation, perhaps out of fear that to even *suggest* that we are all colonised may provoke an indignant reaction from other scholars, as if it takes something away from those who have suffered through colonialism, and continue to. However, many indigenous scholars point to this shared condition of loss quite clearly, along with the differences between the two categories of colonisation.

I have a settler within – this came with the circumstances of my birth. We are, however, on speaking terms, and neither of us feels guilt, shame, privilege, or pride as connected with this unfortunate, displaced, and fragmented state. To do so would be simplistic. As Elder, Ifa/Yorùbá

⁵ As pointed out eloquently by scholars, Canadian settler Elaine Coburn, Goenpul and Minjerribah, Quandamooka Aboriginal scholar, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, African-Canadian, George Sefa Dei, and Waitaha ki Waitaki scholar, Makere Stewart-Harawira, of Aotearoa: “Of course, such declarations of belonging and even of being, which for many Indigenous scholars are at once place-based and spiritual, and also speak of peoplehood, are uncomfortable for mainstream social science. In dominant forms of social science, the textual ceremony of identification for authors is typically limited to name and university affiliation. Often such affiliations appear in a footnote, arguably so as not to draw attention to the fact that the authoritative, authorial voice is from somewhere rather than a more all-knowing, omniscient ‘nowhere’” (Coburn *et al.* 2013). Here, I describe as best I can the erasure of my own possibility for positionality, and yet attempt a meaningful response.

Chief Yeye Luisah Teish, has elegantly stated (2012b), I have to carry *all of my ancestry*, not only my links to the colonised and the coloniser. I have to carry, relative to my own worldview, the memory of our cellular ancestors, our oceanic and plant relations, and of the mitochondrial DNA of the First Peoples: the ancestral kinship I have with the birds, the forests, the microbes, mycelium, insects, and ocean. I carry our collective mistakes, successes, and promises. To claim it all is not only to draw upon it all, but to be *responsible* for it all, and to give up any claim of a particular and distinct positionality.

We are not ‘all indigenous’ – that idea possesses distinct positionality – but we do need to re-indigenise ourselves to Earth. To borrow a fitting term from O’odham-Anglo-Chicano thinker, Dennis Martinez: what is required is a *kincentric* worldview (Martinez *et al.* 2008, p. 90).⁶ When the long-ago colonised, such as myself, seeks to reconnect to Earth, what is called for is literally the recognition of deep connection *with*, a personal commitment *to*, and responsibility *for*, all of our relations.

According to the precepts of settler-colonial positionality, I am defined as a ‘nowhere’ person who has landed in a country I now call home, and there is nowhere to go back to; thus, I am now called to make relations, *here*. In one sense, this ascribed identity is correct: most of my family are gone, there is no ‘community’ to which I belong, and there is certainly neither mountain nor river that I know with the intimacy I should. However, I have been situated in a place where I have to embrace this and to work with it – I am here in *this* land.

This state of newness is, perhaps, liberating, in that the stickiness of ethno-nationalism or blood kin are not an option for me. I have to locate my blessings differently: I was not born in a country plagued by the extremes of war, famine, desertification, floods, excessive corruption, political or religious disunity, or violence. The absence of these immediate threats to my survival means that I can actualise my life choices with a modicum of control over the outcomes, and determine the best use of my energies by choosing from a range of possible applications. It also means that I can invest my energy into the work I do, and hopefully in a way that can in some way benefit other humans and contribute positively to our shared future. I can think, and write, and teach, thanks to my access to a certain kind of education in a relatively peaceful country in which I am encouraged to learn the land and the local language, to embrace indigenous ways of being, and to belong. Similar blessings are experienced by a mere fraction of the world’s population, and I am grateful for them.

⁶ Martinez argues that kincentricity is a step beyond a biocentric, ecocentric, or anthropocentric worldview.

Honouring the Elders and Ancestors

The words and ideas relayed herein are built upon the wisdom of many others. All indigenous and traditional Earth Elders whose words and ideas appear in form or in spirit are listed below, along with all indigenous, traditional, and planetary Elders, scholars, and thinkers who are now Ancestors.

Thank you for lending me your voices in bringing forward this work.

Indigenous, Traditional, and Planetary Elders

- ▣ The Kogi Mamas (Elder Brothers) of the Sierra Nevada
- ▣ The Calista Elders Council, Alaska
- ▣ Elders of the San Bushmen of the Kalahari, of Australia, and all others of the four directions
- ▣ International Council of the Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers
- ▣ Grandmother Agnes Baker Pilgrim, Elder, and the oldest member of the Takelma peoples of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
- ▣ Grandmother Bernadette Rebienot, Elder and educator and Iboga initiate of the Omyene communities, Gabon
- ▣ Grandmother Rita Pitka Blumenstein, Elder of the Yup'ik communities in Alaska
- ▣ Grandmother Julieta Casimiro, Mazatec Elder and curandera of Huautla de Jimenez, Oaxaca, Mexico
- ▣ Grandmother Clara Shinoba Iura, Japanese-Brazilian Elder and Santo Daime healer
- ▣ Grandmother Aama Bombo (Buddhi Maya Lama), Mother shaman in the Nepalese Tamang tradition
- ▣ Grandmother (Unci) Rita Long Visitor Holy Dance of the Crazy Horse Band, Elder of the Oglala Lakota Sioux
- ▣ Grandmother (Unci) Beatrice Grace Weasel Bear Holy Dance of the Crazy Horse Band, Elder of the Oglala Lakota Sioux
- ▣ Grandmother Maria Alice Campos Freire, Brazilian Elder and Santo Daime healer
- ▣ Grandmother Tsering Dolma Gyaltong, Buddhist Elder and peacemaker, now exiled from her homeland in Tibet
- ▣ Grandmother Mona Polacca, Elder of the Hopi, Havasupai and Tewa Nations
- ▣ Grandmother Margaret Behan Red Spider Woman, Cheyenne/Arapaho Elder
- ▣ Grandmother Flordemayo, Nicaraguan Elder and curanderismo
- ▣ Faith Spotted Eagle, Dakota/Nakota Elder of the Ihanktonwan, Yaktan Sioux
- ▣ Tagwseblu Vi Hilbert, Elder and storyteller of the Upper Skagit tribes of the Salish Nation

- ▣ Mae Tso, Dine Elder and healer from Mosquito Springs, Arizona, and one of the original ‘Black Mesa matriarch resisters’
- ▣ Henrietta Mann, Elder and Cheyenne-Arapaho MSU Professor Emeritus
- ▣ Aung San Suu Kyi, Elder, Burmese politician and peace activist
- ▣ Vandana Shiva, Grandmother, Elder, educator and environmental activist
- ▣ Pema Chödrön, Elder, American Tibetan Buddhist nun and educator
- ▣ Chief Yeye Luisah Teish, Elder and Ifa/Yorùbá educator
- ▣ Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, Ngangikurungkurr-Catholic Elder and educator of Nauiyu Country
- ▣ Betty Pearce, Elder, Custodian of Central Arrernte Country and indigenous rights activist
- ▣ Mary Graham, Kombumerri and Wakka Wakka Elder and philosopher
- ▣ Laklak Burarrwanga, Elder and educator for the Datiwuy people and caretaker for the Gumatj clan
- ▣ *Kuia* Dame Whina Cooper, Te Rarawa Elder, Te Whaea o te Motu (Mother of the Nation), and Māori resistance leader
- ▣ *Kuia* Pauline Tangiora, Ngāti Rongomaiwahine Elder and peace activist
- ▣ *Whaea* Te Wharetatao King, Ngā Puhi spiritual visionary and peace activist
- ▣ Joanna Macy, Elder, Buddhist-American educator and systems theorist
- ▣ Elaine Morgan, Elder and Welsh anthropologist
- ▣ Edith Turner, Elder and English cultural anthropologist
- ▣ Jane Goodall, Elder, English primatologist and anthropologist
- ▣ Eileen Caddy, Elder, author, spiritual teacher and co-founder of the Findhorn Foundation community
- ▣ Ina May Gaskin, Elder, midwife and leader of the global cultural-spiritual renewal of natural birth movement
- ▣ Hannah Arendt, Elder, Jewish critical theorist, and philosopher
- ▣ Chief Leon Shenandoah, Tadodaho, Onondaga Elder, spiritual and political leader of the Haudenosaunee/Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy
- ▣ Chief Tekaronianeken Jake Swamp, Elder of the Wolf Clan and sub-chief of the Kahniahaka, Mohawk Nation
- ▣ Chief William Commanda, or Ojigkwanong, Keeper of the Wampum Belts and Elder of the Kitigàn-zibi Anishinàbeg First Nation
- ▣ Chief Oren Lyons Jr., Onondaga Elder and Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan
- ▣ Gilbert Walking Bull, Elder and wicása wakan of the Lakota, South Dakota
- ▣ Chief John Fire Lane Deer, Elder and wicása wakan of the Mineconju Lakota Sioux

- ☞ Chief Irving Powless Jr., Elder and Wampum Keeper of the Beaver Clan of the Onondaga Nation
- ☞ Thomas Banyacya of the Wolf, Fox, and Coyote Clans, Hopi Elder and traditional teacher
- ☞ Chief Luther Standing Bear, or Mathó Nážin, Elder of the Oglala Lakota
- ☞ The Great Peacemaker of the Iroquois Nations
- ☞ Nochaydelklinne, Elder, Apache Prophet and Coyotero Holy One
- ☞ Harry Robinson, Okanagan Elder
- ☞ William Ermine, Saskatchewan Cree Elder
- ☞ Vine Deloria Jr., Standing Rock Sioux Elder and educator
- ☞ Leroy Little Bear, Elder and educator of the Kainai First Nation
- ☞ Handsome Lake, Seneca prophet to the Iroquois Nations
- ☞ Wovoka, Paiute religious leader
- ☞ Kicking Bear, or Mathó Wanáhtake, of the Oglala Lakota
- ☞ Arnold Short Bull, of the Sičhánǵu (Brulé) Lakota
- ☞ Ilarion (Larry) Merculieff, Unungan (Aleut) Elder and educator
- ☞ Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, Elder, and notable Yupiaq educator
- ☞ Paul Tunuchuk, Yup'ik Elder of Chefnak, Alaska
- ☞ Stanley Anthony, Yup'ik Elder of Nightmute, Alaska
- ☞ His Holiness Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome
- ☞ His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, spiritual leader-in-exile of Tibet
- ☞ The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh
- ☞ Māhatmā Mohandas Gandhi, Elder, Indian politician, scholar, and peace activist
- ☞ Shoghí Effendí Rabbání, Elder, great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh and leader of the Bahá'í Faith
- ☞ Vusa'mazulu Credo Mutwa, Elder and sangoma, or traditional Zulu healer, from South Africa
- ☞ Nelson Mandela, Elder, Xhosa anti-apartheid leader, politician, and human rights activist
- ☞ Kapo Kansa, Elder of the Gamo Highlands
- ☞ George Sefa Dei Jr., Elder, African-Canadian critical race theorist and notable educator
- ☞ Bill Yidumduma Harney, Elder, Senior Lawman and Custodian of the Wardaman people
- ☞ Uncle Bob Anderson, Quandamooka, Ngugi Elder
- ☞ Major “Uncle Muggi” Sumner, Elder and educator of the Ngarrindjeri Nation
- ☞ David Banggal Mowaljarlai, Elder and Senior Lawman of the Ngarinyin peoples of the West Kimberley

- ▣ Old Jimmy Manngaiyarri, Maingin Elder from the Victoria River district, Northern Territory
- ▣ Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana, Ngāti Apa and Ngā Rauru spiritual leader, prophet and faith healer
- ▣ Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki of Ngāti Maru, and Ringatū founder
- ▣ Aperahama Taonui, Ngāpuhi prophet
- ▣ Akuhata (Hata) Kiwa, (Rātana Histories) Prophet and Elder
- ▣ Chief (Hipā) Te Maihāroa of Ngāti Huirapa
- ▣ Robert Jay Lifton, Elder, American psychiatrist and traumatologist
- ▣ Mikhail Gorbachev, Elder, Ukranian politician, peacemaker, and member of the Club of Madrid
- ▣ Albert Einstein, Elder, German theoretical physicist
- ▣ Gregory Bateson, Elder, English anthropologist, linguist, systems biologist, and cybernetician
- ▣ Thomas Berry, American Geologist and Catholic Elder
- ▣ Zygmunt Bauman, Elder, Polish philosopher
- ▣ Matthew Fox, Elder, American theologian
- ▣ Paulo Freire, Elder, Brazilian educator and philosopher
- ▣ Kahlil Gibran, Elder, Lebanese poet and philosopher
- ▣ Ervin László, Elder, Hungarian theoretical physicist and founder of the Club of Budapest
- ▣ David Suzuki, Elder, Japanese-Canadian educator, activist, and environmentalist
- ▣ Amit Goswami, Elder, Indian theoretical physicist

Planetary Ancestors

- ▣ Rosa Parks, first lady of the American civil rights movement
- ▣ Alinta, Bundjalung and Thungutti filmmaker, activist, and educator, also known as Lorraine Mafi-Williams
- ▣ Val Plumwood, Australian educator and eco-philosopher
- ▣ Paula Gunn Allen, Pueblo Laguna literary educator
- ▣ Mary Daly, American radical feminist philosopher and theologian
- ▣ Gloria Anzaldúa, Chicana writer and theorist
- ▣ Julie Graham, Australian geographer and educator
- ▣ Donella Meadows, American systems theorist
- ▣ Anne Buttimer, Irish geographer and Dominican nun
- ▣ Rachel Carson, American biologist and conservationist

- ▣ Viola Cordova, educator and philosopher of the Jicarilla Apache and Hispanic heritage
- ▣ Jane Jacobs, American-Canadian urban theorist and activist
- ▣ Elinor Ostrom, American political economist
- ▣ Hunbatz Men, Mayan daykeeper of the Itzá tradition
- ▣ Russell Means, Oglala Lakota wisdomkeeper and Native rights activist
- ▣ Jack D. Forbes, Powhatan-Renape and Lenape, Celtic, and Swiss educator
- ▣ John Trudell, Santee Dakota-Mexican indigenous rights activist
- ▣ Howard Adams, Métis educator, cultural leader, and indigenous rights activist
- ▣ Avi Beker, leading Jewish educator and political figure
- ▣ Martin Luther King Jr., American Baptist minister and civil rights leader
- ▣ Max Weber, German social theorist and philosopher
- ▣ R.D. Laing, Scottish psychiatrist
- ▣ Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, Tamil anthropologist
- ▣ Arne Naess, Norwegian philosopher and deep ecologist
- ▣ John Locke, English philosopher and physician
- ▣ F. David Peat, English holistic physicist and author
- ▣ Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, Austrian-Hungarian anthropologist
- ▣ Joseph Epes Brown, American scholar of comparative religion and traditional peoples
- ▣ Buckminster Fuller, American architect and systems theorist
- ▣ Paul Shepard, American ecologist
- ▣ Lynn White Jr., American historian
- ▣ Warren Weaver, American mathematician
- ▣ Michel Foucault, French philosopher
- ▣ Claude Shannon, American mathematician and cryptographer
- ▣ Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin, Russian activist, scientist and philosopher
- ▣ Arne Kalland, Norwegian anthropologist
- ▣ David Bohm, American theoretical physicist
- ▣ William Stanner, Australian anthropologist
- ▣ Karl Pribram, Czechoslovakian-Indonesian, Austrian-born, American neuroscientist, psychologist and philosopher
- ▣ Antonio Gramsci, Italian philosopher and politician

- ▣ David Lindberg, American historian of the sciences
- ▣ Karl Marx, German philosopher
- ▣ Bill Mollison, Australian educator, scientist, and Grandfather of permaculture
- ▣ E.F. Schumacher, German statistician and economist
- ▣ Thomas S. Kuhn, American physicist, historian, and philosopher of science
- ▣ William Kingdon Clifford, English mathematician and philosopher
- ▣ Raymond Williams, Welsh cultural theorist
- ▣ Ronald Higgins, English political security, and peace journalist
- ▣ Rainer Maria Rilke, Austrian poet and novelist
- ▣ Peter Berger, Austrian-American Protestant theologian and sociologist
- ▣ William James, American philosopher and psychologist
- ▣ Walter J. Ong, American Jesuit priest and cultural historian
- ▣ C.S. Lewis, English theologian, historian and novelist
- ▣ Alfred Korzybski, Polish-American founder of the field of general semantics
- ▣ Keith Basso, American anthropologist
- ▣ Theodore Roszak, American cultural historian
- ▣ John P. Powelson, American economist
- ▣ Peter Matthiessen, American environmental writer and activist
- ▣ Niels Bohr, Danish physicist
- ▣ Michael Beresford Foster, English philosopher
- ▣ Clifford Geertz, American anthropologist
- ▣ Werner Heisenberg, German theoretical physicist
- ▣ Isaiah Berlin, Russian-British political philosopher
- ▣ Jack Mezirow, American sociologist and transformative educator
- ▣ Charles Sanders Peirce, American philosopher-scientist and semiotician
- ▣ Thomas Buckley, American anthropologist and Buddhist monastic
- ▣ Victor Turner, English cultural anthropologist

Work Published

Some of the material gathered for this thesis has appeared in various forms in the following publications:

Sepie, Amba J. 2014. "Conversing with Some Chickadees: Cautious Acts of Ontological Translation." *Literature and Medicine*, 32, no. 2, pp. 277-298.

Sepie, Amba J. 2016. "No Limestone in the Sky: The Politics of Damned Facts." In *Damned Facts: Fortean Approaches to the Study of Religion, Folklore and the Paranormal*, edited by Jack Hunter, Paphos, Cyprus: Aporetic Press, pp. 16-28.

Sepie, Amba J. 2016. "Symbolic Malfunctions and the Failure of Nerve: Heretical Anthropology." *Symbolism: An International Journal of Critical Aesthetics*, 16, pp. 295-314.

Sepie, Amba J. 2017. "Monstrous Offspring: Disability, Decolonization, and Species Membership." *Trespassing Journal: An Online Journal of Trespassing Art, Science, and Philosophy*, 6, pp. 74-94.

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Sepie, Amba J. 2017. "More than Stories, More than Myths: Animal/Human/Nature(s) in Traditional Ecological Worldviews." *Humanities*, 6, no. 4, p. 78.

Sepie, Amba J. 2018. "Impossible Illnesses: Decolonizing Psychosomatic Medicine." In *Reading the Psychosomatic in Medical and Popular Culture: Something. Nothing. Everything*, edited by Carol-Ann Farkas, London: Routledge, pp. 71-85.

Sepie, Amba J. 2018. "Birthing the Spirit: Self-Determination and Childbirth in Australia." In *Sacred Inception: Reclaiming the Spirituality of Birth in the Modern World*, edited by Marianne Delaporte and Morag Martin, Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books/Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 79-96.

Introduction: You say you want a Revolution?

If our species does not survive the ecological crisis, it will probably be due to our failure to imagine and work out new ways to live with the earth, to rework ourselves and our high energy, high-consumption, and hyper-instrumental societies adaptively...

We will go onwards in a different mode of humanity, or not at all.

—Val Plumwood, (1939-2007)⁷

The Movement that Has No Name

It is no great secret that the multiple socioecological crises we are presently facing, as a species, often seem too insurmountable to overcome. The prognosis for the future tilts heavily toward the negative, if not to the outright extinction our own, along with countless other, forms of life. The prospect of no bees and no glaciers seems to lead directly to *no humans*. Environmentalist and author, Derrick Jensen, puts it plainly: “we are in desperate need of revolution, on all scales and in all ways, from the most personal to the most global, from the most serene to the most wrenching. We’re killing the planet, we’re killing each other, and we’re killing ourselves” (2004b, p. 41). Later he adds, so as not to let anyone off the hook: “we’re all doing our parts... this deathly system needs us all” (p. 192).

Such times of crisis call for a radical shift in conceptual focus, one that pushes the human imagination to create differently. Fortunately, there is a revolutionary social movement in play. This movement is happening under many names and in many places, is supported by diverse groups of people possessing their own peculiar politics, and has been quietly gathering on the ground beneath us for some time. Gary Snyder, the Buddhist ‘poet laureate’ of Deep Ecology, calls it the *Great Underground*.⁸ Joanna Macy, who is steeped in the same traditions, has dubbed it the *Great Turning* (2007, 2013; Macy and Brown 1998; Macy and Johnstone 2012), and it is elsewhere referred to as the *Great Awakening* (McFadden 1991).

⁷ These words are by the late eco-philosopher Val Plumwood, penned shortly before her death in February 2008. They appeared in her 2007 article, “Review of Deborah Bird Rose’s Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation.” *Australian Humanities Review*, 42, August, (p. 1).

⁸ This was cited in Hawken (2007, p. 5), however the source was a review of the memoir of actor, Peter Coyote. The original is worth including here: “[Coyote] credits his close friend, poet Gary Snyder, with giving him the notion of ‘the great underground... the continuum since the Paleolithic of shamans and healers and priestesses and poets and dancers and artisans who speak for the planet, for other species for interdependence. A life,’ he says without pausing, ‘that courses under and through and around empires, and that whole other materialistically oriented worldview’” (Steinman 1998).

All revolutions begin with the people, as was once written by the great activist, scientist, and philosopher, Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin, in one of his pamphlets:

no revolution has appeared in full armor – born, like Minerva out of the head of Jupiter, in a day. They all had their periods of incubation during which the masses were very slowly becoming imbued with the revolutionary spirit... and step by step emerged from their former indifference and resignation (2012, p. 190).

This movement is focused upon socioecological change, as linked with a growing public awareness of human-ecological dependencies over the last century. Aspects of this movement appear under the headings of spiritual or reverential ecology,⁹ radical human ecology, ecopsychology, transpersonal and integral ecologies,¹⁰ permaculture, transition movements, social acupuncture, voluntary simplicity,¹¹ nature-connection, and rewilding, among others.¹² I call it decolonising *everything*. Jensen refers to it as, simply, *Endgame*. In his two treatises bearing the same name, he addresses his thoughts to those who “already know how horrible civilization is, and who want to do something about it” (2006, p. 345).

⁹ Spiritual, or reverential, ecology was initiated most notably by the late Thomas Berry (1978, 1988, 1999, 2009; Berry *et al.* 1991; Berry and Tucker 2006; Berry *et al.* 2014) and Matthew Fox (1976, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1988, 1991, 1994; Fox, M. and Swimme 1982). It evokes earth spirituality in the tradition of deep ecology, as informed by Gaian consciousness (Goldsmith 1992; Seed *et al.* 1988; Sponsel 2012; Vaughan-Lee 2013).

¹⁰ Radical human ecology (Williams, L. *et al.* 2012), developed from an earlier tradition of radical ecology (Keulartz 1998; Merchant 1992; Zimmerman 1994), combines cultural-political ecologies, human social sciences, eco-feminism, indigenous ways of thought, and systems thinking, and is connected with ecopsychology (Fisher 2013; Kahn Jr. and Hasbach 2012; Roszak *et al.* 1995), transpersonal, and integral ecologies (Esbjörn-Hargens 2010; Esbjörn-Hargens *et al.* 2010; Fox, W. 1990; Mickey 2014, 2016; Mickey *et al.* 2017; Wilber 1996).

¹¹ Permaculture is a design science based on the pioneering work of the late Bill Mollison and David Holmgren (Bane and Holmgren 2012; Holmgren 2002; Mollison and Jeeves 1988). Permaculture fuses socioecological considerations holistically, informing community design (Fox, Louis and Birnbaum 2014; Gould 2005; Litfin 2014; Morris 2007), spurning economic responses in the form of transition movements (Hopkins 2008; Kamal 2011; Swilling and Anneck 2012), turns to voluntary/radical simplicity (Alexander 2009; Grigsby 2004; Merkel 2003), and calls for social acupuncture and paradigm shifts (Boggs and Kurashige 2012; Edwards 2005; Mander and Goldsmith 1996; Senge 2010; Wahl 2016). Permaculture combines economics, agriculture and horticulture, organic and biodynamic farming, community and housing design, homesteading, smallholding, energy efficiency, child-rearing, schooling and lifestyle choices with an emphasis on sustainability, variously defined in local, global, broad, and narrow terms.

¹² Nature-connection was first popularised by Richard Louv (2005, 2011) and has been extended by Jon Young (2015, 2016b; Young *et al.* 2010). It links to eco-education (Bowers 1995; Dunlap and Kellert 2012; Kahn Jr. and Hasbach 2013; Kahn 2010; Orr 2002) and rewilding practices (Plotkin 2003, 2007, 2013b; Shepard and Shepard 1998; Taegel 2010, 2012, 2017). Rewilding is a radical (sometimes, feral) return to a wild or nature-aware state of being and is applied to reversing domestication, animals, humans, foodways, and ecosystem restoration.

This movement has also been progressively informed by the lifeways of the First Peoples and Nations of the world, along with a variety of cultural-religious, mystical and Earth-oriented traditions. Support for changing how we think and how we live on the planet has come from all four directions. Whilst many have come to this movement through colonialism, apartheid, racism, displacement, war, or a combination of these, others were inspired by leaders, such as Thich Nhat Hahn, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, the 14th Dalai Lama, the Standing Rock Water Protectors, Aung San Suu Kyi, Dame Whina Cooper, Shoghi Effendi, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Mahatma Gandhi. Some were called to action by the shocking claims of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in September 1962, by *Earth Day* in 1970, the consequences of the *Exxon* Oil spill and Chernobyl, the bombing of the *Rainbow Warrior*, the Tiananmen Square massacre, or Bob Geldof's *Live Aid*, in 1985. Some simply had children and started to care about the future.

Severn Cullis-Suzuki and Xiuhtezcatl Martinez are two of those children, carrying the flame alongside last generation's revolutionaries. Both are graced with a heritage which conveys to them a deep appreciation for what is going wrong on our planet, and they, with others, are becoming well known as leaders who demonstrate a powerful ecological vision.¹³ Those without mentors and Elders have had to find their own unique moment of what might be called 'waking up' to the fate of bees, glaciers, and grandchildren. Whatever the seed, the collective creative action is certainly orienting toward a greater socioecological justice and regeneration. This is Futures Speculation of the mortal kind.

In his 2007 book, *Blessed Unrest*, environmentalist and author, Paul Hawken, called this creative shift towards change the last best hope for the future of humankind. Hawken writes:

¹³ Severn Cullis-Suzuki, who founded E.C.O. (the Environmental Children's Organization) at nine, is the Japanese-Canadian daughter of environmental scientist David Suzuki and a current Earth Charter International Council member. Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, is a young indigenous Aztec-Lakota American who began speaking publically about environmental issues, as supported by his family, at the age of six and has gone on to become the director of Earth Guardians, a worldwide conservation organisation. Both are known for attending the United Nations in Rio as children to speak on climate change and ecological issues, and are recognised internationally as prominent leaders in the social and ecological justice movements. Autumn Peltier from Wikwemikong First Nations and Ta'Kaiya Blaney of the Sliammon First Nations are the latest youth leaders to emerge in this lineage. Autumn Peltier, who is thirteen, was recently nominated for the 2017 International Children's Peace Prize, and is scheduled to speak to the United Nations on water protection issues in 2018. Ta'Kaiya Blaney is a speaker, musician, and actress whose latest single had its premiere during at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris.

By any conventional definition, this vast collection of committed individuals does not constitute a movement. . . It has no manifesto or doctrine, no overriding authority to check with. . . Historically, social movements have arisen primarily in response to injustice, inequalities, and corruption. Those woes still remain legion, joined by a new condition that has no precedent: the planet has a life-threatening disease, marked by massive ecological degradation and rapid climate change. . . Healing the wounds of the earth and its people does not require saintliness or a political party, only gumption and persistence. It is not a liberal or conservative activity; it is a sacred act. It is a massive enterprise undertaken by ordinary citizens everywhere, not by self-appointed governments or oligarchies. . . [this] is about people who want to save the entire sacred, cellular basis of existence – the entire planet and all its inconceivable diversity (2007, pp. 3-8).

Hawken's research led him to estimate that, in 2007, there were *tens of millions* of people around the world who were dedicated to social and ecological change. It is now 2017. The market-economy appears precarious, we are certainly unprepared for the future, and the world is still getting warmer. Naturalist, Jon Young (2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017; Young and Gardoqui 2012; Young *et al.* 2010), who is an expert in facilitating the development of a deep nature ethic in young people, notes that, whilst change is happening, it is definitely not happening fast enough. It is also difficult to identify a sufficiently coherent plan, or locate a coordinated base of Elder leadership to guide the work of shaping this sought-for future.

Are other things needed? Perhaps there are certain areas of our societies that could be targeted more deliberately, such as the institutions, and those families, kindergartens, schools, and universities in which we incubate values, foster relationships, and educate young humans. Furthermore, where can we find Elder guidance in a world where people often 'grow old' as opposed to becoming Elders? Helena Norberg-Hodge, a linguist and a lifelong scholar of traditional Ladakhi culture, has written that "Ladakhis who have travelled to the West tell horror stories about the neglect old people suffer, living alone with no one to talk to" (1991, p. 185). As Stephen Jenkinson, a teacher and author experienced in Elder and end-of-life care, writes:

It stands to reason. . . that with this many old people around, we should be awash in the authentic, time-tested, grey wisdom that should emanate from them. And there should be cultural initiatives that expose the general population to this wisdom. And this should deepen the culture's sanity and capacity for sustainable decision-making. And that should make us all ancestors worth claiming by a future time, now that we've come to our elder-prompted senses and begun to proceed as if unborn

future generations deserve to drink the distillate of our wisdom and our sustainable example... I don't see it. Maybe you don't either" (2018a, para 9.13-14).¹⁴

Both Jenkinson and Norbert-Hodge advocate for the rekindling of community, each inspired by the different models for fostering an intimate net of relationships. How do we create the conditions so that the elderly will be Elders once more, and be Grandmothers and Grandfathers who are recognised for their experience, wisdom, and guidance?

The goals pursued by Hawken's revolutionaries are neither utopian, nor idealistic, but *realisable* for the reason that coherent, sustainable, relationship-based and Earth-connected communities are an already-achieved reality in humanity's collective history. The way of life that *was*, and in some places *is*, common across a vast number of traditional and indigenous Earth minded communities is representative of this already-achieved reality. Traditional and indigenous ways of being, as Hawken writes, are the "the quiet hub of the new movement – its heart and soul... the movement reaches back to the deep... roots of our collective history for its axle... the constant and true gauge that determines the integrity of one's culture, the meaning of one's existence, and the peacefulness of one's heart" (2007, pp. 22-23).

According to the Indian (subcontinental) economist and philosopher, Rajani Kanth, this is not a utopian dream, but a long-standing way of being *in place*, strengthened by the affective bonds of community. These practices have been observed all over the planet, and well before the onset of destructive modernist ideas (2017, pp. 82-83). Many traditional and indigenous peoples from all over the world have not only defined what it means to have a 'good life' in reasonably consistent ways, but have very specific ideas regarding *how we should live*.¹⁵ Such communities provide the basis for understanding, as Hawken notes, how people and nature, *or*, social and environmental movements, are one and the same (2007, p. 23).

What should concern us *all*, in the present moment, is the creative transformation of planetary, community, and individual health, conceived of in the very broadest terms, and taken seriously: *as if*

¹⁴ For an extensive treatment of the implications of the loss of Elderhood in contemporary westernised contexts, see Jenkinson's most recent book (2018a), and his work, as profiled in the film *Griefwalker* (Wilson, T. and Padgett 2008). Jenkinson is also the founder of the Orphan Wisdom School, described on their website as "rooted in knowing history, being claimed by ancestry, working for a time yet to come" (2018b).

¹⁵ Aleut (Unungan) Elder, Ilarion Mercurieff reminds us that traces of the 'original' worldview that he, and others, advocate for, along with innovative modifications to it, can be found in *all* human societies. As Mercurieff says, each direction has its gifts, and thus, the potential to collectively create something entirely new (Mercurieff *et al.* 2017).

the seventh generation depended upon it. Such challenges require courage and, at the very minimum, open-mindedness to a range of perhaps ‘previously un-thought’ possibilities.

Living the Questions

I like the language of ‘living the questions’, which I borrow directly from the poet Rainer Maria Rilke.¹⁶ His words suggest that, if you live the questions long enough, you may discover one day that you are living good answers. I ask a good number of questions in this thesis, some of which I propose answers for, and others I leave as a provocation, or an opening, which is designed to create thinking toward what is often un-thought. One good question is: in this age of so many overlapping crises, how can the traditional (often indigenous) values of relationship, respect, responsibility, reciprocity, redistribution and reverence be *re-ignited* as guiding principles for our communities? Another good question that I have circled a number of times is *what is the academic project —now?* What is a good and necessary project for scholars in *these* times, and does this differ from what has concerned us before? Also, what is the project for geographers, working as we are in a time of great planetary, institutional, and disciplinary change? And lastly, how can this project be multiplied across vastly different territories around the globe, in ways that remain culturally salient to those who wish to participate? These ideas will land differently in diverse places, amongst different peoples, in the context of different histories.

This thesis proposes that it is *not too late* to align ourselves better with planetary flourishing and contribute more positively to the wellbeing of Earth and all her living inhabitants. I suggest that we *all* need what are variously called the First Teachings, Original Instructions, and Laws, as kept by the guardians and Elders among the indigenous peoples of the world, to guide us towards better futures.¹⁷ This thesis also reconfigures relations between academics, and indigenous peoples, including indigenous scholars, in a novel way. In asking that scholars *take seriously* the Earth minded, relationally-based, spiritually-revered, culturally-grounded, and ethical components of indigenous

¹⁶ The original source reads as follows: “try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don’t search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answers” (Rilke 1993, pp. 23-24).

¹⁷ The idea of Original Instructions, or First Teachings, which include the Laws for how to live as humans, with/in Earth, is common across Native American and First Nation communities on Turtle Island, showing up also in Central and South America under different names, among the South African San Bushmen, and with other peoples of various traditions, across the globe.

and traditional ecologically-oriented worldviews, and then by demonstrating *how to do so*, I build upon the substantive work of innovative scholars who have been pursuing healing at the postcolonial fault line, and I take this conversation in an entirely *different* direction.¹⁸ Following the directives of Earth Elders, the aim is to show that we might yet walk together down a particular path, and toward the revolution we so desperately need (Four Arrows 2018).

Drawing from the collected wisdom of indigenous and traditional Elders, leaders, and educators, I argue that humans need to turn toward each other and learn from one another in order to secure peaceful and abundant relations for planetary futurity.¹⁹ Indigenous and traditional peoples are entitled to the allyship from all who share Earth to transform the violences of colonial legacies in their communities and on their landbases, and the respect of non-indigenous scholars, leveraged toward an appreciation of traditional forms of knowledge. A further obligation is the commitment to better incorporate indigenous and traditional ecological knowledges in our collective planetary stewardship. In addition, those Earth others who are not indigenous to a place might learn from those peoples who have been carrying, to various degrees and in different places, an exceptional set of instructions, teachings, and laws for how to be human, how to be emplaced, how to live well with/in Earth, and how to pursue correct (or moral) relationships with all other living beings. The point of this work is to provide an entry point to a renewed Earth ethic and a different mode of scholarly engagement, as based upon these teachings, and as balanced by a number of sociopolitical concerns. The direct reckoning with Earth-human relationships, as endeavoured within this thesis, roots this project in a way that is *fundamentally* geographical, in that the nexus between people and place is at its core.

I will state the thesis argument simply: I contend that modern forms of socioecological interaction are in an escalating state of crisis all over the globe, and that numerous scholars, thinkers, cultural commentators, and others, have linked these dire circumstances (at least in part) to the

¹⁸ Taking seriously has become a 'buzz' phrase, especially in anthropology, but is yet to deliver significantly more 'seriousness' in practice, and is still being fiercely debated (see Candea 2011; Cherubini 2009; Haig-Brown 2008; Harvey, G. 2005; Henare *et al.* 2007; Lloyd 2011; Robinson, N.J. 2014; Viveiros de Castro 2011; Willerslev 2007, 2011, 2013). Taking seriously is fundamental to indigenous studies of any kind (Denzin *et al.* 2008; Smith, L. 2012).

¹⁹ Elders wisdom has also been published in the doctoral work of Tamalko scholar, Diveena S. Marcus (2016), Canadian scholar Gabriela McBee (2013), American scholar Mary Dennis (2013), the collected works of Ann Fienup-Riordan (1990, 1994, 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2012, 2016; Fienup-Riordan *et al.* 2007; Fienup-Riordan and Kaplan 2007; Fienup-Riordan and Rearden 2012; Fienup-Riordan *et al.* 2005), and the collaborative efforts of Steve Wall and Harvey Arden (Wall 1994; Wall and Arden 1994, 1998; Wall *et al.* 2006).

ubiquitous presence, and dominance, of the westernised, now globalised, worldview.²⁰ Its influence is observable even amongst peoples in places where ‘western’ is a weak identifier, and this influence is becoming stronger.²¹

I follow the definition given by Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk) French-Canadian educator, Sandra D. Styres, who writes that western thought is a hegemonic European invention. As she explains:

dominant Western refers to a particular world view that rises out of Eurocentrism – that is, the privileging of dominant Euro-centred cultural values and beliefs in education, scholarship, knowledge production, the legitimization of intellectual capital, and the networks and systems of power (2017, p. 19).²²

I have chosen to use the term westernisation, rather than ‘western’, as what I refer to here is more of a *process* than a fixed concept. I do not follow a geographical origin (‘The West’) or refer to an origin place, a specific group of people, or a set of ideas with a fixed identity. Instead, I argue that westernisation has very deep roots, is ongoing, and is the outcome of a long process of *colonisation* (of minds, bodies, and places) that has altered human experiences, communities, and landscapes over time, and in a manner that is not life-affirming. I hold that the long-ago colonised have forgotten not only the heritages surrendered (by choice, by force, or by time) to the colonising processes of what we now call westernisation, but also the manner by which those elements we might name as westernised culture came to be thought of as foundational to an ordinary or typical way of life. In this way, I suggest that westernised peoples are *twice*-afflicted by amnesia when it comes to their origins and traditions. This insight is also expressed by consciousness researcher, Paul Devereux (with co-authors):

For a long time now, we have been unable to remember our former closeness with Earth. Due to this amnesia, the ecological problems now thrust upon us have come as a shock. . . We notice the

²⁰ Worldview is defined as a total ordering system, extending from cosmology (charter myths or origin stories) as the first principle, which informs ontology, epistemology, axiology and practices (including those practices we call culture, religion, and identity). I develop a theoretical contribution to the discussion of worldview more comprehensively in chapter two.

²¹ It is often in places where there is partial modernisation, or selective westernisation, that many of the most serious socioecological problems are manifest. When caught between tradition and modernisation, further westernisation may appear extremely desirable, such as is found in poverty stricken places caught in the development trap.

²² My construction of westernisation as a process that produces and sustains particular historical-cultural representations with material consequences also follows the Marxist political theory of Antonio Gramsci, specifically on hegemony and articulation (see Gramsci 1973; Gramsci *et al.* 1994; Gramsci and Boothman 1995; Gramsci and Forgacs 2000; Gramsci *et al.* 1971).

emergence of an amnesia that is really a double forgetting, wherein a culture forgets, and then forgets that it has forgotten (Devereux *et al.* 1992, pp. 2-3).

In reckoning with this double-affliction, I have come to agree with the late Pueblo Laguna scholar, Paula Gunn Allen (1986b), who once said that we will never be healed, nor sane, until we come to recognise that we are *all* tribal people.

To extend the working definition further, westernisation is characterised herein by reference to the specific spatiotemporal notions that are promulgated in its processes (e.g. separation from one another, emphasis on progress), a power-metaphysics of monotheistic authority structures, attached to hyper-separated dualisms (e.g. clear-cut ideas about authority, good, and evil),²³ and a replacement ethos.²⁴ Further, I do not posit any binary of ‘western’ and ‘non-western’, but prefer to think that all humans who have had contact with these processes locate themselves somewhere on a spectrum of alliances to its central tenets and are enculturated with westernisation to different degrees. Not all modern individuals or societies are overtly, or thoroughly, westernised; however, what I refer to as westernisation has nonetheless visibly affected many modern societies.²⁵

²³ For an in-depth discussion of hyper-separated dualisms, see the work of Val Plumwood (1993).

²⁴ This replacement ethos, although not specifically linked with its historical formulation, has also been identified within the projects of contemporary indigenous scholars, for example: “the settler colonial curricular project of replacement . . . aims to vanish Indigenous peoples and replace them with settlers, who see themselves as the rightful claimants to land, and indeed, as indigenous. . .” (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013, p. 73). [The author then paraphrases and extends on Patrick Wolfe] “The logic of elimination is embedded into every aspect of settler colonial structures and its disciplines – it is in their DNA, in a manner of speaking” (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013, p. 73; Wolfe 2006, p. 388). Monotheism, as argued by philosopher Robert Wright, breeds a belligerent intolerance of difference in the first instance, but even more critically, looking for mechanistic laws of nature (as science came to do) does not make much sense “if nature is animated by the ever-changing moods of various gods” (2009, pp. 100-101).

²⁵ Although I am specifically focused on the relation between colonisation and westernisation in this thesis, there are other versions of similar colonisation processes which have occurred via different routes and orient from a different, although often related, metaphysics (such as is found in many African countries and China). The San Bushmen, for example, have a history of colonisation via multiple migrations out of early African city-states, such as the Bantu-speaking pastoralists, who were themselves colonised and moved southwards in waves over three thousand years, assimilating and displacing nomadic subsistence communities, such as the San, as they went. South Africa then underwent European colonialism, and most recently, the San are subject to broader assimilative (captive) moves as a result of the changing political landscape of South Africa and the related wider effects of globalisation (see Katz *et al.* 1997). The analysis of such societies, although now heavily influenced by westernised modes of being, should be conducted in accordance with the specific historical narratives, ideological contents, and experiences which coalesce to form the collective worldview *specific* to those societies, nation-states, countries, or collectives.

The societies I am concerned with here, and to which this thesis applies most directly (although, not exclusively), are those that can be roughly mapped to the full extent of the Roman Empire in 1C.E. (an area that had already absorbed significant monotheistic, political, institutional, and urbanising structures, primarily of Persian origin).²⁶ There are also those places that were colonised by settlers who *originated* from these (and nearby) regions over the last 500 years. Despite the complexities of mapping peoples, places, colonisation processes, and histories, these regions (colloquially called ‘westernised societies’) are where I posit the influence of westernisation to be most pronounced.

I also propose that the socioecological, and perhaps conscious change that is actively pursued by a large number of individuals (albeit Hawken’s revolutionaries, or others), continues to be blocked by the metaphysical dominance of this westernised worldview. Further, that many individuals who may actually support the idea of change may still perpetuate the status quo by physically, and metaphysically, remaining bound to certain aspects of it. I am not suggesting this perpetuation is always conscious, nor even necessarily intended, but this hypothesis has provoked my interest in identifying what specific transformative tools, ideas, and practices could help facilitate a shift toward remediating our various socioecological ills.

Against this worldview (and its limitations), I hold that humans can benefit greatly by more coherent and conscious connection with what we call nature, other species, and other humans (examples of which can be found across time, geographies, and cultures that are quite distinct from one another). I also hold that there are some excellent instructions that have been disseminated by Elders across numerous traditional and indigenous cultural complexes, which provide a ‘blueprint’ for living in this state of conscious connection. I speculate that many of us are unaware of the existence of this connection with/in what we call ‘nature’ and may not recognise it as important, due to a lengthy process of inoculation with the separatist metaphysics of the westernised worldview.

In setting out these questions, I consider whether intuition and instinct are fundamental aspects of human experience, and whether being conscious of our deep and inherent connections

²⁶ References to Judaic-Persian or Greco-Roman influences on worldview in this thesis refer to a set of ideas and organising principles that were once relevant to a particular peoples, at a particular place, in a particular time. I make no links with present-day communities who connect back to these heritages in what are now multifaceted ways and make no ethnic assumptions in tracing these historical narratives. My purposes here, as I hope will become clear, are simply to excavate bodies of thought that have historically contributed some of their emplaced cultural content to what we now refer to as ‘westernised’ thought and practice.

with Earth and other living beings is as essential to human flourishing as air, water, food, and warmth are to our daily survival. I don't think of this as a belief, a religious or cultural concept, a New Age fad, or an eco-spiritual claim, but as a well-established precept for living within many, many, traditional societies that is worth paying attention to. I hold that Earth, as the ground and origin of living beings (among these, the human) is not a benign resource, nor a collection of organic matter, but is a site of continual conscious interactions, which traditional and indigenous peoples, along with a great number of our collected human ancestors, are very well aware of. What I am suggesting goes into, and yet goes well *beyond*, the precepts of Gaia theory.²⁷ I suggest here that Earth is alive, in the same sense that we unquestionably count ourselves as alive. With others, I frame this insight as a truth: an understanding that is held by many traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented peoples. Instead of querying this truth, or evaluating its rationality, I argue that this is a *forgotten* truth: forgotten by the long-ago colonised (referred to here as the westernised) and what may even, by now, be the majority of humans (see Cooper 1998; Devereux *et al.* 1992; Four Arrows 2016c; Jacobs, J. 2004; Metzner 1999; Mohawk 1978).

Ally and educator, Jerry Mander, who was one of the first scholars to take note of and write about this issue, states:

I believe it is critically important for all Westerners to realize that the idea of the earth *not* being alive is a *new* idea. Even today, that view is far from universal and may represent a minority viewpoint. . . if the majority of people in the United States, Western Europe, and the Soviet Union are comfortable regarding earth as a huge, dead rock, this is emphatically not true of those Indians and aboriginal peoples throughout the world who continue to live as they have for thousands of years, in a direct relationship to the planet. . . it behooves us to at least entertain the possibility that the idea of a living planet, a concept that has endured for millennia, just might be true (1991, pp. 212-213).

Instead of debating the precise terms of what is meant by a *living planet* or elaborating and defending the history of Earth sentient belief and practice, I have chosen to explore this proposition at a level which takes the idea of a living Earth as *a priori*. In doing so, I walk my talk by taking traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented worldviews seriously. This allows me to look closely at the other ideas, suggestions, and instructions (offered by traditional and indigenous teachers, Elders, scholars,

²⁷ Gaia Theory was proposed in the collected works of environmentalist James Lovelock, who has noted that he never intended the theory to be interpreted philosophically, nor taken literally as a goddess, but expected scientists to read his work and consider more closely the implications of Earth as a living system (1979, 1988, 1991, 2006, 2009). He has expressed continual surprise that the idea of Gaia has been so salient across academic disciplines and in the popular press.

and so forth) which follow on from the acceptance of this premise, and consider how this relates to our current socioecological conditions.²⁸

In other words, I have dropped the metaphysics of the westernised worldview (and its associated warnings) in order to explore the territories which lie *beyond* those that appear on contemporary, sanctioned, academic maps. One of my main aims is to speak, primarily, to the academic community in which I participate, addressing what we might do differently in the quest to take seriously those aspects of life and practice that we might claim to take seriously, or that are taken seriously by others, but not always by ‘us’.

I have deliberately pursued answers to a few specific questions: If we are indeed in crisis (which I personally believe we are), what can *we* as humans and scholars do to change this? What is really meant by the multiple calls for a ‘new story’, or a worldview change, or a paradigm shift, and how do we manifest such a thing?²⁹ And lastly, a question that appeared later in my research process upon discovering some good responses to the two foregoing questions: how do I tell an old story in a *new* way, to an audience who may not have heard it before, and be certain it hits the right notes?

Securing Indigenous and Planetary Futurity

There is a rising call that is emanating from traditional and indigenous Elders, scholars and allies (primarily, although not exclusively, from across Turtle Island, down into the lower Americas, and Australia) which bears close attention. This call asks us *all* to follow the lead provided by indigenous and traditional wisdom-keepers in order to ‘reindigenise the rest of the peoples of the planet’ in the interests of the survival of all life on Earth (for examples, see Cajete *et al.* 2008; Four Arrows 2016c; Lyons Jr. 2007, 2013b; Mohawk 1978; Mowaljarlai and ABC Radio 1995; Nelson 2008b; Schaeffer *et al.* 2006; Yazzie *et al.* 2013). Whilst indigenous Elders and scholars have been offering this guidance to westernised peoples for some time now, these offers remain largely unrecognised. In fact, the call to follow an indigenous lead has been suppressed (and obscured) by mechanisms that are both scholarly and social (see Four Arrows 2006, 2016b, 2016c; Mander 1991).

²⁸ In a related move, geographers working with indigenous concepts have begun to refer to the *agency of place*, which, if not quite *a priori* Earth sentience, suggests that geographical thought is moving in an interesting direction (Benediktsson and Lund 2010; Larsen and Johnson 2013, 2016, 2017). For an excellent defence of sentience, see the work of anthropologist, Anne Brydon (2010).

²⁹ The framing of ‘a new story’ (although employed by many others since) was originally proposed by Thomas Berry (1978), a significant contributor to the innovation that was possible through merging ecological and religious thought. Berry, a theologian, thus referred to himself as a ‘geologian’.

I will offer some examples of statements by indigenous Elders to illustrate these calls. The first statement was relayed by the late David Banggal Mowaljarlai, senior Lawman of the Ngarinyin peoples of the West Kimberley in North-Western Australia:

We are really sorry for you people. We cry for you because you haven't got meaning of culture in this country. We have a gift we want to give you. We keep getting blocked from giving you that gift... And it's the gift of pattern thinking. It's the culture which is the blood of this country, of Aboriginal groups, of the ecology, of the land itself... What we see is, all the white people that were born in this country and they are missing the things that came from us mob, and we want to try and share it. And the people were born in this country, in the law country, from all these sacred places in the earth. And they were born on top of that. And that, we call *wungud*—very precious. That is where their spirit come from. That's why we can't divide one another, we want to share our gift, that everybody is belonging, we want to share together in the future for other generations to live on. You know? That's why it's very important (Mowaljarlai and ABC Radio 1995).³⁰

Seneca Elder, the late John Mohawk, outlined a similar idea in 1997, just two years after David Mowaljarlai:

We've been living through this very, very terrible period of conquest... there's a possibility now of gathering consciousness among many hundreds of millions of people about how this is not only necessary but is a very good thing, a positive thing... I think that when we talk about re-indigenization, we need a much larger, bigger umbrella to understand it. It is not necessarily about the Indigenous Peoples of a specific place; it's about re-indigenizing the peoples of the planet... We have to reach ordinary, everyday people. Ordinary, everyday people have to have their sense of moral injustice ignited. It has to be raised a bit. They have to come to understand that they are called upon to care about what happens to the peoples and living things of this world. That's a huge job, but that's the called-upon spiritual call of the re-indigenization of the world (in Cajete *et al.* 2008, pp. 254-260)

Nearly twenty years later, in 2016, the women of the Standing Rock Sioux were revered for “bringing forth a global indigenous spiritual and ecological movement” (Ananda 2016), and in an historic act of defiance, Faith Spotted Eagle, Dakota/Nakota Elder of the Ihanktonwan, Yaktan Sioux, received a vote for president in the US electoral college (NoiseCat 2016). This was, of course, inadmissible; however, it demonstrated that the long fight for recognition of the status and ethics of indigenous

³⁰ The impetus for Mowaljarlai's work with cultural healing came from a series of dreams he had during a 1980s project to find, and document, the important *Wandjina* sites, paintings, and stories, of the Kimberleys. As he wrote: “These dreams have changed my life. It's strange, but the way I see it now is that I must help not only my Aboriginal people, but all people, blacks and whites” (Mowaljarlai and Malnic 1993, p. 37).

peoples has quietly and significantly been gathering ground, and respect. The water protectors of the Sacred Stones camp at Canonball River issued an invitation to all:

What is going on here is that over 80 nations and thousands of people have arrived on the Canonball River to pray for our environment and our cultures together. We ask people to join us if you feel it in your hearts to do so. We are calm here at Sacred Stones Camp; we are safe and in a safe place, and we hold the land in healing and prayer for everyone's benefit. Protect the environment from being "savaged" by speculators, carpetbagging Texas energy companies owned by lone wolf billionaires. Don't let them take our public, and our Native lands, and the resources they hold, the water we all depend on for our future in a changing world and climate. We invite all peoples and representatives to come to our territories to sit together in honor and respect for protection of our lands and waters (Elders and Leaders - Sacred Stones Camp 2016).

As Canim Lake Band Tsq'escen writer, Julian Brave NoiseCat, points out, when Native Americans rose up collectively to protect Earth for *all* Americans, these Elders and leaders also pointed the way *forwards*:

Their story is part of a remarkable and still unfolding narrative in which the most devastated among us lead an insurrection for what is right for the planet and its people. If we fail to pay attention, listen and stand with them, there's no telling how far back we will retreat before the face of hate, for the sake of profit and in the name of lesser evils. As bleak as the present might seem, there is still a future worth fighting for. In 10, 20, maybe even 100 years, we deserve a world where progress no longer seeks asylum in a fortress built by slaveholders. We deserve a world where a Faith Spotted Eagle, a wise woman and leader who stood with and for her people, is president of the United States (NoiseCat 2016).³¹

³¹ These sentiments are echoed by the decolonisation discussions that took place online during the worldwide Occupy movement. These dialogues are collected on the site *For Occupiers to Decolonize* (Chaparral 2011). In a blog linked to this site as part of the discussion, Māori woman Marama Davidson (Te Rarawa, Ngaapuhi, Ngaatiporou *sic*) wrote: "This is what I wish our country would say. We are with you now Tangata Whenua (People of the Land). We are now ALL fighting what you have been fighting since we arrived on your shores. We join with you to say that this system does not treat people or the earth kindly. We echo your call that this way of treading on people is not of Aotearoa. It is not our way. We stand in solidarity with the world against a regime where only 1% are the lucky ones. We are 85% who realise that we must join with indigenous people who have long fought these issues. Then our number will truly reflect 99%. We remember that your responsibility as guardians of these lands was stripped from you under this system we now oppose. We acknowledge that to this day you fight for the status of authority and caretaker that you lost on your lands of ancestral origin. We ask for your blessing that we may all become better caretakers together" (Davidson, M. 2011).

The radical step these Elders, with others, are suggesting is that we recognise that the gifts of traditional and indigenous knowledges were ‘normal’ (or a baseline for human flourishing) prior to the rise of westernisation, and that we use these as remedy for Earth crises, and as a functional and reverent way of living respectfully together, in place. These expressions are inclusive of non-indigenous peoples, those ‘others’ who have historically excluded indigenous peoples from due consideration, the basic elements necessary for a good (or even adequate) life, respect, and care. Elders *include* the settlers, the ancestors of the colonisers, in these pronouncements.³² These sentiments raise an interesting question. If we accept this invitation, how might we plan alongside these Earthkeepers and traditional custodians in order to remake the future for the generations yet-to-come?

In his collection of Elder wisdom, American writer and ally, Steven McFadden, outlines the task ahead as follows:

I believe that we are being called to create social and cultural forms imbued with ethics and aesthetics for the twenty-first century and perhaps the millennium. Those forms must be based on an ecologically informed culture with awareness of sacred time and sacred place. Our culture must gratefully and gracefully embrace [all] humanity. As I hear it, the message of the elders is that this is necessary and possible (1991, pp. 14-15).

It would appear that acceptance of these teachings and following this lead is also a viable means of securing what Unangax (Aleut) scholar, Eve Tuck, and Latin/o educator, Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández, call indigenous *futurity* (2013, p. 80). Indigenous futurity is not secured by extending westernisation via the ‘inclusion’ of traditional and indigenous knowledges, thus limiting these to westernised purposes, but is secured by *rematriating* these knowledges, as I am doing in this thesis.³³

³² Faith Spotted Eagle has stated: “The task for Settlers is to realize we have Settler mind and not replicate Settler-Colonialism. Settlers need to heal from what happened to our culture. With the fallacy of the melting pot, we were made to feel ashamed of our own culture(s), and were forced to become ‘American’ or ‘Canadian.’ However, Settlers are now required to stand in our full spirit” (in Eyers 2015).

³³ This term is gaining ground via the efforts of scholars in indigenous feminist studies (for an example, see Tuck 2011). An early definition was suggested by Shawnee/Lenape Executive Director of the Indigenous Law Institute, Steven Newcomb: “to restore a living culture to its rightful place on Mother Earth,’ or ‘to restore a people to a spiritual way of life, in sacred relationship with their ancestral lands, without external interference.’ As a concept, rematriation acknowledges that our ancestors lives in spiritual relationship with the land for thousands of years, and that we have a sacred duty to maintain that relationship for the benefit of our future generations” (1995).

Just as ‘to repatriate’ is to return people, goods, and so forth to their place of origin (to go home), ‘to rematriate’ is to restore the emplaced feminine. This includes the living maternal body of Earth, and all indigenous and traditional Earthkeepers who have been feminised, and thus disenfranchised by binarised reference to (and comparison with) a masculinist, or ‘rational’, westernised assertion of dominance. In this process, as perpetuated by those modes of thought, and actions perpetuated in the name of westernised colonialism, nation-state establishment, institutions, and scholarship, the body of Earth, and the body of the Native Other, have been constructed as negatively isomorphic. Rematriation is, therefore, a sociopolitical and ecological intervention to recover matristic values and secure indigenous futurity.

By logical extension, the proposal that westernised peoples accept direction from traditional and reestablished forms of Elder wisdom is likely to secure futures, *in general*. The focus (when directed by traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented values) shifts towards good outcomes for all living beings – how to live well, and sustainably, together. As John Mohawk has said:

Native American pragmatism is a way of thinking about the world that demands the thinker look at the outcomes. When you think about the great quotes from Native American people you get quotes like, ‘Let us look forward to what we do today and how it benefits the coming generations, seven generations in the future.’ ‘Let’s put our minds together to see what kind of life we’ll give to our children,’ etc. This is the concept of outcome. And it’s different than Kissingerian realism in that it requires that all elements of an outcome be desirable (2008a, pp. 130-131).³⁴

I suggest that planetary futurity rests *absolutely* on the securement of indigenous futurity, and offer the argument in service to that idea.³⁵

³⁴In his work with the Asháninca communities in the Peruvian Amazon, anthropologist, Jeremy Narby, notes that good knowledge for the Asháninca is knowledge that is good *for* something, and that without this function, knowledge is considered to have no value (2005).

³⁵ Settler-colonialism, or the situation in which the settlers, social practices, and associated colonial institutions come to stay, are a special target of anti-colonial scholarship. Settler-colonialism is the embodiment of the replacement ethos that is native to westernisation. Whilst the securement of settler futures (or, settler futurity) is based upon *replacing and erasing* indigenous bodies and futures, the securement of indigenous futurity does *not* rescind hospitality towards established settler communities. Indigenous futurity (along with associated decolonising practices which uphold indigenous ways of being) foreclose settler-colonialism, and the attached worldview, in its entirety; yet, indigenous futurity does *not* necessarily require the removal of settled bodies. What indigenous futurity requires is the elimination of visible and invisible colonial structures, the very existence of which threatens, from cosmology to practice, the very possibility of indigenous futurity (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013; Tuck and Yang 2012).

Taking indigenous and traditional worldviews seriously, therefore, in the terms and in the manner requested for at least the last century, is foundational for my work in this thesis. Taking seriously includes challenging the aspects of what I call a ‘normative’ westernised worldview, in academic and social contexts, where that worldview provokes the reduction and dismissal of indigenous and traditional thought and ways of being. It involves profiling not only knowledges, but *wisdom*. By wisdom, I mean the products of intergenerational experiences, insights, directions, or instructions that transmit precepts for living well, sensibly, or correctly, and according to particular codes, values, and laws. Wisdom traditions throughout the world may appear to vary greatly, and yet they coordinate beautifully when it comes to advice on how to live well, together. The sentiments, advice, and insights of global Elders and leaders grow out of traditions which extend beyond a single individual or generation, and the reassurances and instruction offered by such traditions ‘prove’ themselves over and again within human experience (see Hrynkow and Westlund 2015).

British philosopher, Nicholas Maxwell, has been making the case for wisdom as central to academic transmission for some forty years. As he writes:

What we have at present – an academic enterprise devoted by and large to improving *knowledge* and technological *know-how* – is, from the standpoint of helping us create a good world, grossly and damagingly irrational... At present we do not possess traditions and institutions of learning rationally designed to help us build a better world... We urgently need a new... kind of academic inquiry... [which] would have, as its basic aim to improve, not just knowledge, but rather personal and global *wisdom* – wisdom being understood to be the capacity to realize what it of value in life, for oneself and others... (1992, p. 207).³⁶

How we achieve these ends, in the context of neoliberalised universities, may require more than the courage to teach differently, although innovation is certainly part of the endeavour.³⁷ As systems

³⁶ Maxwell offers thorough arguments supporting the return of wisdom to the universities, more recently focusing on wisdom responses to the anthropocene (1992, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017).

³⁷ The push for academic institutions to fall in with increasingly neoliberal sociopolitical agendas that protect and support a number of westernised conventions is a topic in and of itself, however these objectives can be construed as almost diametrically opposed to traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented ways of thinking and being. Neoliberalism is defined well by David Harvey. As he writes: “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create a preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices... [and] to set up those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if

scientist, Peter Senge, reminds us, *institutions matter*. In his outline of the three main objectives to keep in mind as we pursue socioecological change, he writes:

our individual actions are mediated through the web of institutions that connect the world. It is folly to think that the changes needed in the coming years will not involve fundamental shifts in the way institutions function, individually and collectively... While institutions matter, how they operate arises from how we operate, how people think and interact. In short, to shape a sustainable future, we all need to work together differently than we have in the past (2010, p. 10).

As Senge quips, there was no one Ministry put in charge of the Industrial Revolution, no one had a plan, and what lies ahead will be no different. And yet we have the capacity to act *locally* and transmit, from person to person, the courage to empower even small changes among friends and colleagues. This, as Hawken noted in *Blessed Unrest*, is to distribute the seeds that might grow a different world. Fortune favours the bold, and the collected power of people to design a sustainable future is limited only by a belief in separateness. If neoliberal agendas are based on an age-old colonial philosophy of ‘divide and conquer’, emphasising markets over human beings, then the power of refusal lies with strong community, human-to-human connection, the securement of shared goals, and collaborative action (see Choudry 2007).³⁸ Refusal, or withholding consent, which serves indigenous communities labouring against neoliberal agendas, might also serve academic disciplines and communities as they refuse to compete with one another for resources and endeavour to promote a wisdom-base that informs differently rendered values and goals.³⁹

need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary” (2007, p. 2).

³⁸ There are a number of examples of this community ethic as it informs indigenous responses to neoliberalism (see Artaraz and Calestani 2015; McLean, J. 2017; Rice 2012). For a useful treatment of the necessity to emphasise *care* within geographical disciplinary communities, see the work of UK-based geographers, Kye Askins and Matej Blazek (Askins 2009; Askins and Blazek 2017).

³⁹ The relationship between refusal and responsibility has been a topic for a number of scholars, many working in the area of indigenous geographies (Madge *et al.* 2009; Massey 2004; Noxolo *et al.* 2012; Raghuram *et al.* 2009; Wood and Rossiter 2017). Refusal is described by Australian geographer, Sarah Wright, as “a way of resisting, reframing, and redirecting colonial and capitalist logics” (2018, p. 128). As I am suggesting that that neoliberalism (and capitalism) employ new kinds of colonial logics, the strategies for nonviolent resistance which are embodied by traditional and indigenous communities can also be usefully applied to neocolonial attempts to dominate peoples who feel they are locked into the institutional performance politics of competing with one another. Whilst the situation here in Aotearoa is consistent with international observations that neoliberal reforms are a factor in the creation of intense academic anxieties (Berg *et al.* 2016; Berg and Roche 1997), work on the relationship between responsibility and geography is ongoing (Higgins *et al.* 2016; McClean *et al.* 1997). The work of Aotearoa New Zealand geographer Nicolas Lewis is also useful for delineating the relationships between the international education industry and geography (2011, 2012; Sidhu *et al.* 2016).

To transmit wisdom is to attempt more than just 'knowledge transfer'. It is not a purely utilitarian directive, but references a web of relationships between different aspects of the life journey, other living beings, past and future generations, and any other materials that mediates the transmission of those who are passing it on. Furthermore, and as pointed out by Onondaga Faithkeeper, Chief Oren Lyons Jr., the transmission of this collected wisdom is not optional for those who hold it: "there are instructions in our histories and a responsibility to pass those on to the people coming" (Lyons Jr. and Mann 2016).⁴⁰ Taking seriously therefore includes respect for these felt obligations.

My point here, as part of the scholarly work that seriousness requires, is to target those aspects of indigenous and traditional thought that have been categorised variously as religious, cultural, irrational, spiritual, pagan, animistic, unimportant, invisible, imaginary, fictional, primitive, or suspicious. In a number of instances, these dismissals are centred upon some aspect, or reference to, a view of consciousness or sentience which exceeds the secular-scientific, westernised view of the human.

For example, I argue that intuition and instinct are not only endemic to the human species, but that they augment awareness of connection, or what the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh has called *interbeing* with all other kinds of life,⁴¹ and facilitate further deep connection behaviours between life-forms, many of which are ecologically-oriented with a socially-functional ethical core. I give numerous examples which support this idea, sufficient to consider it not only a valid hypothesis, but probably true. There are, however, significant biases against the intuitive, relational, reverent expressions of kinship or interbeing that are found in the numerous cultural traditions I discuss in this thesis.

⁴⁰ Chief Oren Lyons Jr. is Seneca Wolf Clan by his mother's line, but was asked to be the Faithkeeper of the Onondaga Turtle Clan (Haudenosaunee) in the 1970s. His understanding of the title Chief is that the English concept is an inadequate representation of his position. This word, among his people, refers to a position akin to leader and peacemaker, who possesses a good mind, and works for the people. This was expressed in a 2016 conference plenary shared with Cheyenne-Arapaho MSU professor emeritus, Dr Henrietta Mann (Lyons Jr. and Mann 2016).

⁴¹ Thich Nhat Hanh founded the Order of Interbeing in Saigon in 1966. The Order of Interbeing is a monastic and lay community of Mahayana Buddhist practitioners. I became familiar with this term and its broader applications through reading the work of Daniel Christian Wahl (2016). It is roughly equivalent with *interêtre* (in French) and *intersein* (in German). The Sino-Vietnamese translation for *Tiếp Hiện* 接現 or interbeing, is a combination of 'to be in touch with, continuing', and 'realising, making in the here and now' (note the active present tense).

I argue that the real work of properly considering other knowledges and ways of being is only possible beyond these biases, as the biases limit comprehension of other worldviews due to certain *a priori* assumptions. These assumptions distort how other ways of being and knowing are viewed, interpreted, and/or taken account of. Furthermore, the perpetuation of these assumptions negatively impact not only on indigenous communities, scholars, thinkers, and Elders, but others who may have excellent contributions to make in a number of fields that engage socioecological solutions.

Cultivating a different sense of our place and experience in ‘nature’, and repairing or remaking cultural models (such as renewing affective bonds as the basis of community) also has to be a ‘modern’ project which repurposes, rather than rejects outright, a number of modern technologies upon which human societies have come to depend. As suggested by Chief Oren Lyons Jr. (2007), we need to adapt our technologies and change people’s minds so that *everybody* has a future. Robin Kimmerer extends how this might be enacted: “For all of us, becoming indigenous to a place means living as if your children’s future mattered, to take care of the land as if our lives, both material and spiritual, depended on it” (2013, p. 9).

I believe that we owe our academic labour to this future, perhaps in some way due to the collected scholarly misdeeds of the past (actioned largely in support of colonialism), but also because I believe we are yet to explore so much of what has been discarded due to biases we might be as yet unaware of. As noted by Aotearoa New Zealand geographer, Robin Kearns, we must renew our sense of story (2001, pp. 300-301). We need to find the courage to eschew irreligious or dispirited engagements with others, or with the subjects we choose to focus upon in our studies. His call, like mine, is for scholars to resist the ‘secular religion’ of academia and find new ways to broadcast the message that place *matters*.

The ways in which place matters to specific peoples with specific histories that are enspirited with the awareness of Earth consciousness calls for more collaboration between place geographies, indigenous geographies, emotional geographies, and the vast ecological literatures that have emerged from a range of disciplines. As the Australian anthropologist, Deborah Bird Rose, has noted: “The current western emphasis on sustainability – that future generations should have some means of life support, has stimulated a great green literature” (2004, p. 175); and yet, as she writes, conversations between indigenous peoples and others regarding our shared ecological wellbeing have ‘barely’ begun.

This could change, and I think that we are obligated to use our collective energies in a more directly constructive, purposeful, and responsible manner than that which presently characterises

much teaching and scholarship. Even where genuine and deliberate efforts to work on these issues are endeavoured by scholars, these biases, together with the corporatisation of academic institutions, academic cultures of disciplinary isolation, and disciplinary secular-scientific conventions, still make it difficult to speak, teach, or write plainly on those issues which concern us.⁴²

Whilst I find no sound reason for what is, on occasion, a disrespectful tokenism, tolerance, and elsewhere, the outright dismissal of indigenous and traditional perspectives, encouraging non-indigenous others to rework their understandings of consciousness in a manner which embraces an alive and sentient planet, wherein every living thing is a potentially interactive site for communications, might require a little more than proselytisation. I suggest that what we face here is a *worldview* problem, and a persistent one. Taking seriously will mean being changed and being affected in ways that transform worldview in personal, political, and institutional ways (see Larsen and Johnson 2016). The work of taking seriously, therefore, will require a deep questioning of those precepts *we* (as scholars, and some of us, also, as westernised humans) take very seriously, and may hold to be self-evident.

Caring for Earth as Kin

Four Arrows writes that *awareness* of our collective issues is a prerequisite for understanding this overall hypothesis on reindigenisation and the necessities of worldview shift (2016c, p. 16). Value change for survival (as Lyons Jr. puts it, 2007), or the motivation to be interested, to understand, or to change, comes from perceiving that there *is* actually some threat to planetary futurity, to which I would add, *caring about this*.⁴³ Planetary stewardship may rely upon caring in ways that are informed by much broader definitions of what Earth is – as formulated in explicit *kinship* terms – and certainly more deeply than is evidenced in many contemporary, modern, human settlements.

⁴² The prefiguring of geography by a positivist legacy, as observed over thirty years ago by Harrison and Livingstone (1980), remains (just as in most other westernised disciplinary areas) a persistent story. Recent work that attends to the decolonisation of geographical thought converges on this positivist history but problematises it from a number of angles (Baldwin 2017; Daigle and Sundberg 2017; de Leeuw *et al.* 2013; de Leeuw and Hunt 2018; Esson *et al.* 2017; Halvorsen 2018; Hodge and Lester 2006; Jazeel 2017; Noxolo 2017a, 2017b; Radcliffe 2017a, 2017b, 2018; Shaw *et al.* 2006; Simpson, M. and Bagelman 2018; Smith, J. 2017; Sundberg 2014; Wright, S. 2012).

⁴³ As noted by posthumanities scholar on care, María Puig de la Bellacasa (who is, in turn, drawing upon Donna Haraway): “Thinking in the world involves acknowledging our own involvements in perpetuating dominant values, rather than retreating into the secure position of an enlightened outsider who knows better” (2012, p. 197).

If we are to make a commitment to each other, to other species, and to the planet, it cannot be just to the ‘environment’ – literally meaning ‘that which encircles’ an autonomous individual – but to the ecology of relationships within which we are always and already embedded. This involves choosing to extend our circle of concern, as premised first on *increased human awareness of the existence of these relationships*. Therefore, any vision of transformation includes a new, or perhaps renewed, ecological commitment to Earth that has, at its core, a deep appreciation of our presence in/as what we call ‘nature’ as a locus of deep relationships and a foundation for a good life. This vision is at the very heart of the work offered herein.

Caring for Earth by way of extending our circle of concern is a relational proposition with precursors that are not typically part of the modern ethos, by which I mean that the concept of caring for Earth may appear as an *optional extra* for individuals, families, communities, and organisations within modern westernised contexts, rather than a component of core cultural values.⁴⁴ As political scientist, Joan C. Tronto, asks: what would it really mean “to take seriously, as part of our definition of a good society, the values of caring – attentiveness, responsibility, nurturance, compassion, and meeting others needs?” (1993, p. 3). Being human in a modern, urban, westernised society does not generally *require* care for others, care for other forms of life, or care for Earth, as a part of the definition of a good life, although care work may be performed routinely, or sometimes out of obligation (see Puig de la Bellacasa 2017).⁴⁵ Yet problematically, it is this westernised worldview that presently dominates the world, often in implicit and unexamined ways. Caring for Earth, if rendered as an extension of caring for others, or even caring for place as enacted in local and personal ways, constitutes a good beginning.⁴⁶

⁴⁴As Tronto says, in reference to igniting a sense of common morality, “rethinking the nature of responsibilities turns out to be a much more radical project” (2013, p. 143).

⁴⁵ Along with Joan C. Tronto (1993, 2013), feminist philosopher Virginia Held must be counted as a key figure in this field (1995, 2006).

⁴⁶ The literature linking the relatively new field of emotional geographies with postcolonial issues, development studies, responsibility, new feminisms, indigenous matters, and the importance of care has been ever-growing in recent years (Askins 2009; Askins and Blazek 2017; Boff 2008; Clouser 2016; Conradson 2003; Davidson, J. *et al.* 2005; Davidson, J. and Milligan 2004; Dombroski *et al.* 2016; Lawson 2007; McEwan and Goodman 2010; Noxolo *et al.* 2012; Phillips 2016; Puig de la Bellacasa 2012, 2017; Raghuram *et al.* 2009; Suchet-Pearson *et al.* 2013; Wright, S. 2012). What these scholars appear to be converging upon, despite being presently situated somewhat adjacently to one another, is a parallel concern with ‘reshaping’ the politics of inclusion within moral, ecological, and geographical communities (to draw upon the excellent doctoral work of Canadian geographer, Alette Willis 2007, pp. 41-42). The recognition that there is no ‘us’ and ‘them’

Conversely, many traditional and indigenous ecological worldviews *do* require care for others, care for other species, and care for Earth as interdependent and essential components of a good life. This stark comparison with a westernised worldview is not overstated. Although it may appear that caring for/caring with does happen in societies that have arisen from processes of westernisation, the motivation for caring that I highlight here is fundamentally derived from a different guiding ethos: it generates a completely different foundation for caring behaviours directed towards the livelihoods (and thriving) of all Earth others as *kin*. It is this ethos, most evident in traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented communities, past and present, that I am particularly interested in.

When care is radically inclusive of all life, it flows differently and, perhaps, further than we might presently imagine when guided by our scholarly or social constructions of what caring means. What I mean by this is that a kincentric worldview, with Earth at centre, as nourished by and as nourishing a deep ecological ethic, extends care to *all* life, without exception.

Consider the following prophecy, as relayed by Robin Kimmerer:

This time that we live in of great change and of great choices has been spoken of by our ancestors, in the teachings known as the Prophecies of the Seventh Fire... it's said that people will find themselves in a time when you can no longer fill a cup from a stream and drink... And it's said, that we would know, in the time of the Seventh Fire that we stand all together at a fork in the road, and one of those paths is soft and green and all spangled with dew... and one of those paths is black and burnt... we know which path we want. And the prophecy tells us that we have to make a choice between the path of materialism and the path of spirituality and care and compassion, of *pimatisiwin*, of following the good life. And we're told that before we can choose that soft green path, we can't just charge forward; that instead, the people of the Seventh Fire must indeed turn backwards and *remember to remember*. To walk back along that path and pick up what was left for us – the stories, the teachings, the songs, each other, our more-than-human relatives who lay scattered along that path – and our language. And only when we've found these once again and placed them in our bundles, the things that will heal us, the things that we love too much to lose, then can we walk forward on that green path; and it's all the world's people, everyone, together, you and me. And these are the questions that we face at the crossroads (Conference Keynote, 13-15 March 2015).⁴⁷

(which Willis refers to as the overcoming of geographic compartmentalisation), is a necessary first step in achieving some resonance across disciplinary specialties born out of what were once historically salient divisions.

⁴⁷ A bundle is described by Anishinaabe/Metis/Norwegian scholar, Melissa K. Nelson, as a collection of stories representing different aspects of life's teachings, bringing together spiritual and material objects, elements, allies, energies

What Kimmerer expresses is a vision of all Earth's people as powerfully directed toward embracing a traditional and indigenous Earth minded ethic as panacea and remedy for our present socioecological crises. Yet, whilst a significant number of Earth's people may understand and appreciate these words of Kimmerer's in one form or another, the prophecies and other kinds of 'non-rational' wisdom relayed by indigenous thinkers and Elders are often relegated to the category of 'beliefs'.

As Waitaha ki Waitaki (Māori) scholar, Makere Stewart-Harawira, has written (and her voice is not an isolated one):

far from irrelevant in the modern world, traditional indigenous social, political and cosmological ontologies are profoundly important to the development of transformative alternative frameworks for global order and new ways of being. . . . To date, however, outside of indigenous scholarship itself, within academic circles little serious attention has been paid to examining the possibilities inherent in indigenous ontologies (2005, pp. 24,34).

A taken-for-granted awareness of instinctual and intuitive faculties, especially when they are present among the Elders who lead a community, augment a deep awareness of kinship, interbeing, or connection, with all other species of life, and work to promote ecologically-oriented behaviours with a functional ethical core (oriented to Earth or kin-centred practices).

Earth based practices are the foundation for, and the result of, healthy communities which maintain a landbase and associated relationships with the other living inhabitants of this terrain. The cosmological bases for the maintenance of such healthy communities, within which relationships are sustained, are transmitted from one generation to the next, through enculturation and education – from birth, through appropriate life-stage rituals, and by high conduct role models and Elders within cohesive communities. Such societies are generally sustainable in their management of available resources.⁴⁸

and so forth for the ceremony or gathering that is being undertaken (2008a, p. 5). A similar concept is represented by the baskets of knowledge, or *ngā kete o te mātauranga*, as sometimes used in Māori contexts to represent an equivalent idea.

⁴⁸ Whilst not all groups who use the self-designator of indigenous are ecologically-oriented, I am also aware of a number of examples in which sustainable practices with land, as managed by ecologically-oriented communities, are profoundly disrupted. This is generally prompted by migration to a new place in which relationships have not had sufficient time to be established, or by unexpected disaster, and/or starvation. In addition, the examples offered by scholars arguing *against* indigenous sustainable practices often suffer from a paucity of data, and can leave out indigenous or local explanations (for an example, see Maragia 2005). Further, as argued by ethnocologist, Gene Anderson, "We also have reports of systems that seem to fail—but the reports come from societies shattered by hundreds of years of colonial oppression" (2014, p. 10).

Sustainability attracts diverse definitions and has become somewhat of an unstable signifier; however, in his ground-breaking work, *Designing Regenerative Cultures*, scholar Daniel Christian Wahl makes the case that “what we are actually trying to sustain is the underlying pattern of health, resilience and adaptability that maintain the planet in a condition where life as a whole can flourish. Design for sustainability is, ultimately, design for human and planetary health” (2016, p. 43). Sustainability grounded in a renewed ethic of care might also prompt the reevaluation and use of multiple kinds of knowledge – the traditional and technological, local and global, urban, wild, prophetic, and innovative – reconsidered in the context of the contemporary world, and in terms of their *complementarity*, rather than as distinct and mutually exclusive fields of interest. There are a number of other precedents for this view, many of which are evident in the work of the collective *Bioneers*.⁴⁹

Whilst, I do not claim to have ‘the’ right answer as to how we should live, I *am* interested in knowing more about these ideas that have been historically by-passed (or ignored) by academic scholars, *how* and *why* this occurred, and what the *impacts* of this are for traditional and indigenous communities, Elders, scholars (and more recently, their allies) when they talk in terms of worldview, the planet, and solutions. Honouring these voices differently is critical.

Just as there are obvious problems with how many of us are living, there are also some good and often, time-honoured, proposals for how we *could* be living differently, along with newer ideas for respecting, reformulating, reimagining, and restoring (or *restorying*) our contracts with Earth. As I detail in this thesis, there are some good instructions for *how to live well* in the realms of the ignored, suppressed, reduced, and denied: our respectful engagement with these instructions now seems essential. Furthermore, this corpus of traditional knowledge may actually be *critical* to securement of a different collective human future, and the ongoing failure of academics to engage more genuinely with other worldviews could prove to be extremely short-sighted.

Melissa Nelson writes that “the question of whether Indigenous Peoples were, historically, environmentalists or not, is almost irrelevant. To say that American Indians were the ‘first ecologists’ fragments environmental matters from other issues of daily life and imposes a modern postcolonial concept onto a historical precolonial context” (2008a, p. 13).

⁴⁹ *The Bioneers*, founded by Kenny Ausubel and Nina Simon, are a global organisation that is committed to increasing socio-ecological literacy through combining scientific and indigenous knowledge. Speakers at their yearly conference are filmed and the proceedings are publically available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/bioneerschannel/videos>.

Chapter Outline

In my opening chapter —*Marking Out the Research Terrain*—I outline my disciplinary location, delineate the method and process that is particular to my research interests, and index the key concepts that are central to my argument. I also discuss a number of caveats regarding scholarly approaches and objections and the correct or debated approaches to indigenous and traditional worldview elements. I attend to the positioning of my own arguments relative to these. Chapter one addresses the political and academic dimensions that a thesis of this nature may attract.

In this chapter, I also discuss what it means to be westernised and/or long-ago colonised, and I use historical materials to excavate the religious and philosophical basis for the westernised worldview. Furthermore, I discuss the biases that I have identified, as generated by this worldview, that are an obstacle to taking seriously, and suggest an exit by way of strategic worldview decolonisation. Part of this strategy, as offered by traditional and indigenous Elders, involves reindigenising humans to Earth under the guidance of Elders, and as supported by their allies.

In chapter two—*Worldview Metaphysics*—I delineate my own theoretical contributions to the study of worldview. In these contributions, I define new relationships between cosmology, ontology, epistemology, axiology, praxis, paradigms, culture, and religion. In writing theory, I have also created an educational tool that can be usefully employed to safely and deliberately disrupt westernised social and academic conventions within learning environments. In this chapter, I suggest that worldview analysis provides metacognitive openings for initiating significant and transformative inquiry into the various personal, familial, geographical and institutional biases that might be operative (yet unthought) in any one individual or collective. Furthermore, I argue that direct and deliberate engagement with worldview in educational settings can assist scholars in leveraging the privilege and resources of their positions in service to planetary futurity.

Chapter three—*This Anthropocen(e)tric Moment*—provides an outline of what we are collectively concerned with in terms of contemporary global socioecological conditions. I discuss the idea that westernised human beings suffer from a crisis of perception, as generated from the westernised worldview and the conditions of westernised societies. In this chapter, I begin to engage more directly with the voices of Earth Elders and consider some of their perspectives on human engagement with Earth. I introduce the idea that the English language works to inscribe a false sense of separation from Earth when, in reality, humans are not and could never be disconnected from Earth, nor from one another. I argue that this sense of separation is an illusion. In addition, this

chapter introduces key concepts from systems thinkers that are useful for the type of inquiry I am endeavouring, and engages directly with issues pertaining to scholarly responsibility and education.

In chapter four—*Listening to the Elders*—I relay and discuss some of the prophecies that hold the balance across multiple traditional and indigenous kincentric contexts. In detailing prophecies, I provide an introduction to the many warnings and key wisdoms that Elders from all over the world have issued directly to people within westernised societies. This is a chapter in which I offer a collation of the voices of Elders and traditional and indigenous educators with relatively little intervention. In beginning with prophecy, my intention is to challenge the demand from those operating from within a westernised worldview that events be ‘properly situated’ in a sequence of explicit cause and effect, which must conform to prevailing scientific ideas. The Elders and educators present a compelling case, which responds directly to some of what has been discussed to this point in the thesis, and this chapter provides these voices with a frame.

In chapter five—*The Laws of the Mother*—I explore in-depth what indigenous and traditional Earth minded people have referred to as First Teachings, Original Instructions, and Laws. These are instructions concerning human beings and how we must live. As in the foregoing chapter, I elaborate from a number of traditions and consider particular perspectives that are shared by different peoples, in different places. I argue that indigenous and traditional understandings of human nature and human potential, and kincentric relationships between humans, with other beings, and with Earth, are key to the flourishing of humankind and overall planetary futurity.

Taken together, chapters four and five are an introduction to *particular* aspects of traditional and indigenous worldviews that appear to have obtained consistently (and reliably) for numerous of the worlds peoples, and from which westernised peoples might learn. Note that this thesis can only ever serve as an ‘introduction’ to such a topic. As is evident in these chapters and their footnotes, there is an immense body of orature and written literature which speaks directly about the necessity of humans to change their ways for the benefit of Earth, and offers advice as to how we might all do this. The best I can do in a document of this length is point to the remainder of that evidence.

The organisation of the thesis chapters presents my argument as two interwoven strands. The first is a challenge to academic claims that scholars take seriously traditional and indigenous Earth minded, or ecologically-oriented, ways of being in world. I articulate the particularities of this assertion from a number of different angles, and posit various arguments that demonstrate that these claims are, for the most part, unfounded. I address various issues of what it would mean to actually

take seriously, and provide some tools of analysis based upon the cosmological interrogation of the westernised worldview.

The second strand *takes seriously*, and is concerned with the content of indigenous and traditional Earth minded worldviews and the connections these elements of worldview have with planetary futurity. What I take most seriously in this thesis is that relationship, reciprocity, respect, responsibility, reverence, co-creative personhood, gratitude, and sharing with one another from the cornucopia of Earth, as determined by Laws, are *key organising principles* of multiple indigenous and traditional Earth minded worldviews. This thesis situates the necessity for these, within our current socioecological situation.

Chapter One: Marking Out the Research Terrain

One of the false gods of theologians, philosophers and other academics is called Method... This means that thought is subjected to an invisible tyranny... The tyranny of methodology... prevents us from raising questions never asked before and from being illumined by ideas that do not fit pre-established boxes and forms. The worshippers of Method have an effective way of handling data that not fit into the Respectable Categories of Questions and Answers. They simply classify it as non-data, thereby rendering it invisible.
—Mary Daly, 1973⁵⁰

British sociologist, John Law, in the introduction to his book, *After Method*, states that method is about “playing with the capacity to think six impossible things before breakfast. And, as part of this, it is about creating metaphors and images for what is impossible or barely possible, unthinkable, or almost unthinkable” (2004, p. 22). Law observes that the methods scholars have been using to engage with the full range of earthly phenomena are grossly insufficient to the task at hand, eventually acquiescing that he does not know precisely what which forward. He knows only that “it is no longer obvious that the disciplines and the research fields of science and social science are appropriate in their present form” (2004, p. 156).

Having absorbed the contents of his tome in full, and pondered it a very long while, I took his declaration of ‘opening’ the conversation as a challenge, noting that he appeared caught (as do many others) between the frustrating inadequacy of the methods at hand, and a genuine desire for something he calls ‘outthereness’.⁵¹ The response I have come up with, which I hope will attend to his

⁵⁰ Mary Daly (1928-2010) was an American radical feminist philosopher and theologian. This quote comes from her seminal text, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press. Reprint, 1985, (1973, p. 11).

⁵¹ Law states his project as follows: “Pains and pleasures, hopes and horrors, intuitions and apprehensions, losses and redemptions, mundanities and visions, angels and demons, things that slip and slide, or appear and disappear, change shape or don’t have much form at all, unpredictabilities, these are just a few of the phenomena that are hardly caught by social science methods. It may be, of course, that they don’t belong to social science at all. But perhaps they do, or partly do, or should do. That, at any rate, is what I want to suggest. Parts of the world are caught in our ethnographies, our histories and our statistics. But other parts are not, or if they are then this is because they have been distorted into clarity. This is the problem I try to tackle. If much of the world is vague, diffuse or unspecific, slippery, emotional, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct, changes like a kaleidoscope, or doesn’t really have much of a pattern at all, then where does this leave social science? How might we catch some of the realities we are currently missing? Can we know them well? Should we know them? Is ‘knowing’ the metaphor that we need? And if it isn’t, then how might we relate to them?” (2004, p. 2). Some of the work-around metaphors he uses include enactment, multiplicity, fluidity, fractionality, flux, crafting, indefiniteness, condensates, interferences, allegory, resonance, gathering, imaginaries, enchantment, and assemblage.

frustration (at least in part), focuses on the need to reconsider those *metaphysical inheritances* that have always informed the processes, practices, and (re)productions of scholarship.

In this chapter, I outline my location in the discipline of Human Geography, and delineate the method and process that is particular to my research in this thesis. I index the key concepts that are central to my argument and necessary for my research objective: that is, *to take seriously*. Given that this thesis engages with research materials that profile indigenous and traditional ways of being and forms of knowledge, I also discuss a number of caveats and definitions that are of political concern to scholars working in this area. In doing this, my purpose is to create a scaffold that can support the radical disruption of metaphysical predicates that follows in the upcoming chapters.

1.1 Writing the Earthlife

This thesis originated with the personal, yet very *political*, question of how I could make sense of my own intuitive experiences. I was told (informally, by scholars who claimed more experience than I) that such experiences were difficult, if not impossible, to translate into scholarship, unless I wished to write something narrative-based, inside a discipline such as cultural or religious studies. This ‘advice’ was accompanied by a number of disclaimers regarding the dangers of truth-claims, the difficulty of ‘knowing’ what people (or animals) might think or feel, concerned nods to the problems associated with anthropomorphism, and the perils of subjectivity.⁵² Nonetheless, I took up my doctorate in sociology and anthropology, taught undergraduate classes, and read widely, publishing where I could in order to develop my ideas under the direction of scholars in other disciplines.

The thesis then went through a number of very different iterations, under the direction of a range of supervisors. In the words of the late Polish philosopher Zygmunt Bauman, the experts “being experts – must know best the things on which they are the experts” (2006, p. 23). The difficulty was that, in trying to capture the ‘impossibility’ of intuitive (specifically precognitive) experiences that I knew very well to be reliable and even verifiable, there were no undisciplined ‘experts’ to whom I could turn – they were all very well trained in what ought to be rejected as a matter of course. Eventually, having attempted reconciliation with this uncomfortable reality in a number of ways, I applied to relocate my doctoral work to human geography.

⁵² For a brilliant deconstruction of the argument against anthropomorphism, see the Bioneers presentation by ecologist Carl Safina (2017), as bolstered by his work in print (Robinson, L. *et al.* 2017; Safina 2002, 2016).

Human geography, which is a kind of ‘earth writing’,⁵³ includes a remarkable facility for accommodating the kind of inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary scholarship that occurs in the interstitial spaces between the sciences and the sociocultural. As geographer, Wendy Gibbons, has established (2001), many human geographers self-identify as critical, often radical, with a research focus that is in some way involved with emancipation, social change, and power relations, as they relate to space, place, humans, and ‘nature’. In her survey of human geographers, Gibbons found that two of the strongest themes to emerge were “the possibility of reconciling an agenda of critical problem-solving and social change within geography and relating geographical problem-solving to the world outside the university” (2001, p. 14). The work offered herein certainly conforms to those agendas.

In one sense, the premises central to this thesis are aligned with the disciplinary sub-field of *more-than-human geography*, as an off-shoot of radical geographies with a posthumanist agenda which draws inspiration from scholars such as Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway (see Anderson, K. 2014; Whatmore 2002).⁵⁴ More-than-human geography formed in response to a long-standing ‘overly human focus’ within geography, and practitioners working in this sub-field predominantly deal with the other-than-human actors with which we share the planet. Often, these are other species in the context of the Anthropocene, or environmental change (see Gibson *et al.* 2015; Lorimer 2012). Such challenges to human exceptionalism, provoked by contextual motivation, emphasise some urgency with regard to “the need to critique geography’s inherent colonial biases from decolonial angles” (as argued by British geographer, Eleanor Hayman 2018, p. 13). However, the field is also a necessarily fertile, experimental, and trans-disciplinary space.⁵⁵

⁵³ I recall learning that the earliest recorded name for Earth is *Ki*. The Greek cognate Gaia, *geo-* (derived from *gē, ga*) actually predates the Greek language as a reference to Earth and implicitly carries the meaning of sacredness and creativity. Graphy (from *graphein*, which is to draw, scratch, or carve) when added to *geo-* much later, creates a particular kind of representation, in which Earth has a subject-object relationship to the scribe or artist, as mediated by human cultural expression.

⁵⁴ Latour, ostensibly a philosopher, is engaged with the collapsing of the nature-culture divide to expose the hybrid arrangements that more readily map to the lived experience of social life (1987, 1993, 2005, 2013). Haraway, originally trained as a biologist, has become a critical reference for scholars working with multispecies ethnographies and in the area of human-technology interactions (1997, 2003, 2008, 2016).

⁵⁵ More-than-human geography attracts a very broad range of disciplinary lenses. The field is influenced by postcolonial, indigenous and development studies (Bawaka Country *et al.* 2013; Bawaka Country *et al.* 2015; Bawaka Country *et al.* 2016; Hunt, S. 2014; Larsen and Johnson 2013; Panelli 2010; Watson and Huntington 2008; Wright, K. 2017), intersectional and queered feminisms (Gibson-Graham 2011; Green 2007; Mickey and Kimberly 2012; Probyn 2014;

These new geographies combine novel approaches in terms of method and topic, such as the inclusion of more-than-human ‘Country’ as an author in the works of Bawaka Country (2013), and interactions with microbial and fungal life in Bingham (2006), Lorimer (2016), and Tsing (2015). Such moves coordinate and consolidate the spatial, decolonial, ontological and species ‘turns’ that have recently altered the disciplinary terrain in radical ways that would have been ‘unheard of’ in the not-so-distant world of Geography’s Past. As more-than-human geographer, Sarah Whatmore, has noted, these innovations are ‘writing *Earthlife*’ back into geographies:

Through these diverse currents, cultural geographers have found their way (back) to the material in very different ways that variously resonate with what I take to be amongst the most enduring of geographical concerns – the vital connections between the *geo* (earth) and the *bio* (life) (2006, p. 601).

Although I do consider human relationships with other species, sometimes at length, there is much more to the connection between this thesis and more-than-human geography. Technically, I have not really tried to *write* a more-than-human geography. This work is concerned with the prior question of how we have constructed our species and nature-culture boundaries in such a way that there *needed* to be a more-than-human geography. What I take from this field is an interest in the very reason for its existence and I develop the arguments in this thesis with recourse to the analysis of power relations as applicable to the construction of categories, classifications, and boundaries. I also follow the late Irish geographer, Anne Buttimer, in her vision for geography. As she wrote, with reassurance: “To seek better understanding of indigenous modes of understanding nature, seasonality, and sacredness does not in any way imply a celebration of pseudoscience or superstition. On the contrary, it amounts to admitting that contemporary humanity needs to remember more harmonious ways of dwelling on Planet Earth” (2006, p. 201). My political concern is with *knowledge justice*, or parity among knowledges, with full cognisance of the very real impact that silences, subjugations, and erasures have on human life and social worlds.

Analysis of power broadly situates this work within *critical human geography*, which is a diverse set of ideas and practices linked by “a shared commitment to emancipatory politics within and beyond the discipline, to the promotion of progressive social change and to the development of a broad range of critical theories and their application in geographical research and political practice” (Johnston *et al.* 1994, p. 136). In its radical guise, critical human geography is significantly informed

Twine 2010), political, historical, and economic critiques (Anderson, K. 2014; Braun and Whatmore 2010; Castree 2010; Harvey, D. 2000, 2016), critical and continental philosophies (Howitt and Suchet-Pearson 2006; Keeling 2012; Woodyer and Geoghegan 2013), and new materialisms (Bennett, J. 2010; Coole and Frost 2010; Johnson 2015; Nieuwenhuis 2016).

by the scholarship of Karl Marx and, whilst many modern Marxists will argue that Marx was ‘fiercely anti-ecological’ (see Foster, J.B. 2000; Foster, J.B. and Clark 2016), his work has proven to be remarkably compatible with the analysis of not only the forces of production, but socioecological relationships.⁵⁶

In formulating the links between critical geographies and my over-arching socioecological concerns, the most representative work for this project is the later scholarship of anthropologist and geographer, David Harvey (2016). Harvey interrogates human-ecological relations in a manner that embraces a new synthesis between the diverse interests and intersecting social spheres that converge in the concept of ecological thought on ‘the environment’, with the agenda of *recuperating* human alienation from nature. He calls for a geographical historical materialism which brings history, temporality, and scales of inquiry into account by transforming the ‘Cartesian-Newtonian-Lockean’ view into a dialectical, contingent, processual, and largely holistic or systems-oriented basis for a new political economic ecology.

Harvey’s thinking demonstrates a remarkable synthesis of the contributions of historians, geographers, social theorists, and scientists, and he does not hesitate to draw upon radical scholars, such as physicists, Fritjof Capra and David Bohm, and the evolutionary biologist, Richard Lewontin, to augment his reading of ecological thought. As he writes:

The task is... to both define and fight for a particular kind of ecosocialist project that extricates us from the peculiar oppressions and contradictions that capitalism is producing... Exploration of our ‘species potential’ and our capacity for realisation require that we take cognisance of the relation between ecological projects and the social relations needed to initiate, implement and manage them (pp. 203, 206).

Harvey emphasises that there can be no refashioning of nature into one that is unmediated, but only the possibility to ‘go beyond’ the present moment in a manner that continues to explore the emancipatory potential of modern societies (p. 205).

Whilst human geographers have been struggling to clearly articulate how a leftist, green geography might eventually look (see Castree 2002, 2003, 2010), the more-than-human and radical

⁵⁶ The most notable contemporary debate on anti-ecological versus ecological interpretations of Marx is between scholars Jason W. Moore (2015) and John Bellamy Foster (2000; Foster, J.B. and Clark 2016).

geographers have had much to offer.⁵⁷ More-than-human and radical geographers, such as Whatmore, or the collective inquiries of Bawaka Country, continue to test the arbitrary construction of nature as separate from culture, or humans and other living beings. However, as I have been careful to return constantly to the trans-disciplinary mode of synthesis for my analysis, these voices have been granted no lesser, nor greater, weight than those which are gleaned from other ‘disciplined’ areas, and deliberately so.⁵⁸ One of the key realisations I have come to is how easy it is to miss the vital connections between areas of study held as disparate ‘fields’ as a result of becoming overly attached to, or too disciplined, in one or another.

The most inspiring authors tend to return me to the book jacket, midway through, to check what discipline they are writing in.⁵⁹ Scholars of this kind seem to be intensely interested in contributing something useful to the world, or offering their scholarly insight genuinely as a kind of *service*. I have sought out this quality in the process of selecting whose voices I bring to the fore, and have favoured those who have an ethic of care, with a deep and obvious interest in improving the wellbeing of others. In this way, I have aimed to contribute to a particular kind of conversation, which uses the word ‘geography’ and connects this to ‘hope’, yet does not exist in any disciplinary sense – there are no formal *geographies of hope*, although there are many contributors to it, some of whom are also geographers.

⁵⁷ Similarly, political, economic, community, and environmentally-oriented scholars (see Bauman 2001; Bird 2016; Bowers 1994; Hayes-Conroy 2008; Moore, K.D. and Nelson 2011; Roelvink 2016; Roelvink *et al.* 2015) are just as relevant to this thesis as scholarship on emotional geographies and care (see Boff 2008; Conradson 2003; Heckert 2010; Held 2006; McEwan and Goodman 2010; Puig de la Bellacasa 2012, 2017; Tronto 1993, 2013).

⁵⁸ My definition of transdisciplinary follows systems thinkers: “The term ‘trans-disciplinarity’ is used to define a concept that goes beyond the meaning of multi- and even interdisciplinarity. While multi-disciplinarity would mean the unrelated coexistence of mono-disciplinary accounts and inter-disciplinarity the casual establishment of relations between mono-disciplines without having feedback loops that have a lasting impact on their repertoire of methods and concepts, trans-disciplinarity comes into play when each discipline is engaged in the collaborative undertaking of constructing a common base of methods and concepts, of which its own methods and concepts can be understood as kind of instantiations. Trans-disciplinarity does thereby not mean the abolition of disciplinary knowledge but grasping for a bigger picture” (Hofkirchner and Schafranek 2011, p. 193).

⁵⁹ Some of the greatest thinkers I have encountered (in print, alas, far more than in life) are skilled at novel innovation or insight by the careful cultivation of specialisation and generalism, or a balance of *span* and *depth* thinking, undertaken in equal measure. This is a quality I admire in Harvey, among others. My concept of span and depth balance is interpreted from the essay “The Hedgehog and the Fox” by the philosopher and political theorist, Isaiah Berlin (Berlin *et al.* 1997, pp. 436-498), and has also been developed via the work of transpersonal and integral theorist Ken Wilber (1996).

Following Whatmore (2006), I am also wishing to recover *Earthlife*, as she names it, but in a manner that is fundamentally geosophical in terms of content, orientation, and, ultimately, cosmology. How might scholars learn to incorporate Earth (-*geo*) wisdom (-*sophia*), which is a step beyond what we generally think of as 'knowledge'? This would also be a step *toward* reconfiguring what counts for knowledge when encountering traditional and indigenous ecological thought. In local disciplinary terms, what would a Gaian, or *geosophical geography*, look like? That is, a truly decolonised mode of university scholarship?

This kind of decolonised scholarship would have to include root assumptions which do not present problematically to scholars and others who approach the planet with the instruments of quantitative scientific research, as indigenous scientists have been arguing for some time (see Armstrong 2002b; Cajete 1994, 1999; 2000 ; Kawagley 2006; Kimmerer 2002, 2012, 2013; Rich 2011). There is not necessarily a dichotomy between indigenous and western sciences, yet the latter presently fail to capture the holism inherent in traditional practices and, as a result, westernised scientists may fail to fully appreciate the value of indigenous sciences. These kinds of knowing might be comprehended more fully if the biases that are presently maintained within 'the sciences' were examined more closely, and freed from their (somewhat invisible) theological roots.

John Kirtland Wright, who first proposed geosophy as a subfield of geography, wrote of this issue (in 1947, p. 3): "Geographical research seeks to convert the *terrae incognitae* of science into *terrae cognitae*...". His suggestion was to combine philosophy, history, and geography. Sixty years later, I would suggest that a new transdisciplinary 'geosophy' requires an approach that is not limited to any particular philosophical, scientific, or religiospiritual confinement. A new kind of *placework* (as it is called by indigenous geographers, Soren Larsen and Jay Johnson, 2016) also requires a relationality between humans, more-than-humans, and sentient Earth which is intensely personal. As they summarise:

Place creates—it personalizes the power consciousness of Creation into ways of being whose manifestations are enmeshed within more-than-human relationships. Place speaks—its creative aegis is expressed in the diverse personalities, moods, and intentions of the many place worlds of being and relationship. Place teaches—its manifestations guide us in our responsibilities in the pluriverse by reminding us when we forget, as we so often do, how to be Natural People... (p. 152).

A further suggestion would be to co-opt the emancipatory and more-than-human future-orientations afforded by radical, more-than-human, and indigenous geographies *without* the accompanying metaphysical inheritances proscribed within secular-scientific academic disciplines.

These inheritances are presently unacknowledged and, thus, remain immune from any sustained or cohesive critique.

Earthlife cannot be an ‘object’ of study – it is not separate from the many interconnections that obtain in the making and maintaining Earthlife. Incorporating a geosophical element into scholarship, as a whole, requires the validation of traditional and indigenous kinds of Earth wisdom as a possibility, which, presently, does not figure as a valid component of academic work, except as an offshoot of ethnicity, culture, or religion.

The question as to how wisdom can be liberated from the shackles of outdated historical classificatory devices and be retrieved as not only a useful, but *necessary* corrective to scholarship as a whole, would require the overcoming of long-standing colonialist injunctions. In addition, a geosophical turn requires compassion (that is, active care) in its management and distribution, so as to avoid being anathema to those scholars who are emotionally invested in certain kinds of scientific inquiry. In addition, such a turn could be well-intentioned and yet remain obstructive to indigenous self-determination, sovereignty, and cosmological expressions. A compassionate approach, to follow Kearns, “involves being down to earth so as to reconnect with the roots of both our humanity and our discipline... Rather than simply advocating principles of abstract justice, compassion requires a commitment to *care*” (2001, pp. 301-302, italics mine).

Metis geographer Jillian Smith (2017) writes that it is not only possible, but desirable that geographers engage with Indigenous worldviews in a manner that does not perpetuate the colonial project: indeed, in a manner that is radically *decolonised*. Whilst there are a number of active debates on decolonising geographies (see, for example the 2017 theme for the Royal Geographical Society conference: *Decolonising Geographical Knowledges* and the *Area* Special Issue),⁶⁰ these conversations are just beginning. As argued by Canadian geographers Sarah de Leeuw and Sarah Hunt:

Geographers theorizing and enacting what they name as decolonization—especially non-Indigenous settler geographers—tend to have in common a series of *ideals* that they gesture toward. Such gestures, however, are often still decoupled from actual Indigenous peoples, voices, and places... citing a significant number of Indigenous scholars, or including Indigenous voices, is lacking (2018, p. 7).

⁶⁰ I owe credit for this observation to geographer, Eleanor Hayman (2018, p. 12); see also the *Area* Special Issue introduction to decolonising geographical knowledges (Esson *et al.* 2017).

They suggest a starting place, and challenge geographers to begin asking how much they know about the lands on which they live and work; to ‘unsettle’ themselves, and to reimagine geography differently in the context of other voices, other knowledges, and a corpus that is less reliant on settler scholarship or points of view.

I suggest this is ‘easier said than done’, and for reasons that should become plain through the course of this chapter. Decolonising the academies has barely begun, and this slow pace cannot be attributed to neoliberal reforms, or to a lack of buy-in from scholars: generations of indigenous and critical race scholars, and their allies, have been making the argument to be taken seriously for half a century and many have listened. What has confused matters is the absence of a clear directive regarding what it is, specifically, that we need to decolonise. It is not simply the decolonisation of ‘knowledge’ – it is *ourselves*, and our westernised worldview, with special attention to a number of biases of which we may not even be aware. The work is personal. Decolonising the geographical (or any other) worldview is not prior *to*, but progresses *from* the decolonisation of one’s self, by which process a number of ‘academically salient’ categories, neologisms, perspectives, theories, and classifications become rapidly redundant. By this, I mean that the concepts with which we make sense of the world *change* through the adjustment of worldview.⁶¹

1.2 Taking Seriously, Seriously

The call to ‘take seriously’ is a relatively new idea, found across disciplines, in a variety of forms; however, the parameters of what is meant by this are not always explicitly stated. As penned by the budding sociologist and academic blogger, Nathan J. Robinson (2014): “A cursory browse for academic articles in the form ‘taking X seriously’ turns up hundreds of entries,” yet he bemoans the fact that very little of this actually takes anything more seriously than it was taken before. Implying both a depth of distinction from past scholarly works, and a certain arrogance attached to the notion that the object in question has somehow escaped the ‘real’ considerations of the ‘present’ author, Robinson quips:

Those who promise to take seriously often continue to plod along using the standard methods of their field, in the same manner of many others who go about their research but do not issue grand

⁶¹ To give an example here, consider phenomenology, a category that derives its very existence from philosophical ideas regarding the phenomenal world as mediated by the senses. This category relies heavily on theorising consciousness in ways that only make sense as part of a westernised worldview.

promises.... The Seriously-Taker casts all prior philosophizing into the fire, assuring us we will now get down to business, before proceeding to do more of the same (2014).

It would be difficult to phrase this better. Indeed, many of those who focus on taking seriously do seem to make initial, generally good points about what is wrong with (or missing in) scholarship, before inevitably crashing under the weight of the impossibility of the task at hand, or fatal entanglement in complex arguments which, ultimately, seem to up in debates over semantics.

I will offer a brief example to illustrate how discussions about ‘taking seriously’ can sometimes appear. Anthropologist, Matei Candea, writes that anthropologists have become increasingly insistent that their colleagues “‘take seriously’ the people they work with. And yet the moral valence of ‘taking seriously’ has often been clearer than its precise meaning” (2011, p. 146). The scholar to whom he is responding, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (also an anthropologist), states that by ‘taking seriously’ he means: to progress, firstly, the requirement for ontological self-determination among those who are ‘studied’ by anthropologists, which means that people have the right to choose what they will believe; and secondly, the ongoing project of decolonisation, which he calls as much a project for the self as the other (Viveiros de Castro 2011, p. 128).⁶² His article is difficult, specific, very much written in the language internal to the philosophy of anthropology, and the various responses to it are equally convoluted. Furthermore, Viveiros de Castro removes belief as a valid descriptor and seems to also want to remove the binary of truth and falsity (or whether something is ‘real’ or ‘unreal’). Whilst removing binarisations is an excellent idea, given the illusory distinctions binarisations created, I am not sure that ‘suspending as possibilities’ the beliefs and practices of others is a sufficient to answer the call to take seriously.⁶³

⁶² He goes on to suggest that anthropologists (and by extension here, other social scientists) must first “construct a concept of seriousness (a way of taking things seriously) that is not tied to the notion of belief or of any other ‘propositional attitudes’ that have representations as their object... [nor] tied to the hermeneutics of allegorical meanings... [and] must allow that ‘visions’ are not beliefs, not consensual views, but rather worlds seen objectively: not *worldviews*, but *worlds of vision* (and not vision only – these are worlds perceivable by senses other than vision and are objects of extrasensory conception as well). Secondly, and reciprocally, anthropology must find a way not to take seriously certain other ‘visions’” (Viveiros de Castro 2011, p. 133). A full discussion of this article by a number of scholars appears, with the Candea article, in *Common Knowledge*, Volume 17(1) Winter, 2011.

⁶³ To be clear, I am fairly sure that this was not what Viveiros de Castro intended to convey at all, however the aforementioned convolutions work to obscure his points. A deep reading suggests his interlocutors have misread him. Nonetheless, his work, and its reception, demonstrated to me that another approach was needed.

Reading Candea's account of Viveiros de Castro's definition, it is evident that this version of 'taking seriously' appears as just another form of the maxim that it 'doesn't matter' whether what other people believe is 'true' or not. The right to believe argument is hardly new, and reproduces the 'standard' in ethnography, as pointed to by anthropologist, Paul Nadasdy. As he writes: "most anthropologists... generally maintain that we do not need to (indeed, should not) adopt the beliefs of the people we study to theorize about those beliefs" (2007, p. 34). However, truth *does* matter to people. Seriousness may not necessarily depend upon personally compatible beliefs (indeed, we each have our own), but what is legitimated as a *valid* belief over and against an *invalid* one is extremely important.

Much of the time, when academics consider questions about a range of subjects generally considered 'spiritual' or 'supernatural', they may go to great lengths to state that it 'doesn't matter' whether these stories are 'true' or not, but only that they are accurate representations of 'what people believe'. Truth must matter if the dominant worldview is to be properly queried in areas where it is hegemonic, such as within areas where ascriptions of cultural relativism simply cannot compete with the abiding authority of the dominant worldview. Anthropologist, Paul Rabinow, writes that inscribed relations between truth and power are concealed by devices which 'bracket truth', which means taking no culture at its word: "The anthropologist thus succeeds in studying what is serious and truthful to Others without it being serious and truthful to him" (2011, p. 31).

Claims as to the subjectivity of truth have served academics well, as these claims can be extended from the broad classification distinctions of religion and culture into the designated supernatural realm, to reduce and marginalise, as false, any realities which directly oppose the dominant norms. Claims as to the objectivity and universality of westernised research are equally problematic (see Connell 2007). Truth *matters* in westernised contexts, especially academic realms, and to suggest that it does not matter, or that truth is 'relative' within an indigenous context, appears structurally racist.

This last point is at the theoretical centre of my research and concerns the rubric by which scholars determine truth, versus 'truth claims', or legitimate/illegitimate knowledge (claims), and so forth. This rubric reproduces certain hierarchical power relations according to a very specific metaphysical inheritance, which remains (at least fifty years on from the first murmurings of discontent from indigenous voices in academia) contested and unresolved. To 'take seriously', then, requires the parameters and limits of the present paradigm be explicitly enumerated, discussed, and, as far as is possible within the confines of a thesis, remedied. Taking seriously is not that complicated,

but it *does* require risk-taking and rule-breaking with regard to certain academic conventions. It requires dropping the metaphysics of the academy, and all the attached cosmological and ontological precepts which work to obscure and deny other concepts of process and reality. It also requires taking stock of the claims that are made in service to ecological or social justice issues and seeing whether ‘taking seriously’ *actually* applies, and, if not, supplying remedy that goes beyond tokenism, tolerance, or politically correct pretence. Resistance to changing the status quo, or fear of attending to the ethics in question, to borrow from Four Arrows, might well be refigured in such circumstances as *the opportunity to practice a virtue* (2016b).

These are bold moves, but they are rationally, logically, and practically overdue. The westernised worldview remains a relatively new exception to the rule that is understood by generations of traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented peoples. As asked by the late Standing Rock Sioux scholar, Vine Deloria Jr.: “You have got to look back into your own culture. . . why, after Newton and Darwin, did you grab that one quadrant and say that is what the world is about?” (Deloria Jr. *et al.* 1999, p. 229).

1.3 Method and Motivations

Some reflection on the *means* by which I have endeavoured to *take seriously* is necessary. I have used meta-analysis for the synthesis of ethnographic studies, an approach which is typically used to bring together the findings of a methodologically diverse set of ethnographies in order to generate deep (or ‘thick’) interpretations across subjects, cultural groups, or geographical zones (see Noblit and Hare 1988). It has also been described as a systematic study of literature concerned with similar kinds of phenomena (see Hunger *et al.* 1984; Wolf 1986). I determined that the work of synthesising from already-existent fieldwork and research (as augmented by the work of other scholars) was a critical undertaking for the topic I was interested in, and elected to use this method and augment it with modern orature and contemporary scholarship to weave a transdisciplinary synthesis of the findings.⁶⁴ In choosing to look at existent scholarship, orature, popular texts, internet sources, and so forth, I hoped to construct an analysis that was somewhat planetary in scope, rather than one that would be forced into the narrow confinements required of specialised fieldwork, or area studies.

⁶⁴ As pointed out during my oral examination, there is some irony in representing, in text, the contents of traditional and indigenous orature. However, as I make plain in the chapters ahead, the dissemination of this wisdom by Earth Elders is deemed essential by Elders themselves, and is expressly meant to be conveyed by any means possible.

In terms of the style of analysis, I have followed an iterative and *abductive* method, as initiated by the anthropologist, Gregory Bateson (1979, pp. 149, 153-155), who extended the definition of abduction he acquired from the semiotician, Charles Sanders Peirce (1931). Abduction is to draw resemblances between differences and interrelated propositions, or the comparison of patterns of relationships (and meta-patterns) in order to evaluate data *holistically* (rather than in a strictly linear progression from one component to the next), in order to generate higher-order organisational concepts and conclusions. Similarly, I have sought patterns when gathering and compiling critical commentaries on the present state of modern westernised societies.

I was also inspired by the description of *research* offered by Glenn Aparicio Parry (2015a, 2015b), in which he redefines 'original' thinking as origin, rather than its general definition as novel or unique.⁶⁵ Traditional and indigenous thinking often uses a circular world-ordering principle (see Norton-Smith 2010), as do I, so I used this motif to structure my research processes, rather than 'building upon' existing hypotheses in a linear fashion. This seemed appropriate, as I had been working with the process of recovering knowledges and seeking patterns, requiring layers of comparative work. This is not a process that is not accumulative in the linear sense as, in practice, the research materials spiral out into a web of connections as the interconnections between them become apparent.⁶⁶

The combination of abductive reasoning with this circular research method has also proved extremely useful for a more critical attunement to the research materials. Comparing patterns over a long period of time, whilst returning to the same sources repeatedly, has enabled me to evaluate the reliability of the sources I have encountered and read them against each other with an ever-increasing understanding of where critical contexts have been altered, or misrepresented entirely. This evaluation was, in part, intuitive, however it also involved a great deal of verification across bodies of orature and literature based in different places and time periods. Any principles, precepts, or knowledge claims that seemed anomalous when compared cross-culturally across communities with a lot of commonalities were initially put to one side. I eventually confirmed some of these claims as reliable, and included them in the thesis.

⁶⁵ Glenn Aparicio Parry, a Euro-American educator and founder of the SEED Institute, has also been gifted the Ojibwe name Kizhe Naabe for his work with bringing the perspectives of Native American scholars and Elders into broader view.

⁶⁶ Working with this method has also generated the account I give of 'the history of westernisation' as a product of the processes of extended colonisation, a finding which absolutely reoriented the research.

Although misrepresentation of indigenous and traditional knowledge is more common in ethnographies, there are plenty of examples (some well-intentioned) of distortion or misunderstanding in all types of sources, including some penned or spoken by people who have reported themselves to be traditional or indigenous experts, or allies.⁶⁷ My dual method of abductive reasoning and circular research has not only allowed me to identify disjuncts and commonalities, but to make stronger statements about the indigenous and traditional ways of being that I discuss in upcoming chapters, and trace the lines of continuity between disparate traditions far more competently.

My argument is substantiated by the firsthand accounts from indigenous Elders, community members, and indigenous scholars in their representations of traditional ecological worldviews. These have come from a century of translated ethnographic materials, gathered by non-indigenous scholars and in various contemporary forms of orature, such as public and academic talks, documentaries, and films available on the internet, as well as numerous books, articles, and other materials offered by contemporary non-indigenous allies, scholars, and ecological thinkers. Elder wisdom is my primary source material.

This choice of source materials has been largely determined by following the critiques that indigenous, anti-colonial, decolonising, anti-racist, and critical race scholars have made about the multiple privileges that are granted to particular kinds of knowledge within academic disciplines, always with particular interpretations attached.⁶⁸ In the practical procedure of writing up these findings, it has not simply been a matter of lining up indigenous and traditional thought and seeking to demonstrate the depth of these arguments *in situ*. My research process has entailed the making of

⁶⁷ Academic sources (often when writing outside their own discipline) may refer to books written by non-indigenous peoples that are not representative of a community, nor at all accurate. Much of the work for this thesis has been in following up minor points, details, and the contexts within which 'facts' have appeared in the literature. For an excellent example of how the popular imagination can be completely misdirected, see this interview with the late Aboriginal filmmaker and activist, of Bundjalung and Thungutti heritage, Alinta, also known as Lorraine Mafi-Williams (McLean, B. 1999).

⁶⁸ These critiques are now long established in scholarship by a range of authors (see, among others, Abdi 2011; Chilisa 2012; Collins, P.H. 1991; Connell 2007; Cox 2007; Dei 2011; Dei *et al.* 2000; Dei *et al.* 2004; Deloria Jr. 1995; Denzin *et al.* 2008; Dorfman 2010; Dorfman and Mattelart 1975; emerald *et al.* 2016; Four Arrows 2008, 2016a, 2016c; Grande 2004; Gray *et al.* 2008; Gray *et al.* 2013; Haig-Brown 2008, 2010; hooks 2003, 2009, 2010, 2013; Kovach 2009; Kuokkanen 2007; LaDuke 1999a, 2002, 2005; Lavell and Lavell-Harvard 2006; Mercurieff and Roderick 2013; Mihehah 1998, 2003, 2004; Mohawk and Barreiro 2010; Nelson 2008b; Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986, 2012; Oliveira and Wright 2015; Santos 2007, 2013; Smith, L 2012; Waters 2004a; Wilson, S. 2008; Yellow Bird and Waziyatawin 2005, 2012).

correlations to bodies of literature and non-indigenous thinkers and scholars, to hopefully demonstrate that the arguments I make herein are not only *significant*, but are widely supported outside of the academies and, sometimes (if only tacitly) within them.

Re-search means quite literally, to search or to *look again*, and in many instances I found myself reading what were essentially similar concepts and advice, offered in very different contexts, and across a wide range of time periods. It became evident that the conventional forms of knowledge capture leaves out many voices. This means I have chosen to look *into*, and then *beyond*, the traditional westernised canons to find what I would call better answers to difficult questions about how we, *as a species*, might overcome our various socioecological crises at this time. I have also noted the mandate which had always accompanied the gift of knowledge gathered by scholars working within indigenous and traditional contexts. This mandate implies reciprocity based on respect, mutual values and interests, and I found many examples in which it had neither been understood, nor fulfilled.⁶⁹

Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg (Anishinaabe) scholar, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, relays a contemporary example of this practice, the ethic of which stretches right back to first contact:

Elders are interviewed, hunters mark their hunting grounds on maps with the expectation that this knowledge is respected and will be used to make decisions. Most often it is not... the holders of the knowledge, the Aboriginal people, have no power over how that knowledge is interpreted and used (2001, pp. 139-140).

Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou (Māori) scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, writes on this also:

The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples. It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity... From some indigenous perspectives the gathering of

⁶⁹ Haunani-Kay Trask, Pi'ilani- Kahakumakaliua (Hawai'ian) scholar, as written: "While Hawaiians suffer this colonial yoke, anthropologists deny the very methodology of their work as exploitative... the exploitation of a people's hospitality and generosity does not carry with it any responsibility of repayment in kind, or of privilege and privacy. At some time in their professional lives, anthropologists live with Natives who are in struggle, dispossessed, and, in some cases, endangered. But in the interests of knowledge or science or some other abstraction, the anthropologist has no obligation to aid the people he or she studies, to withhold information that threatens the people or is considered sacred or privileged to them, or to be a part of their struggles, whatever they may be. In other words, the anthropologist is a taker and a user. And if the people who are taken from suffer from the anthropologist's work, too bad. No moral or ethical responsibility attaches to the anthropologist or the archaeologist" (1999, p. 127).

information by scientists was as random, *ad hoc* and damaging as that undertaken by amateurs (2012, pp. 1-3).

Tuhiwai Smith uses historical language here; however, I am convinced that these words are still true today. Indigenous knowledges emerge from worldviews that are *not* secular, which means that they are *a priori* considered by scholars to be ‘religious’, or in some cases, as ‘cultural’: set apart, not scientific, not modern, full stop.⁷⁰ I argue that the normative westernised view, as perpetuated in scholarship, is not (despite politically correct deferments) any less superstitious than the superstition attributed to indigenous peoples by colonial missionaries when conceiving of their lifeways as pagan, savage, and potentially dangerous.⁷¹

With this basis for evaluation, anything useful that could be extracted out of the indigenous cultural complexes of the world has been extorted without recognition or respect for the holistic web of relations and sacred elements that cohere these complexes. The sacred contexts which give meanings to practice are not often considered as valuable or ‘real’. Just as some humans have been categorised as ‘slaves’, ‘workers’, or a ‘labour force’, indigenous cultural content has been renamed ‘a resource’ or, at best, part of ‘a cultural heritage’ belonging to the nation state within which said complex has been absorbed.

Based upon this line of argument, my research and findings have been concentrated necessarily in two directions. The first direction requires exegesis of the historical roots of the present-day westernised worldview, and some exploration of that worldview in context and practice. My precedent here is the work of Rajani Kanth (2017), whose work on Euro-Modernism is essentially an

⁷⁰ For a defense of a materialistic, grounded approach to geography which abandons what the author terms as all notions of extravagant, immaterial, transcendent, or theistic references to soul or spirit or similar, see UK-based geographer Dragos Simandan (2017).

⁷¹ A number of examples come to mind here, particularly those assertions which maintain the hierarchies of being in fields such as archaeology and animal research. The rejection of ethnohistories as legitimate sources of knowledge yields many examples, a problem which occupied much of the scholarship of Vine Deloria Jr. (1973, 1978, 1988, 1995, 2004, 2006; Deloria Jr. *et al.* 1999). An interesting disjunct between archaeology, ethnohistory, and bias presents in the histories of Australia, particularly as relating to agriculture. The conventional narrative of Aboriginal Australian history does not include agriculture as a factor, with most scholars maintaining that “Australia remained a nation of nomadic hunter-gatherers whilst most people in the rest of the world... became cultivators” (Flood 1995, p. 253). Not only is this incorrect, as Aboriginal peoples throughout Australia have modified, cultivated, irrigated, and sown land, for tens of thousands of years (Gammage 2011; Graham 2018; Pascoe 2012, 2018a, 2018b), but ethnohistories from the Kimberleys detail the peoples’ deliberate rejection of *certain* kinds of agriculture in *preference* to a Law-based system of respectful animal and plant relations (Mowaljarlai and Malnic 1993).

economically-framed analysis of the same processes of psychic and physical ‘replacement culture’ that I discuss in this thesis.⁷² Other partial precedents for the project of Kanth (and in turn, aspects of this thesis) can be found in the work of cultural historians, Morris Berman (1981, 1990) and Richard Tarnas (1991, 2006), the work of polymath and political commentator, Thom Hartmann (2001, 2009), and in the most recent work of Glenn Aparicio Parry (2015a, 2015b).

Following a number of contemporary scholars, I also discuss philosophical angles on what it might mean to have been socialised into a normative westernised worldview, and the implications of ‘being colonised’, the precedent for which is most evident in the work of the Haudenosaunee, which in Anglo histories are called the Iroquois Confederacy (see Mohawk 1978), and Papatashash Cree First Nations philosopher and educator, Dwayne Donald (2010). I consider the necessity for a paradigm shift, in the context of worldview change, and what this might entail. Along with the likes of Donald and Kanth, I argue that we are all living with the consequences of this colonisation, and of the distribution of its accompanying worldview, which prompts the question: *how do we change that?*

The second direction taken in this thesis is an extended answer to that question. Kanth argues that the way forward is the restoration of communities based upon the cultivation of affective and maternal bonds, as modelled by numerous traditional and indigenous ecologically-based societies. He advocates for the urgent restoration of these bonds in presently fragmented westernised, postcolonial, traditional, and indigenous communities. By extension, he asks that we look to traditional and indigenous ecological values as a model for re-embedding communities of westernised peoples in the land *as kin*.⁷³ As I mentioned in my introductory greeting, what is

⁷² Cultural commentary of this kind properly begins with Karl Marx, Max Weber, Karl Mannheim, Vilfredo Pareto, and other early critics of modern rational societies. Historical analysis and early warnings pre-empting our current socioecological crises have since become part of an ongoing project taken up by scholars and a great lineage of critical ecologists too diverse to list here.

⁷³ The substantiation for this point is really to be located in the extensive work and collected voices of traditional and indigenous scholars and Elders. A selection include the edited position statements from the Haudenosaunee (collected in Mohawk 1978), the independent writings of Seneca Elder, activist, and scholar, John Mohawk (2000, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d; Mohawk and Barreiro 2010), the collective sentiments of the Kogi Mamas of the Sierra Nevada (Ereira 1990, 1992, 2012) and the International Council of the Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers (Hart 2009; Schaeffer *et al.* 2006), along with the contributions from Onondaga Elder and Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan, Chief Oren Lyons Jr. (Lyons Jr. 2007, 2013a, 2013b; Lyons Jr. and Mann 2016), Potawatomi botanist and educator, Robin Wall Kimmerer (2002, 2012, 2013, 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2017a, 2017b), Syilx Okanagan educator, Jeannette Armstrong (2002a, 2002b, 2008, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2017), Tewa Santa Clara Pueblo educator, Gregory Cajete (1994, 1999, 2000, 2015; Cajete *et al.* 2008), Unungan educator and Elder, Ilarion Mercurieff (2012, 2013, 2015, 2017a, 2017b; Mercurieff *et al.* 2017; Mercurieff and Roderick 2013), White Earth Ojibwe educator and activist, Winona LaDuke (1999a, 1999b, 2002, 2005, 2016, 2017),

required is a *kincentric* worldview (Martinez *et al.* 2008, p. 90).⁷⁴ If we, as a species, wish to foster better relationships with Earth, what is called for is the recognition of deep connection with a personal commitment to, and responsibility for, *all* of our relations.

1.4 Complex Caveats

My first intention (to summarise the foregoing sections) is to take seriously and honour traditional and indigenous voices that have long been subject to erasure in scholarship by academics, and to honour the mandate to convey certain knowledges with respect. *My second intention*, emergent from my research engagement with the first, is to honour those voices that have called for a decolonisation of settler and long-ago colonised, those Earth others who are not and no longer indigenous to a place, in order to pursue the securement of not only indigenous futurity, but planetary futurity. These intentions carry certain ethics which need elaboration and follow from relatively well-known warnings that others have already offered in the context of academic conduct in research with, or on, indigenous peoples and knowledge bases. Such critiques show justified caution when it comes to engagement with ‘outside’ researchers, scholars, and organisations. As Makere Stewart-Harawira writes, whilst the reclaiming, retelling, and rewriting of indigenous histories is critical to heal the scars of the past, there remain serious risks that ‘outsider’ scholars will essentialise and mythologise knowledges, as they have done in the past (2005, p. 23). Some caveats on my research position are therefore required.

Firstly, I reject the binarisation of ‘authentic’ and ‘invented’ as has been applied to traditional and indigenous histories and knowledges, and I do not see how these categories have value. The idea of authenticity, rendered in such binarised contexts, is rooted in racism, with links to blood quantum arguments, the erasure of cultural rights, and access to resources (see Memmi 2000). Authenticity arguments of this kind subvert the right to belong in a community of inheritance, albeit cultural or physical, and force a static (rather than dynamic) conception of culture and tradition.

Secondly, I do not presume a mythical golden age of pure ecological harmony and peaceful existence, but nor do I accept the idea that all humans, or all traditional and indigenous communities, are ‘naturally’ violent. This is an old trope which posits a universal and naturalistic view of human

Ifa/Orisha Yorùbá educator and Elder, Chief Yeye Luisah Teish (Teish 2012a, 2012b, 2015), and Irish-Cherokee educator, Four Arrows (also published as Don Trent Jacobs, Four Arrows 2006; 2008, 2013, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Jacobs, D.T. 1995).

⁷⁴ A good discussion of how a kincentric worldview works was presented at the Bioneers conference by Jeremy Narby (2017), drawing on his work with the Asháninca.

violence that I do not find much evidence for.⁷⁵ As scientist, James Demeo, writes in *Four Arrows'* collected survey of these assumptions within the Americas:

Certainly, not all Indigenous American cultures fit the peaceful images given in *Dances with Wolves*, but it is not an exaggeration to say that the majority did. If members of the “white man’s culture,” which has been far more patristic and violent, ridicule this assessment, they risk dismissing the more peace-oriented and democratic, egalitarian aspects of their own cultural history (2006, p. 151).⁷⁶

Generally, the communities I have looked at are essentially cooperative in nature, with a few exceptions across populations and continents, such as where a group has been under threat, or has had to migrate and re-adapt. The idea that people are naturally violent seems to be retrospective justification for two thousand years of human violence, largely administered by those belonging to

⁷⁵ The very *existence* of cooperative (rather than competitive) indigenous and traditional societies has been obscured by a dearth of anti-indigenous scholarship, most visibly in the United States and Canada. The assumption that competitive and violent behaviours or histories of warfare were indicative of the way life ‘had always been’ has plagued anthropological fieldwork for the foregoing century. As such, many anthropological accounts of ‘primitive behaviour’ are grossly inaccurate. Those indigenous communities who claim a warrior history do so in a manner that is self-validating, rather than as a by-product of violence as ‘written into’ their histories. On the misconstruction of the past in the United States and Canada, see the work of Ojibwe scholar, Lisa Poupart (2003), Muskogee Cree scholar, Sarah Deer (2015), Vine Deloria Jr. (1973, 1988, 1995; Deloria Jr. *et al.* 1999), and the extensive work on anti-Indianism undertaken by Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (2001) and *Four Arrows* (2006). There are many other examples from elsewhere in the world, although the most well-known case is the controversy surrounding Napoleon Chagnon’s anthropologist work on the Yanomamö (or Yanomami), whose communities span the nation state territories of Venezuela and Brazil (for sources and debates, see Borofsky and Albert 2005; Chagnon 1968, 2013; Kopenawa and Albert 2013; Salamone 1997; Tierney 2000).

⁷⁶ Traditional and indigenous communities can, and do, take account of their own historical misdeeds, learn, and counteract previous cycles of violence. John Mohawk gives an example from the Seneca of the Eastern Woodlands, prior to the coming of the Peacemaker. “The cycles of violence were deeply embedded in the laws and customs of the Indian people, and they were about revenge, for real and imagined injuries. Some of it was about thinking that someone had performed witchcraft on you, and therefore you had to get even for that. Or somebody had gotten killed and you had to get even for that. . . [the Peacemaker said] war makes people crazy. When people are at war, they’re not thinking clearly, and this is a problem... he addresses two questions: How do we know when we’re thinking clearly? And what does it mean to pursue peace?” (2008d, p. 55). Another example is given by Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg (Anishinaabe) scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, who relays a lesson on the remedial actions required, and acknowledgment of errors, after the Anishinaabe neglected their relationships and obligations with the Hoop Nation (Simpson, L.B. and Strong 2013). In South Australia, Elder of the Ngarrindjeri Nation, Major Sumner (also called Uncle Muggi), has said: “We had our wars but we didn’t slaughter each other because we needed each other. . . for ceremony. . . for marriages. . . disagreements were talked out, dissolved though some way of payment” (in Global Oneness Project 2009a).

the same cultural dominator complex as those who (later) promoted the ‘scientific’ idea of universal and naturalistic violence.⁷⁷

My third disclaimer rejects the binary of spiritual versus pragmatic or utilitarian sources of indigenous and traditional knowledge. The late Viola Cordova, of Jicarilla Apache and Hispanic heritage, summarises this well. She warns against divorcing pragmatism from the popular trope of the Native American who speaks to trees and birds and receives all their knowledge from a nature deity or spirit guide. She writes:

If the American aboriginal peoples were truly of such a nature, they would never have survived. Embedded in the mythology, legends, and traditions, is a pragmatic core . . . based on acute observation (Cordova and Moore 2007, p. 213).

As Cordova’s relational position demonstrates, the most likely position is *between* these poles, in which reverence, ceremony, Elder knowledge, kinship, and intuitive wisdom informs, and is informed, via utilitarian and pragmatic experiment and observation – a balance that is very evident across many traditions.

Fourth, I reject the idea of the ecological Indian, the noble savage, and the savage primitive, all of which are Eurocentric constructions of the ‘other’ that are leveraged to situate traditional and indigenous peoples and wilderness as static and romanticised bounded categories. There are no characteristics, ecological or otherwise, that could ever apply to all peoples who self-identify as traditional, or indigenous, as all communities are dynamic and adaptive. Indigenous lives, communities, and degrees of cultural and Earth connections differ, and what is being presented by Elders as an ideal to westernised humans is *also* offered to all peoples in all nations, including those indigenous peoples who have experienced significant postcolonial violences.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ I share this observation with Rajani Kanth (2017), who spends many chapters explaining, illustrating, and commenting on the many dimensions of what he calls the dominator culture.

⁷⁸ Consider this account from the Australian interdisciplinary scholar, David Tacey: “There’s a big term here in the Northern Territory: ‘two-way’. It means black way, white way. It also means Christian way and Aboriginal dreaming way. And a lot of people say ‘You two way,’ which means, can you operate both with Aboriginal dreaming and western religion? Pope John Paul II came here to Alice Springs in 1987 to deliver an official apology to the Aboriginal people. . . As one Aboriginal man said to me after that apology delivered by the Pope, ‘It was a wonderful apology. Him big man, but apology too late for me. I’ve already lost my dreaming, so I can’t go two-way.’ The dreaming was said to be devil worship by some of the early Christian missionaries, and so our European culture smashed those Aboriginal traditions. The apology’s fine, but the damage is done, and unfortunately the result is pathology: ‘Where there is no vision, the people

This healing gesture, and the accompanying instructions, risks being subverted by interpretations that co-opt the noble savage trope in order to minimise, reject, reduce, or dismiss, the offers of Elders. It also risks being subverted by those who eschew the ecologically-oriented origins of traditional and indigenous communities to avoid ‘romanticising the ecological Indian’, and then promote the ‘choice to modernise’ (in westernised ways) to those communities that are caught in the poverty trap, or in the throes of industrial development. As stated by Winona LaDuke, activist and scholar of the White Earth Ojibwe Nation, “we’re fighting crazy... we need to start calling bad ideas, bad ideas” (2016).

Suggesting that many traditional and indigenous peoples care about Earth, and have a long history of ecologically harmonious traditions, does *not* presume they are less than civilised, earthier, more animalistic, mystical, or any other trope. This ‘concern’ that scholars might have for the further dehumanisation of indigenous peoples is not a useful one, and simply reinforces westernised binaries and paternalistic thinking. It is more constructive to realise that the legacy that remained after many, if not all, indigenous peoples suffered the near-total destruction of their lifeways, land sovereignty, and basic rights, was in part due to the false judgments colonisers made as to their capacities. Indigenous peoples were characterised as ‘primitive’, ‘less than human’, and ‘closer to nature’. To insist upon associating those concepts with one another (as a warning to other scholars, no less) is to continue the colonial project under the guise of ‘respecting indigenous peoples’ by avoiding romanticism. None of this has much to do with indigenous futurity. As Anishinaabe/Metis/Norwegian scholar, Melissa Nelson, writes:

there has been much debate and discussion about the stereotype of the ‘ecologically noble savage’, as well as concerns over a romanticization of the past. What is interesting is that these questions do not often concern Indigenous Peoples themselves... issues of romanticization and exotification seem to be more of a concern and practice from outside, from Euro-American academia and the New Age movement respectively... given the rich philosophical worldviews and life practices of land and kin, it is absurd for Indigenous Peoples (or others) to question whether they were or are environmentalists or not (2008a, pp. 12-13).

For those living in the wake of the near-obliteration of their whole way of life, as Haunani-Kay Trask has written, the daily experience of resistance is bitter (1999, p. 126):

perish” (2012). Also worth due consideration is the account given by sociologist Colin Samson of the Innu ‘double-bind’ of having to live between two incommensurable worlds, the westernised and the Innu (2009).

The secrets of the land die with the people of the land. This is the bitter lesson of the modern age. Forcing human groups to be alike results in the destruction of languages, of environments, of nations. *The land cannot live without the people of the land who, in turn, care for their heritage, their mother.* This is an essential wisdom of indigenous cultures and explains why, when Native peoples are destroyed, destruction of the earth proceeds immediately (1999, p. 60).

Her way of speaking of place and relationships (of ‘earthiness’ or perhaps, even, harmony with nature), is an integral part of her stark political commentary. Trask is indigenous, highly educated, politicised, modern, traditional, and unashamedly elevates her felt relations with Earth. She does not reduce herself to the indulgent binarisations of western romanticism; rather, she ignores them. I choose to follow her lead. It is not a ‘romantic notion’ to identify what are essentially peaceable, wisdom-based traditions that base their lifeways on intuitive and instinctual relationships with Earth and other living beings. Nor is there anything ‘primitive’ about indigenous and traditional ways of knowing and being, and strategies for how to live well, as developed within the context of cohesive and ecologically-oriented communities over very long periods of time.

In a related theoretical move, I *do* posit that traditional and indigenous lifeways in westernised prehistory were often characterised by similarly constructed kinship relations, and place-based ecological-orientation. Non-indigenous scholars have typically rejected this idea, suggesting that it is to paint indigenous peoples as ‘living fossils’ of a former way of life, and that it sustains the appearance of indigenous peoples as ‘primitive’.⁷⁹ I suspect that it actually unsettles the Enlightened progression that is embedded within, and drives the promulgation of westernised ideas under the heading of civilising missions.

The full weight of westernised histories (and the accompanying violences) are not only subverted and denied for political ends, but the *prehistories* of what are now westernised peoples are

⁷⁹ Historical accounts that framed indigenous peoples as ‘living fossils’ were rejected in the 1970s and 1980s, as they were imperialistic and misconstrued; however, this rejection also halted any academic comparison of indigenous peoples across cultures, and the related interest in identifying any somewhat unified set of precepts across worldviews, or correlations with other human groups in prehistory. Scholarly focus subsequently became specialised, concentrating upon indigenous livelihoods within western-dominant contexts, and postcolonial sociopolitical movements. Whilst these foci are critically important for undoing colonial damages and establishing recognition of indigenous sovereignty and rights, the rush to revere ‘differences’ has also muted indigenous voices and opinions on a number of issues salient to this thesis. It has also entirely obscured the possible identification of any continuity between traditional and indigenous lifeways and the prehistory of westernised people. Consequently, the ascriptions of ‘primitivism’ (and associated power relations) have not been reversed, but simply avoided. Such cautions are counter-productive when the residual fears of misrepresentation are so active as to actually *contradict* the perspectives of many indigenous peoples themselves.

largely forgotten, as I explore at some length later in this chapter. As ethics and communications scholar Thomas W. Cooper writes of this forgetting:

To the extent it is successful, anamnesis not only awakens the Native to ‘roots’ but provides a *déjàvu* for all societies. After all, which culture can claim to be fully autonomous? All peoples have tribal ancestors (1998, p. 8).

My fifth caveat relates to the trope of the indigenous saviour. I do not suggest that that all indigenous and traditional peoples should be remade into saviours or teachers, or stereotyped as ‘panacea’ for westernised societal ills, as is occasionally suggested as remedy for ‘western’ losses of meaning. However, I do feel it is important to bring forward the voices of those who *wish* to be heard, such as Elders and teachers who have presented *themselves* (see Mohawk 1978), as bearers of wisdom and remedy since the 1970s.⁸⁰ It is critical not to sanction further exploitation on the basis of these offers, but it is also essential that we, as scholars, do not dismiss these offers or fail to take them seriously.

The westernised constructions of the traditional and indigenous teacher (the quintessential mystical Native American ‘shaman’ or the African ‘witch-doctor’) and the accompanying ridicule of the ‘New Age seeker’ *within* westernised societies has worked to trivialise real and existing Elders, teachers, healers, and wisdom-holders across a number of communities. The result of this subtle discrimination has been to render the teachers as invisible and voiceless, whilst the westernised seeker appears foolish and naïve. As this game of trivialisation is endemic only in westernised minds, as are the accompanying in-group/out-group politics, I have chosen to afford it no further attention.

My sixth point is made in response to the related issue of cultural appropriation. I hold that the work for all westernised peoples, some of whom *are* indigenous and therefore continue to endure cultural wounding, is to recalibrate our worldviews to live more in keeping with the recommendations of traditional and indigenous Elders.⁸¹ Their collective suggestion is for westernised peoples to begin the shift from the present ‘norm’ (the non-awareness of connection with Earth) to a greater awareness of connection to, ideally, deep connection with Earth, as grounded

⁸⁰ For an excellent example of how scholars can become caught in the rhetoric around these issues see Caston (2013).

⁸¹ On the inclusion of indigenous peoples as co-learners here, note the request made to scholar Thomas W. Cooper: “Many of my Native friends and associates, bemoaning a lost heritage, have asked, ‘Please tell us what you find out. We have forgotten the ways of our ancestors’...” (1998, p. 8). Anthropologist Ann-Fienup Riordan and oral translator, Alice Aluskak Rearden, in their collection of Elder wisdom, also note the concern of Elders regarding the increasing loss of tradition. Recording Elder knowledge and oral instructions in book form has been embraced wholeheartedly in this community, and is considered critical to the preservation of cultural wisdom for future generations (2012, pp. 4-5).

in traditional understandings of relationship, responsibility, respect, reciprocity, redistribution, and reverence.

As scholars (and, also perhaps, as inhabitants of westernised societies), this could be done by engaging in the work of relearning from indigenous and traditional Elders, communities, scholars, and models, and their non-indigenous allies who are already doing this work of recalibration. Melissa Nelson, relaying the words of Bear Clan, Chicksaw and Cheyenne law professor, James Sakej Henderson, says that he refers often to the 'learning spirit' within each person, and asks: "How do we awaken and sustain the learning spirit?" (2008a, p. 5).

I am not advocating for a 'seeker' culture in which westernised peoples descend upon indigenous communities for guidance (or appropriate ceremony, etc.), or in pursuit of greater spirituality by way of someone else's traditions, but suggest that all humans engage in respectful processes of learning how to live more consciously with Earth and other forms of life.⁸² The late Joseph Epes Brown, an ethnographer and historian of religion, laments that in suggesting these ideas to his students, he was often misunderstood:

Especially by students who like to believe that what I am trying to say is that they should go out and live and be American Indians; this is not my point at all, because for those of us who are non-Indian it is an impossibility... What I am trying to say is that these traditions could be taken as models which might provide us with answers to some of the dilemmas with which we are currently struggling in our own society (2009, pp. 346-347).

Epes concurs that we relearn from the core perspectives which have been rooted in the land for far longer than those who came after. For Melissa Nelson, this work aims toward the decolonisation of our mind, hearts, bodies, and spirits, in order to revitalize healthy cultural traditions, whilst also creating new traditions, and new ways to thrive in those places we presently live (2008a, p. 14). I think of this work as a foundational first step to planetary socioecological transformation, the basis for an ethic of care, a good life, or, revisiting our ideas about *how to live well*.

Lastly, members of traditional and indigenous communities are not responsible for continually engaging in the work of 'awakening', decolonising, and re-educating westernised people, or 'saving

⁸² There is a concept in cognitive accounts of religion called the God-shaped hole, originating with St Augustine, fully developed in the *Pensées* (Thoughts) of Blaise Pascal, published posthumously in 1670. It has since gone on to have a pejorative afterlife in scholarship (as a God-shaped delusion), in which the human search for meaning is viewed somewhat contemptuously, and as 'backwards' (see Fiala 2009).

the planet'. Nor do they have time, which means that the mandate for continuing the work they are initiating also falls to their allies. Elders advise, and the work is to be taken up by others who follow those directions. As suggested by Choctaw scholar, Thurman Lee Hester Jr.:

Surprisingly, some of the real work of academic Native philosophy is going to have to be done by the non-Natives. Not only will they, as the gatekeepers-in-fact, act to police the discipline, but they really must do it because it will be a while before our community will be large enough that we can do it ourselves. Those of us trying to do Native philosophy will certainly try to make what we are doing clear, but a person could be a fine Native philosopher, and be unwilling or unable to do philosophy in a way that is recognizable within the Euro-American tradition. Hopefully, some of the wisdom will come through, hopefully discerning academic philosophers will be able to detect it despite differences in tradition. However, if you can't see it time after time, I would suggest that you pass on to more fruitful pastures (2004b, p. 267).

Allies must work in accordance with the traditional principles of relationship, responsibility, respect, reciprocity, redistribution, and reverence for the knowledges or practices they are engaged with. Following peace scholar, Rick Wallace, allyship is defined here as a trust-based, "mutual reworking of colonial relations of power" (2013, p. 172).⁸³ Rethinking allyship and its uses is critical for creating the conditions whereby non-indigenous people can move beyond the 'charity model' of allyship and engage a personal, conscious, educated, and emplaced sense of responsibility for socioecological partnership; thus, creating an effective, decolonised perspective for collective global change.

Pedagogical responsibility for un-learning has to occur through networks of transmission which venerate these life ways without reduction or appropriation, and it is the responsibility of each individual within one's own community to help one another 'get right' with the world – to teach each other to have 'right relations'. The call from the Elders asks those who need and want leadership to

⁸³ Based on fieldwork and case-studies, Wallace identifies constructive non-indigenous ally practices as follows: material and strategic support for indigenous communities, respect for indigenous leadership and processes of decision making, and establishing trust as dependent upon shared sincerity, commitment, values and beliefs, truth-speaking, and respect for the mutual obligations of honouring the land and each other as key for rebuilding right relations (2013, pp. 176-177). For further, detailed, discussion of the multiple pressures to rebuild and sustain indigenous communities in the postcolonial context, see the work of Gregory Cajete (2015) and Tsalagi (Cherokee Nation) scholar Jeff Corntassel (2012). I use the word ally here, rather than the alternative, *accomplice*, as ally suggests kinship and friendship. *Accomplice* suggests an alliance between co-conspirators, or those involved in deception, which seems extremely inappropriate. A related discussion of decolonisation and criminality (as applied to anthropology) emphasises the relationship between transformation of scholarship (against neoliberalism), and an ascription of fugitivity to such endeavours that is often strongly associated with race (Allen, J.S. and Jobson 2016).

pursue this, and this call also requires westernised peoples attend to their own decolonisation in all the ways necessary for taking up this offer, whilst extending the deference it commands. Gifting this guidance in the context of securing good allyship is a part of what many indigenous communities see as essential to the remedy for restoring balance to Earth.

As an ally, I have made myself responsible for challenging a number of metaphysical conventions (of westernised origin) that are culpable in perpetuating colonial exploitation through the academic-indigenous relationship. This also implies that I am careful not to ‘speak for’ indigenous peoples, but to make evident to the academic community, of which *I* am a part, that many aspects of the collective experiences of traditional and indigenous peoples have been overlooked, ignored, misunderstood, appropriated out of context, misinterpreted and have continued to be represented in terms native only to a *westernised* worldview.

These are critical disclaimers, especially given the mode and orientation of my research in the context of indigenous academic efforts to overcome such assumptions, reductions, and representative devices. Contemporary indigenous scholarship, when it attends to these issues (as it often does), is a site of perpetual struggle and the field remains marginalised despite a long history of constant requests to be taken seriously. I find this state of affairs unacceptable and outdated. Intellectual miscomprehension perpetuates colonial violences, and as these caveats demonstrate, the degree of complex manoeuvring and explication that is required in order to disrupt persistent academic assumptions is significant in scope.

Additionally, the lack of sustained scholarly attention to the kinds of ideas that I put forward in the remainder of this thesis, and biases that have explicitly and implicitly obscured the integrity of indigenous and traditional worldviews remain dominant in indigenous-academic encounters. This is still happening, in both subtle and overt ways.⁸⁴ Misunderstanding is common and I have a responsibility to those who offer these collected teachings to honour them properly.

1.5 Indigenous as Signifier, Indigeneity as Paradigm

According to Chief Oren Lyons Jr., it was at a meeting in British Columbia, Canada, in 1975, that the term *indigenous* was chosen to signify that the collective ‘indigenous peoples of the western

⁸⁴ For examples of gross scholarly misconstruction of indigenous histories, see the work of Jocelyn Linnekin on Hawai‘i (1985, 1990); for blatant anti-Indian scholarship on Canadian First Nations, see the work of Frances Widdowson (2016; Widdowson and Howard 2008); and, for generally negative representation, see the following authors, as critiqued (2016c) by Four Arrows: (Clifton 2007; Edgerton 1992; Keeley 1996; Krech 1999; Pinker 2011; Whelan 1999).

hemisphere' would be recognised as those who are *original to the land* (Lyons Jr. and Mann 2016). The term has since been adopted as a cultural and political signifier, signalling long-term residence, relationship with, or custodianship of land that pre-dates other migrations, and often refers to the shared experiences of colonial violence, minoritisation, removal, dispossession, and the consciousness of sharing a common, relationally defined, identity.

The anthropologist, John Bodley, writing in 1990 (when indigenous processes of self-determination were beginning to acquire traction), noted:

When leaders from diverse cultures meet each other for the first time, they are overwhelmed by the fact that they share the same basic culture in spite of their often conspicuous, but superficial differences... indigenous peoples throughout the world are independently saying exactly the same things when they describe the elements that make them different from the dominant societies surrounding them... Leaders of the emerging indigenous peoples' self-determination movement see their own societies as classless, community-based, egalitarian, and close to nature... Some anthropologists might argue that no society was ever really egalitarian and that all contemporary tribal societies have irrevocably lost whatever ideal features they may have once possessed, but today's indigenous leaders disagree (pp. 154-155).

Whilst this perspective certainly matches many self-conceptualisations I have read, the act of grouping traditional and indigenous peoples together nonetheless risks a loss of complexity and diversity across vastly different communities that are often separated by geography and time. It is important to strike a balance between the particular and the universal; however, the universal has proved to be a useful strategy for indigenous peoples within a number of arenas. In this thesis, I follow a number of indigenous scholars who have found universalism to be a necessarily part of 'strategic essentialism' (following the postcolonial perspective of Spivak 1993; 1999). Universalistic claims, when directed towards particular purposes, can also reveal important aspects of species-level human experience, behaviour, and practice, which can be instructive.

Udyurla Arabana (Australian Aboriginal) scholar, Veronica Arbon, writes that, as opposed to suggesting a new hegemony, in which the diversity of indigenous cultures are collapsed into a new universal, there is the need to acknowledge the similarities between different indigenous groups of the world (2008, p. 19:fn 17). She outlines cultural continuities between many indigenous communities in her work, as do Sámi political scientist, Rauna Kuokkanen (2007), Makere Stewart-Harawira (2005), Sandra D. Styres (2017), Vine Deloria Jr. (1973, 1978, 1988, 1995, 2004, 2006; Deloria Jr. *et al.* 1999). Others combine their voices across boundaries for collections on indigenous knowledges (for

example, Abdi 2011; Ah Nee-Benham and Cooper 2008; Dei *et al.* 2000; Denzin *et al.* 2008; Gonzales 2012; Gray *et al.* 2008; Mercurieff and Roderick 2013).

Indigenous is an irreducible signifier, self-determined, and inseparable from a lived experience that is community-oriented across time, space, and beyond the limits of personal identity. It has historical significance, yet it is lived in the contemporary context, and it is *emplaced*. The unique connections between land, place, terrain, and inhabitants, when joined to the relative congruence of species-being and ideas of ‘humanness’ *across* communities, is a critical part of what I am emphasising in this thesis.⁸⁵ Fittingly, Four Arrows defends a pan-indigenous approach as fit for purpose in his discussion of worldviews and suggests that comparison across diverse cultural complexes is possible if it can be observed that they share common features, just as landscapes may be recognised as ‘landscapes’ through the identification of common features such as trees, rivers, mountains, or grassy fields (2016c, p. 3).⁸⁶

Inspired by Four Arrows’ approach, I would suggest that human beings across ethnicities, religions, whether indigenous, or westernised, or with a combination of multiple signifiers and geographical locations can be thought about in much the same way. Diversity, ethnicity, and tribalism (whilst they have their uses over and against homogenisation) present complex issues when

⁸⁵ The notion that there are places with, and without, the presence of ‘spirit’ still afflicts the figuring of place for geography, in a similar way that the harder sciences may conceive of other-than-human Earth beings as with, or without, consciousness. As noted by Canadian geographer, Nadia Bartolini (with co-authors), both sides of the debate on the presence/absence of religion within modernity agree, in the first instance, “that there is a separation between different public spheres; *second*, that these spheres have very particular geographies; and, *third*, that these map out spheres/places where the spiritual is present or not...” (Bartolini *et al.* 2017, p. 338). They also note that occulture and alternative spiritualities are overlooked in the geographical debates on religion, in which there has been a recent resurgence of interest (Dwyer 2016; Kong 2010; MacKian 2011; Sheringham 2010; Sutherland 2017; Tse 2014; Yorgason and della Dora 2009). Scholars working in these areas might usefully take note of Anne Buttimer’s observation that the disciplinary focus on ‘space’ rather than ‘humanity and environment’ has obscured the role of the biophysical environment in the shaping of religious, or spiritual, sensitivities (2006, p. 197).

⁸⁶ Trask, speaking in Karasjokka, Norway, at a world conference of Native women as sponsored by Sámi, said: “We come from diverse communities at varied levels of forced assimilation, economic exploitation, religious missionizing, political and cultural oppression, and physical extermination as peoples. Many of us are survivors of earlier genocidal campaigns, while some of us are no doubt fighting current genocidal campaigns. Clearly, we are vastly different from each other, not only geographically, but culturally, linguistically, and historically as well. And yet, I believe, we share many more similarities than differences. We have a common heritage as aboriginal peoples, that is, as First Nations of the world. We are all land-based people, and some of us are also sea-based people, who are attuned to the rhythms of our homelands in a way that assumes both protection of and an intimate belonging to our ancestral places... These large commonalities have brought us together as indigenous women fighting for our peoples, our lands, and our very survival” (1999, p. 102).

the lines by which people can be divided from one another *are reinforced as absolutes*. In an historical context, the colonial strategy of ‘divide and rule’ proved very effective in diluting resistance to imposed powers, and I personally remain very suspicious of contemporary versions of this which appear benign.

The separatist violence that has been perpetuated (and encouraged) amongst people who would otherwise assume a common human relationship as *sui generis*, is an imperial project. Regardless of their origin, these divisions into ethnicity, culture, race, tribe, and religion, have been mobilised as colonial classifications, despite their political uses as collective signifiers for the securement of rights and resources, and whilst their relational uses are appropriate in a number of contexts, they also continue to reinforce stereotypes, marginalisation, inclusions, and exclusions, whilst limiting access to power.⁸⁷

In addition to the everyday dilutions of power that can be achieved through recourse to such ‘unassailable differences’, many more racialised, geopolitical and religious clashes (such as the conflicts in Darfur, or the 1994 genocide in Rwanda), continue to yield only disastrous results. Such an emphasis on difference seems to lead inevitably, and consistently, to xenophobia, violence and deaths. This is apparent both in the extreme context of war and between everyday people who hold a belief in the absoluteness of difference and all that has been denied, withheld, or enabled in its name.

In the spirit of peacemaking, the work of Syilx Okanagan Nation scholar, Jeannette Armstrong, is inspired. She focuses on separating the idea of *indigeneity* (as process and paradigm) from the ethnic and racialised contexts within which it is often situated. In her written work and orature, she emphasises a set of core, specifically *species-based*, commonalities that are essential for the project of reindigenising westernised people to places, and the shift toward a sociocultural paradigm that is set against westernised metaphysics.

⁸⁷ French Tunisian scholar, Albert Memmi, has argued that racism has four ‘moments’: the insistence of difference, the negative valuation imposed on those who differ, the generalising of this negative valuation to an entire group, and the use of this generalisation to legitimise violence. He writes that “*racism has a function*. It is both the emblem and the rationalization for a system of social oppression. . . [there is an] *organic connection between racism and oppression*. . . racism subsumes and reveals all the elements of dominance and subjection, aggression and fear, injustice and the defense of privilege, the apologetics of domination with its self-justifications, the disparaging myths and images of the dominated, and finally the social destruction or social nullification of the victimized people for the benefit of their persecutors and executioners – all this is contained within it” (2000, pp. 92-93). I am suggesting that we disrupt this process by close attention and rejection of the *first* moment he identified.

Armstrong's definition of indigeneity may *include* other definitions, such as local concepts of kinship or long-term residence, political solidarity, or a shared experience of colonialism, but it does not *limit* the term to ethnic, racialised, localised or political uses. In her PhD dissertation, Armstrong opens with the following statement:

Indigeneity as a social paradigm is identified by an inter-reliant experience in the land as demonstrated in their land-use practice and shaped in the way the land's realities are observed, learned and communicated to succeeding generations. Indigeneity from that perspective is not a delineation of human ethnicity but an attainment of knowledge and wisdom as a part of the scheme of perfect self-perpetuation that nature is... Indigeneity reflects an epistemology that optimum human self-perpetuation is not human centered but must be consistent with the optimum ability for the environment to regenerate itself (2010a, p. 1).

Armstrong's work is strategic, in that it extends the idea of indigeneity to be paradigmatic. In doing so, she constructs it as something to aim for: in the first instance, as remedy for those indigenous communities who have been critically weakened and seek cultural healing, or the restoration of their indigeneity, or reinvigoration of their cultural traditions, but also, in the second instance, as an achievable set of values and practices, set in the context of a long-term view of planetary inhabitation for all humans.⁸⁸

This re-definition of indigeneity, as Armstrong says elsewhere (2011), is oriented towards shaping a particular kind of social ethic in each other *against* a monoculture that is increasingly 'devouring everything' – one that is attentive to becoming connected, and local, to specific places, in the same manner indigenous peoples 'have always done'. Her greater perspective on securing value change in the whole human population is worth summarising here, as it incorporates the broader issues she connects to our collective futurity:

We know there is a lot of work to be done if the sustainable survival of our people is going to be ensured seven generations from now. There's going to be a lot of work in which... we must try to engage others to position themselves so that we can share information, our knowledge, our values, and our reasons for our values. So that we can at some point in the future be living together in a healthy way on this land... It comes down to the issue of values—philosophical and social values—and

⁸⁸ For a supporting argument, see the work of scholar La Donna Harris, of the Comanche Nation, writing with Jacqueline Wasilewski: "We believe that an articulation of Indigenous perspectives, of the concept of Indigeneity, with its inclusive management of diversity, constitutes a contribution to global discourse which has the potential of positively transforming the relationship dynamics of the 21st-century world, politically, socially, economically and spiritually" (2004).

an examination of constructed Western values...You can't just tell people to change their values. You have to find ways in which you can create connection to value the land and create an understanding to who that bear is, and what he's saying to you; who that tree is and what it is saying to you; what the bear or the tree is saying they need from you; and what the relationship is that they want from you. What they require from you in terms of you changing your actions. So that you *are* their brother or sister. So the issue is how you shift the paradigm in terms of making better choices, in terms of land use... Knowing that and understanding that and finding ways to reinstall those values in all of us as humans, in every one of our children, so that they come from that value first (2002b, pp. 11-15).

Armstrong's innovative conception of indigeneity as a paradigm embraces the values that cohere indigenous lifeways, and yet she extends it to augment the collective processes of reindigenising people to the planet. It is inclusive of those indigenous communities who are strong and healthy, those who remain profoundly wounded by the perpetuation of colonial violences, *and* those who are westernised, to differing degrees, including the long-ago colonised.

Armstrong presents us with an opportunity for going beyond binarised thinking which posits traditional-modern and self-other divides, and, simultaneously, beyond a sense that these differences could ever be overcome. She is thinking beyond what I would call the 'blood quantum logic' of ethnos, and into *species*-logic, in ways that mark out a path to rematriation, whilst also thinking through issues that might help to secure indigenous and planetary futurity – perhaps, in profound ways. The hope is that westernised peoples might be able to engage in these processes respectfully, without reverting to appropriative, inappropriate, covertly violent, or misconstrued responses.

1.6 Reindigenisation

The 'reindigenisation of all people to the planet', as signalled by Armstrong and the collected aforementioned Elders, will require some elucidation, as does the idea that 'we are all colonised'. Such calls are potentially contentious propositions, especially as they could be misread as sharing ground with ideas, such as 'we are all indigenous', 'we are all immigrants', 'everyone is native to somewhere', or 'everyone is indigenous to the planet'. There are no hard-edged bifurcations intended here, as no such binarised categorisations exist; however, we are not all indigenous and ought not to claim so. Such claims are a common way to dismiss and reduce indigenous points of difference, erase experiences of colonial violence, and subvert the self-determination/reclamation of culture and territory that is an essential redress to the cultural wounding inflicted by these violences.

Indigenous is a unique marker at this time in history, signalling experiences of dispossession and minoritisation, often with an experience of colonial invasion, violence, and destruction. Reaching

for historical ancestral connections that are Earth connected can be a valid endeavour without appropriating (and thus erasing) the political situatedness of indigenous peoples. Settler communities and immigrants may indeed experience repercussions from the experiences of colonisation suffered by ancestors, as I argue in the forthcoming section, but the resultant losses are fundamentally different. Settler, westernised, or immigrant lives are not somehow parallel with those who are living in the wake of colonialism, nor do ancestral experiences of colonisation erase ancestral links to the perpetuation of colonialism. Stating that we are all indigenous, or we are all immigrants, is one of several devices for avoiding the discomfort which accompanies responsibility toward all those who are structurally marginalised within modern nation states and westernised societies.

As Rauna Kuokkanen has written:

[Being indigenous] is inseparable from the legacy and aftershocks of colonialism... to be indigenous is synonymous with being colonized *today*. To claim then – as is often done – that ‘we are all indigenous’ is either to be blind to this contemporary reality or to refuse to recognize the ways in which colonial history continues to affect not only indigenous peoples but also relations between the state and indigenous peoples (2007, p. 10).⁸⁹

Remedial activities which work on these relations remain foundational for indigenous futurity, without which, planetary futurity is impossible.

There are two distinct scholarly responses to concepts such as reindigenisation and colonisation. The first is the response from non-indigenous scholars working in the areas of indigenous studies, anthropology, and related disciplines, who seem to be somewhat plagued by fears of cultural appropriation, romanticism, primitivism, exoticism, and reviving the noble savage trope. The work of Australian anthropologist, Deborah Bird Rose, is instructive here, especially in her careful manoeuvres around settler guilt, violence, and the colonial histories which impact upon her work in Australia (1992, 2004, 2011; Rose and D’Amico 2011; Rose and Davis 2005). Reading her elegantly written work, I have the impression that there is much that has to be said in particular ways

⁸⁹ As Trask writes: “In Hawai’i, Hawaiians are categorized as just another group of immigrants who happened along some 2,000 years before whites and Asians. Words like ‘indigenous’ are never used by scholars or lay people to describe Hawaiians. Nor is the word ‘settler’ used to describe immigrants. As racist as this obviously is, the denial of Native history, culture, and humanity is central to the colonial endeavor... For those who disagree, there really is no middle ground. Non-natives, no matter how long their residence in Hawai’i, should acknowledge their status as settlers, that is, uninvited guests in our Native country. Hawaiians are the only Native people. No other people – Asian, white, etc. – can or should claim Native status. Put differently, we are *not* all immigrants” (1999, pp. 132-133).

(and with due diligence) regarding the state of scholarly engagement with indigenous matters in Australia. The geographers working with Bawaka Country, also in Australia, navigate similar cautious negotiations, wherein the authors avoid attending directly to those biases through their creative and engaging prose (2013; 2015; 2016).

These negotiations are perhaps what the anthropologist, Anna Lownhaupt Tsing, would categorise as occurring in ‘zones of awkward engagement’ (2005, p. xi). It is appropriate that non-indigenous scholars remain wary of repeating past crimes against indigenous peoples and are conscious of minding settler-colonial relations in general. Yet, I also read these authors as ‘waiting on permission’ to communicate directly on subjects that are not presently visible, audible, or considered legitimate within the academies. Certain aspects of indigenous and traditional knowledges remain ‘unspeakable things’; yet, their invisibility sometimes requires they be spoken (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 186).⁹⁰

The second response, which comes from indigenous academics, is *also* cautious, lest these moves result in even greater exploitation of traditional and indigenous peoples.⁹¹ Some of these objections come from scholars who would like to limit the uses of terminology (such as *indigenise*, see Hill 2012; or *decolonisation*, see Tuck and Yang 2012). Perhaps, for some indigenous academics who have a situated and generally postcolonial perspective, the notion that the world’s indigenous and traditional Elders are suggesting reindigenisation may seem outright dangerous, especially given the historically validated unreliability of westernised people when it comes to minding things of value, or respecting sacredness. However, whilst these parallel cautions are facing one another and negotiating

⁹⁰ A good example of this difficulty is illustrated by the style of Elaine Riley-Taylor’s book *Ecology, Spirituality and Education*. Her hypothesis is excellent, but relies on complicated theoretical constructs. Writing with Deleuze, for instance, she employs the language of assemblages and becomings to frame a “line of flight, a journey ‘in’ to the ground of not-knowing. . . It is a question of *how* to say what must be said, when *the saying of it* risks the very totalization that I seek to disrupt” (2002, pp. 70-71). Her work is a very good example of working around ‘unspeakable things’ and ‘unwritten rules’ with established linguistic and conceptual devices. Riley-Taylor is arguing for many of the same things I argue for in this thesis, however this is difficult to extract given the devices she chooses, or perhaps, feels compelled, to employ.

⁹¹ There is a related issue of the impacts of colonisation on indigenous academics, as outlined by Four Arrows (2006, 2016b, 2016c) and Metis scholar, the late Howard Adams. As Adams wrote: “Eurocentric interpretations create a false consciousness among the colonists and the colonized. Eurocentrism does not allow for alternatives and thereby deceives Aboriginal peoples into believing that their history can be acquired only through the colonizer’s institutions. Rather than critically attacking their oppressor’s dogma, indigenous elites have accepted historical distortions to an alarming extent. Many Aboriginal academics are intellectual captives and have become part of the colonizer’s regime. . . [writing] Indian and Metis history from a strictly Eurocentric and racist interpretation” (1995, pp. 31-33).

terms of mutual engagement, neither group are really looking at (nor necessarily looking *for*) the wave of ideas coming *from* indigenous and traditional Elders (generally, from outside the universities), who are clearly advocating for indigenous leadership, reindigenisation, and decolonisation, as extended to all the peoples of Earth as kin.⁹²

Permission to reindigenise may seem contrived, yet here it is. Reindigenisation is specific to place and fundamentally about fostering particular practices which are respectful of place as a site of conscious interactions with Earth. I am profiling this concept as it shows up in the sources I have looked at, and these sources emphasise a different conception of *species-being* and *conscious relations with Earth*, over and above other possible interpretations. There is no confusion as to what is intended here, it is plainly put that a vast number of humans need to be taught how to be ‘real human beings’ again, and the specifics of this are also stated in clear and direct terms.⁹³

With all the cautions in mind, and with respect to the mutual (if awkward) engagements between scholars negotiating their terms of inquiry, the interstitial zone is phenomenally rich with just these kinds of pronouncements. Recognising these requires stepping *beyond* the limits of unspeakability and calling up a veritable army of allies who can absorb some of the requested labour that is needed to follow these directions and implement new practices.⁹⁴

1.7 Colonisation and Westernisation

The idea that we are *all* colonised – either by force, choice, or time – as a result of many generations of progressive ‘inoculation’ with what we have come to recognise as ‘western culture’ is not new; however, it is not generally stated in these specific terms. Perhaps this is because there is some risk of confusing colonisation, as a set of historical processes that stretch back into history, with

⁹² Ngā Puhi *whaea* Te Wharetatao King issues this invitation to all grandchildren who wish to walk with Māori for global unity and restoration, with/in the context of the reimagining of Aotearoa (King, T.W. 2010a, 2010b).

⁹³ Geographers Larsen and Johnston take up this terminology when they refer to Natural People, following John Mohawk (2016, p. 152; citing Mohawk and Barreiro 2010).

⁹⁴ The Australian anthropologist, Ghassan Hage, writes against a crude binarisation of reducing Australian history to a question of White remembering, rather than as a stepping off point for imagining better national futures. He states, perhaps controversially, that “a recognition of the past as shameful... remains a coloniser’s take on history. There is a set of Aboriginal histories where the alternatives are also memories of heroic resistance or memories of shameful defeats... An ethical coming to terms with this split requires a lot more than recognition of a shameful past: it requires a symbolic tipping of the balance between coloniser and colonised. As such, it requires a *becoming indigenous*, what American radicals call becoming a ‘race traitor’, on the part of non-indigenous Australians” (2003, p. 5).

colonialism – the more recent incarnation inflicted upon indigenous peoples from around 500 years ago.

On these points, I follow the Haudenosaunee address to the United Nations in 1977, specifically on this topic, and the indigenous remedy proposed, with teachers and Elders offering guidance (Mohawk 1978). Furthermore, I follow Papaschase Cree scholar, Dwayne Donald, who proposes that colonisation is “an extended process of denying relationships. *Everybody has been colonised*. It doesn’t matter what colour your skin is, or where you’re from” (2010). I also follow Glenn Aparicio Parry, who has written: “We are all colonised by time. It’s not like we just colonised indigenous peoples, we colonised ourselves first: and that’s the problem” (2015a). As Robin Kimmerer reminds us also, we all have to ‘remember to remember’ things that we did not know we had forgotten (2013, p. 5).

The central difference between colonisation and colonialism is that, whilst traditional and indigenous peoples possess a *living ancestral memory* of the collective losses wrought by colonialism and can make concrete connections between colonial violences and cultural and physical losses, those who were colonised by processes *prior* to living ancestral memory do not.⁹⁵ In other words, there is an identifiable *before* and *after* in colonial contexts which do not apply to the long-ago colonised. I locate colonialism in a *continuum* with colonisation, but I consider colonisation as a process that can be mapped back to ancient and half-remembered times. For example, consider the statement of Ngāti Kahungunu, Rongomaiwahine, and Ngāti Porou (Māori) legal scholar, Moana Jackson:

Colonisation has a history as old as humankind. For as long as people have imagined that the grass was greener on the other side of the fence, they have embarked on the bloody and costly business of

⁹⁵ No rule is hard and fast, and some exceptions immediately come to mind. The Irish, Cymry (Welsh), and Scots cultural heritages would be situated, for those who remain in their lands, somewhere between these two poles of memory and forgetting, with traditions often called ‘folkways’, and memories ‘superstitions’, as derived from earlier times. Conversely, the waves of migrations of these peoples have certainly beget many amnesiacs in their landed contexts. Europe also has many rich traditions which still exist as neither entirely forgotten, nor well-remembered. For an excellent collection of essays on Irish histories, see the work of the late Patricia Monaghan (2001), who was an influential figure in the women’s spirituality movement. Similar essays have been collected by East-West psychologist, Marian Van Eyk McCain (2010), Sufi author, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee (Vaughan-Lee 2013), and scholars have presented useful excavations of premodern histories in Greater European contexts (Baronas and Rowell 2015; Blain 2001; Carver *et al.* 2010; Fowden 1993; Hutton 1991; McKenna 1938; Pálsson 1993; Raudvere and Schjødt 2012; Stanley, E.G. 2000; Van Bladel 2009; Winterbourne 2004). These cultural repositories, which bear many similarities to indigenous and traditional ecologically-oriented worldviews, may be able to undergo cultural repair and reinvention processes if the idea of continuity across time and geographies is accepted as a valid route for collaborating on worldview.

dispossessing each other. Empires have regularly been imposed and just as regularly collapsed, and territorial borders have been rampaged across in neighbourhood raids to flaunt a new sovereignty, change a ruler, claim a bride, annex an estate, steal some treasure or simply rape and pillage. The desire to dispossess others and to take over their lives, lands and powers has been a constant in world affairs. In 1492, the dispossession took a new and especially destructive turn...[this] marked the beginnings of a haphazard but deliberately learned process of political domination and commercial exploitation that was quite specific in its intent and unlimited in its reach (2007, p. 167).

Jackson's use of the phrase 'deliberately learned' points to some codification and institutionalisation which has a bearing on this long history, and the specific methods of conquest. Although there is little evidence outside of myth and ethnohistories for the details of colonising processes which may be older than this, there is little doubt such visions and activities of violent conquest have their own prehistories, perhaps linked to exploration and Empires still largely unrecognised by the canons of academia.⁹⁶

The relationship that I posit as existing between colonisation and westernisation is relatively straightforward, and it reveals something of the codification process Jackson alludes to. I hold that the *westernised* model for colonisation (as that is the type with which I engage in this thesis) became progressively established in the fusion of Judaic-Persian-Greco-Roman-Christian cultural contributions to what we now refer to as the Roman Empire. This model was instituted within those

⁹⁶ As I have been writing this thesis, I have come to 'sort' what might appear to be distinctly different groups of people into two 'preferences', those who culturally sanction violence, war, and ritualised 'magic' (often with sacrifice) as means for solving problems and absorbing resources (conquest, or 'blood' peoples), and those who try to avoid this at any cost (nature peoples). Simplistic as this might seem, the pattern of leaning in one or the other direction seems to correlate with treating Earth (including other peoples, and animals) as a resource, perhaps even dangerous, or, alternatively, treating Earth as sacred and bountiful, and assuming guardianship or custodial duties. In subsequent chapters, as guided by the Kogi Mamas, I use Elder and Younger brothers as terms of reference. This division cannot be neatly mapped to either indigenous or westernised ways of being. If we are to head in the direction suggested by the Elders profiled here, then valorising war and conquest as 'cultural treasures' or marks of honour, especially when these activities have silenced those who were conquered and erased them from the historical record, is certainly worthy of reconsideration. Whilst some modern day traditional and indigenous populations appear to have *both* elements as a feature in their cultural histories (particularly in African nations, Central and South America, and the South Pacific, a likely result of very early cultural fusion and colonisation), my suggestion here is that *all* lines of ancestry – that of the conquerors and the conquered – become part of a renewed cultural identity. An excellent model for this can be found in Hawai'i, where the significant culture change brought with Tahitian expansion into the Islands is acknowledged as one part of a history which has been absorbed, evaluated, and slanted deliberately towards a consistent collective Hawai'ian identity in service to an Earth ethic that does not erase, nor valorise, histories of warfare.

territories originally specific to the Roman Empire at the height of its expansion, around the first century C.E., and in the surrounding areas that were variously impacted upon by way of its influence.

As such, the colonising processes that have led to those characteristics inherent within westernised peoples and societies are, at origin, *culturally-derived*. These have created a chimera that resembles a ‘culture’, and can be referred to as ‘the west’ (in that the sign sufficiently matches the signifier), but one that is notable for the absence of any cultural cohesion. The idea of ‘being western’ *appears* to have some coherence to it, sufficient to base an identity on; however, those elements necessary to its cohesion are those very aspects of culture, those sacred or reverent *emplaced* qualities that were systematically and deliberately exorcised during its period of incubation.⁹⁷

To be westernised is, ideally, to be an indigene of the imagined geographies that are particular to modernity. There is no *actual* shared territory; instead, there is an ideological map of an imaginary world that makes a claim on the whole, and yet exists nowhere in particular. This ‘west’, with which we are now all familiar, is fundamentally divorced from specific places and unable to provide any shared sense of community, ethos, meaning, or direction, as collated under the sign of ‘western’.⁹⁸ I would suggest that what afflicts it (and those who inhabit its imagined terrain) is the absence of any consistently held (shared) ethical, or spiritual, core.⁹⁹

Colonising processes can be identified primarily as possessing a logic of replacement, assimilation, and ultimately, absorption of local places and peoples into a conglomerate, nation, or city-state, for the purposes of either human resources (labour) or natural resources (land, minerals, etc.). The mechanisms of control included, as a fundamental feature, the systematic and deliberate replacement of worldview at the level of religion and ritual practice (called ‘paganism’ in historical

⁹⁷ This argument regarding the exorcisms specific to the history of westernised societies and thought, and a well-developed account of the histories that are abridged here and in the following section, was the research topic for my Master’s thesis in Religious Studies (see Morton 2011).

⁹⁸ Cultural theorist, the late Raymond Williams, supplies a useful definition that summarises how ‘western’ is to be interpreted here: “...a whole body of practices and expectations over the whole of living; our sense and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values... which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming” (1977, p. 110).

⁹⁹ Consider, for example, the privilege of certain kinds of life over others within westernised societies. People who are perceived as possessing greater economic value (rendered a number of different ways) are more likely to have access to those things that sustain their lives (practical, medical, protective, communal, reproductive), than those who do not possess this value. Unlike traditional ecologically-oriented worldviews, human life in westernised contexts does not possess a particular, yet relational, and contextualised set value, but rather, is evaluated in a number of contradictory ways, on a structurally legislated, person-by-person (or producer/consumer) basis, that has changed over time.

accounts). This was often achieved with the severing of relational, familial, geographical, and community bonds, as generally accompanied by the threat of violence or death.¹⁰⁰ Early colonisation processes were *continued as colonialism*, perpetuated by those who were colonised before memory, largely (although not exclusively) from the regions that were a part of the former Roman Empire.¹⁰¹ More recently, the distribution of westernisation occurs under the guise of globalisation, development, modernisation, and in the various ways that now institute westernised modes of thinking and being in places that are *outside* of the original, founding territories.

My narrative account of the history of colonisation is as follows. Well-organised political powers, such as those found in ancient city-states of specifically Persian, monotheistic, political influence, mandated urban reorganisation, political change, and religious conversions in numerous empires (most especially, Greece), with resistance punishable by death. These regimes also progressively instituted, often by force, the dislocation of people from place. Such moves eradicated the layered ecological understandings peoples had acquired through long occupation of a site, and the ritual and practical maintenance of close, cohesive groups, as embedded in their relations with their local habitats. Local forces, energies, or gods, as residing with tribes or kin-groups, and the territories they were linked to, were deliberately unsettled in order to take command of a group of people. In fact, capturing, stealing, or destroying a portable ‘idol’ (or a representation of a sacred being) often constituted a victory over a group. Strong prohibitions against the making of portable idols, or visual representations of gods (carried through within Judaic and Islamic traditions, for example), are inherently linked to these early practices.

In ancient ‘civilised’ worlds (as was later emulated by colonial missionaries), the elimination of a people was most effective if it was instituted *in the name of religion* against foreign, pagan, tribal, and local or place-specific beliefs – deemed *other religions*. Whilst altering the spiritual or religious

¹⁰⁰ It is difficult to say to what degree these colonising processes occurred prior to their appearance in Persia (then Greece and Rome), and whether there were similar practices in ancient Babylonian, Indian subcontinental, Egyptian, or other advanced cultural complexes, precisely because it is normative to call these very ancient histories, *myth*. I can, however, note parallels with Egyptian regimes and shifting kingships, and find evidence, following the German Egyptologist, Jan Assmann (1998, 2005) for early monotheism (or perhaps, *monism*, but in either case diametrically opposed to the reigning philosophies of the time).

¹⁰¹ To frame the colonisers as *formerly colonised* is not to adopt an apologist stance regarding the continuance of colonialism across the world (into contemporary times), as perpetuated by successive governments, institutions, and communities in ways which show absolutely no respect for indigenous peoples, nor aid their recovery from colonial violences. Rather, I am emphasising that the behaviours of those who initiated, and continue, the colonial project, have a history that goes beyond contemporary settler-colonial academic discourses.

orientation of any community to align with the interests of the state is a powerful tool in maintaining social control, religious obligations that are set against political interests can also be a motivator for extreme violence, as modern history attests to.

When a smaller tribal or kin group voluntarily aligned with a city state, the new cultural identity gradually absorbed and eroded the old. In China, for example, as pointed out by historian, Philip Yale Nicholson: “The invaders and occasional conquerors of China, the Mongols of the thirteenth century and the Manchus of the seventeenth, were absorbed by the Chinese culture and became as ardently Chinese as the Chinese they overran” (1999, p. 17). Similarly, it is difficult to find the traces and histories of the many peoples who *became* Egyptian, Greek, or Roman, due to the absorption of their personal and localised histories into meta-narratives of identity, during what were usually lengthy processes of assimilation. Across the ancient empires, it was generally not by choice, but by military and political conquest, indebtedness, poverty, and starvation that people fell under the control of others. Where locally-based beliefs and customs persisted, they often did so under duress, most especially after the advent of Christianity (following its adoption as a state-religion in Rome).¹⁰² This duress has continued into the present through the mechanisms of colonialism.

The strategies which accompanied early processes of colonisation have been refined, acquired new dimensions, and been perfected over time. I am not suggesting this was at all intentional, but simply followed along from the parameters originally set within these zones of western incubation. Those practices that are informed by a replacement ethos absorb and, eventually, eliminate local ways of life, progressively achieving absolute dislocation from cultural traditions and place in a given population. As noted by Rajani Kanth, whilst cultural complexes can take millennia to evolve, they can be erased within just *two generations* (2017, p. 242).

This erasure is consistent with the birthing of what we now call westernised cosmologies, and resulting practices or norms, in that the original dynamic nature of cultural exchanges and the evidence for this in the historical record (which can be identified with relatively ease) has become largely forgotten. What is of concern, to which I attend in the forthcoming section, is the degree to

¹⁰² Note that the most historically accessible bridge between pagan and Christian thinking is made explicit in Byzantium contexts, and that the Judaic thought inherited by Christianity was a thoroughly Hellenised Judaism, the combination of two distinct *rationalisms*. As argued by historian, Louis A. Ruprecht Jr., the core ethnic identity which attaches to early Christianity is overwhelmingly Greek, a cultural base which persisted until Constantinople (formerly, Byzantium) fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453C.E (2002, pp. 79-81). See also support for the argument in John Ferguson (1972) and Patricia Fara (2009).

which these historical processes are culpable in manifesting consequences that have remained evident into the present day.

1.8 Excavating Biases

Traditional and indigenous ways of being in the world, wedded as they are to radically different cosmological ideas, can be thought of as incurring the effects of significant biases at the most fundamental levels of scholarly comprehension.¹⁰³ ‘Truth’, and what it requires to be maintained as true, has been systematically levelled against what Paula Gunn Allen calls “thousands of years, and thousands of cultures” (1986a, p. 103). Those histories that have culminated in the cosmological stories specific to westernisation – the *origin* points for westernised biases against indigenous and traditional ways of being – are worth narrating in brief here.

As detailed already, the peculiarities of westernisation can be only be tracked somewhat conclusively to the pre-classical period, in a particular part of the world – history cannot reasonably take us any further. The first bias, that which prompts the classification of spiritual, sacred, non-rational, pagan, animist, or supernatural concerns, as ‘dæmonic’, and later, ‘religious’ (thus, of little importance to the sciences), derives from the removal of spirit and sentience from Earth and all other living beings.

Within traditional and indigenous collectives prior to colonialism, and also in the pre-classical period, the propitiation and cultivation of what we might refer to as spirits or gods, and general beliefs in the usefulness of ritual was wedded to a cosmological framework. This, although regionally variable, accommodated multiple gods, spirits and forces as tied to living beings, ancestors, localities, elements, objects, and so forth. These beliefs and practices, which appear in Greater European history as ‘paganism’, demonstrate and maintain continuances between people and places, as mediated by laws and prescriptions for living with/in an ecology of relationships.

As the late historian of science, David Lindberg, writes: “One need only recall that Plato demanded solitary confinement (and in extreme cases, execution) for those who denied the existence

¹⁰³ For some examples of academic critique of scholarly biases, see longstanding work in the anthropology of religion by Benson Saler (1968, 1977, 1993, 2005) and the late Edith Turner (1987, 1992, 1996, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c), medical folklorist David J. Hufford (1982, 1983, 1995, 1996, 2009), philosophers David Ray Griffin (1988, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2007) and Christian de Quincey (1999, 2000, 2002, 2005), among others (Ezzy 2004; Howard 2013; Jeggle and Bendix 2003; Wautischer 1993, 1994, 1998, 2009).

of the gods and their involvement in human affairs” (1983, p. 512).¹⁰⁴ In Roman times, practices that were associated with place-based relationships became illegal, including divination and prophecy, sympathetic magic and sacrifice, and ritualised forms of childbirth, initiation, death, and associated collective medical or healing practices. This occurred when the strict classifications of late Judaic-Persian origin morphed into Christianity (via Greece), and became politicised.¹⁰⁵ State authorities designated certain forms of healing as forbidden and perverse; most especially if they involved unsanctioned spirits, forces, or powers.¹⁰⁶

The desacralising of Earth was not only of political use, but was a predictable by-product of the progressive enforcement of a narrow, tripartite, Christian cosmology. Christianity had no room for sacred nature, and all local or place-based gods were reclassified as *spirits*, which immediately increased their volatility, whilst (literally) dislocating their power. Spirits, who were neither ensouled (within human flesh), nor ascended to God on high, were classified as dangerous entities that were conflated with the *dæmonic*. Those who insisted on transacting with their local, familial, and culturally-prescribed deities (now *spirits*), were not only considered a danger, but by Roman times, were breaking the law.

This collapse of gods and spirits into a single type of restricted entity allowed the perceived volatility of the spirit to be transferred *directly* to those humans who were maintaining a relationship with it. There was also the possibility (given that *dæmons* were not really ‘catered for’) that such persons would ‘carry’ this god (now reframed as a *dæmon*) within them. The subjugation and elimination of persons who remained ‘attached’ to local gods, were disobedient, or resisted

¹⁰⁴ For a book length treatment, see: *The beginnings of Western science: the European scientific tradition in philosophical, religious, and institutional contexts, 600 B.C. to A.D. 1450* (Lindberg 1992).

¹⁰⁵ Divinatory practices and ‘magic’, along with earlier sacrificial practices, were exorcised from an increasingly transcendental Judaic practice well before Roman times. In Deuteronomy 18.9-14 (the fifth book of the Jewish Pentateuch) “various forms of divination, spell-casting and consultation of the dead are declared to be the practices of the nations that will not enter the land of Israel and pronounced abominable. The practices abominated are, accordingly, alien to the religion of Israel and for that reason occupy a position akin to that of magic in relation to religion” (Dickie 2001, p. 22). By the fifth century BCE there are also clear signs in Greco-Roman thought which set magic apart as a discrete category, generated perhaps out of conflict between certain forms of religious, but also, medical practices, as it is philosophers and doctors who appeared to have been chiefly responsible for promoting this distinction.

¹⁰⁶ “The idea that the magician coerces the divine and lacks proper respect for it is first found in the Hippocratic treatise, *On the Sacred Disease*, (and can be traced down to the end of Classical Antiquity and beyond)” (Dickie 2001, p. 22). Following the opinion of the late anthropologist, Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, this text is landmark as it provides the first known instance in which a body of beliefs is explicitly declared to be magical or ‘occult’: this, in Tambiah’s terms, represents a significant intellectual paradigm shift (1990, pp. 9-10).

conversion, became essential to the emerging cosmo-political order. When combined with emerging state monism, the monotheistic authorising mechanisms of religious tradition cemented the divisions between exclusivist, mandated, and ‘accepted’ ways of being, and those who were designated as ‘others’ (who, much later in history, the missionaries would be deployed to ‘save’).

When a cultural belief complex involves entities that are deemed impossible (or dangerous) by the ruling powers, the trickle down effects on the communities in question can propel the adoption of a less contentious metaphysics, whilst other elements may be sequestered away – hidden and denied. This theological edict has had enormous consequences. The danger perceived in all that was deemed to be ‘supernatural’ (according to a purified Christian metaphysics) was beyond question; thus, it profoundly affected the way in which the modern sciences were initially conceived. Scientific *knowledge* (derived from measurable experience, experiments, and equations) is the outcome of an initial inquiry into nature that was assumed to be a divine creation.

As noted by the late historian, Lynn White Jr., “it was not until the late 18th century that the hypothesis of God became unnecessary to many scientists” (1996, p. 191). Whilst theology may have eventually appeared unnecessary to this project, it was nonetheless preserved, or *subsumed*, like a mythological thread which continues to hold westernised thinking together. This thread holds all of our unconscious assumptions – our ‘hidden shackles’ and *a priori* biases – alongside reason, as a part of our metaphysical inheritances. The methodological atheism that is required within intellectual inquiry is a result of these woven histories.

Another set of biases, inherently linked to the first, involves demarcations between sanctioned or legitimate practices and ideas and the *illegitimacy* of others. At some point, in ancient Greece, the flourishing of philosophies (and overall intellectual quest Greek philosophers are now remembered for) began to incorporate the notion that discerning the quality of certain ideas over others was potentially linked with power – most especially power *over*. The specifics of how this was derived from a combination of Egyptian, Indian, and Persian influence is lost to history, however the insecurity of the philosophers is already evident at the time Greece came under the control of Achaemenid Persia around 500 B.C.E.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Cyrus the Great (Cyrus II or Cyrus the Elder), King of Persia, was the founder of the first Persian Empire, and conquered Greek Ionia in 547 B.C. Cyrus is mentioned multiple times in the Old Testament and appears to live by the same religion as the Hebrews. Isaiah 45, for example, contains the following prophecy: *Thus says the Lord of Cyrus: he is*

Whilst in previous empires, such as in Egypt, religious and ethnic differences were considered as a matter of curiosity rather than a threat, the intense racialisation that accompanied the notions of purity, bloodline, chosenness (or exceptionalism), all present in monotheism, had progressively influenced ancient Greek culture.¹⁰⁸ Greek culture began to take on the effects of their earlier subjugations under foreign command and, whether by design, provocation, or by cultural insecurity, ancient Greece became profoundly dialectical and discriminatory; this was a process that intensified over the next thousand years, once these ideas and practices of discernment became internalised in Rome.

This discrimination between self and other, rendered in expressly Greek (rather than tribal, or generalised) terms, reached its zenith during the early modern period in the conclusive showdown between medicine, science, and what was called witchcraft (for discussion, see Clark 1997; Peters 1978; Stratton 2007). Greek philosophical intellectualism secured the conditions necessary for not only the binarised distinctions between the natural/supernatural and the holy/unholy, but it also provided a rational scaffold that could support the idea of a science that can persist without reflection, as if *sui generis* – perfect at origin and with no necessity for history.

Consider, for example, the codification or category shift by which older religious ideas (such as a belief in a sentient or enspirited Earth) were historicised and made a part of ‘ancient’ Greek thought. The Greek philosophers switched the meanings of *mythos* (truth) and *logos* (lies and dissimulation), so that *mythos* became synonymous with lie, and *logos* became rationalised thought. Bruce Lincoln (1996), a religious historian, speculates that this shift in meaning (as concretised by the Romans) arose alongside a purified Platonic reason, just as various regimes of truth were competing for power.

My anointed and I hold his right hand that he may subdue nations before him. I will loose the strength in the loins of their kings and will open before him the two leaved gates of cities so that the gates shall not be shut (Edujee 2013).

¹⁰⁸ As Nicholson writes: “In none of the diverse systems of culture and authority, from the Indus Valley of India to the Mediterranean world, do we encounter legal forms of discriminatory practices constructed on what we now understand as racial theories” (1999, p. 17). The first instance of this occurs with the absorption, and dæmonisation, of Judaism, in the Greco-Roman transition, which was the means by which Christianity became dominant. Hebrew language and ritual practices were explicitly, and politically, linked to sorcery, the supernatural, and the practice of magic, despite the fact that the original prohibitions against sorcery *had become a part of Christianity by way of Judaism*. The late Avi Beker, who was a leading Jewish scholar and political figure, writes: “Christianity ingested Judaism almost whole, turning it into one of the basic building blocks of European culture. But at the same time, the Church found it necessary to stamp the old religion as null, void, surpassed, and of no further consequence” (2008, p. 41). By the second century C.E., the Christian literature claims that God himself had rejected the Jewish people, and the Christians were now the elect, which became a central pillar in Christianity and the foundation for legitimate, or theologically decreed, supersession (p. 40). Supersession is the basis for the replacement ethos that is central to westernisation.

The shift in the meanings of *mythos* and *logos* are now preserved in etymological history and reveal a kind of colonisation of thought and word in action; specifically, the overturning of traditional beliefs within an urban and ‘progressive’ political and economic context, in which a belief complex was eradicated and ultimately replaced by a newer philosophy. One consequence of this was the creation of a distinct fictitious genre (myth and fable, from the Latin, *fabula*) into which pre-classical, foreign, non-Christian, pre-Christian, and other beliefs would be relocated. The origin point for the parameters by which ‘true’ and ‘false’ knowledge (or fact and fiction) are determined, as specific to a westernised context, has to be set somewhere around the time of this transfer.

In the contemporary context, the outcome is that the classification of ethnohistorical stories alongside actual myths has become commonplace. Myth is used to refer to a certain kind of narrative that is, following historian of religion, Wendy Doniger: “...good to believe in but unverifiable in the real world [...or] a story that a group of people believe for a long time despite massive evidence that it is not actually true” (2011, p. ix). In her account of westernised scholarship, Allen aligns myth with other derogatory terms for indigenous story, words that imply backwardness, foolishness, and the general derision of indigenous lifeways. She argues that the manner in which it has been used always points towards ‘questionable accuracy’ (1986a, pp. 102-103).

Language change and progressive improvements on a specifically *Greek* written language were inherently linked to the accumulation of power, in particular the Greeks’ extraction of religious power from the Hebrews. As Nicholson writes:

Ancient Egyptians, Chinese, and Greeks all shared a common term or character for those who could not read their language: they were ‘barbarians.’ Many cultures have made their written texts sacred and revered objects...language is so fundamental a part of collective identity...encoded symbols, or finely written ideographs or hieroglyphics were at the very center of authority itself...the printed or drawn word itself imposes a cultural unity from top to bottom (1999, p. 16).¹⁰⁹

In the ancient Greek context, written language was considered to be an essential aspect of the ‘civilising’ processes and incorporated a shift from the Hebrew *aleph-bet* אֵלֶּפֶת־בֵּת to the adapted

¹⁰⁹ Professor of English, Adam R. Beach, explains the ideology of language hegemony in the imperial context: “English ‘classical’ language would be implanted around the world, becoming dominant wherever Britons colonized, displacing the so-called ‘primitive’ languages spoken by native inhabitants. Just as the English people once were civilized and improved by both Latin and Roman conquest, so too could Britain help other nations progress by the export of English to their colonies... If English could be standardized and codified... it would become the building block of... a metaphysical empire, an empire of language and literature that would outlive the actual British Empire” (2001, p. 119).

written letters and, most importantly, *vowels* of a Greek alphabet. In adopting and desacralising the aleph-bet, the Greek scribes stripped it of its magical, oral dimensions.¹¹⁰ The philosopher and cultural ecologist, David Abram, notes that the ‘final removal of the air’ from oral, pre-classical traditions, by the addition of these scripted vowels, silenced the power of the voice in a way that disengaged people from Earth (1996, pp. 93-135).

The Greek modifications also had the effect of *interiorising* conscious engagement with the alphabet and restricting it, which was a move toward individualisation and the privatisation of consciousness. In his comparison of orality and literacy, the cultural and religious historian, the late Walter J. Ong, wrote: “Oral formulaic thought and expression ride deep in consciousness... [and] do not vanish as soon as one used to them takes pen in hand” (1982, p. 26). Such processes take time.

Ong’s view of orality *in situ* can be counterpoised to demonstrate the significance of orality within traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented worldviews:

Sound exists only when it is going out of existence... Sound cannot be sounding without the use of power. A hunter can see a buffalo, smell, taste, and touch a buffalo when the buffalo is completely inert, even dead, but if he hears a buffalo... something is going on... all sound, and especially oral utterance, which comes from inside living organisms, is ‘dynamic’ (pp. 31-32).

In both Abram and Ong, the characterisations of orality echo the insistence made in many indigenous and traditional contexts that words are powerful – the spoken word in particular.¹¹¹ There is no reason to suspect this was different for place-based oral traditions in the pre-classical era. As Joseph Epes Brown explains when writing about a Native American/First Nations perspective:

In Native languages the understanding is that the meaning *is* in the sound, it *is* in the word; the word is not a symbol for a meaning which has been abstracted out, word and meaning are together in one experience. Thus, to name a being, for example, an animal, is actually to conjure up the powers latent in that animal. Added to this is the fact that when we create words, we use our breath, and for these people and these traditions breath is associated with the principle of life; breath is life itself... if a word is born from this sacred principle of breath, this lends an added sacred dimension to the spoken word (2009, p. 349).

¹¹⁰ As Walter Ong wrote: “Josephus even suggested that Homer could not write, but he did so in order to argue that Hebrew culture was superior to very ancient Greek culture because it knew writing” (1982, p. 18). It is therefore reasonable to view the adoption and adaptation of the *aleph-bet* in the context of a fragile Greek self-image.

¹¹¹ See, also, Brianna Burke’s study of Native American literature (2011) and the work of Cherokee-German-Greek-Canadian scholar, Thomas King (2005).

Silencing the ‘barbarians’, erasing the mechanisms of oral transmission, and schooling them in the language specific to the reigning powers, eventually became central to forcing the reconfiguration of their relationships with Earth.¹¹²

A related effect of these long-ago literacies is *mnemonic*, in that the written word can not only *stand in* for precise transmission of collected knowledge in a cohesive community, but, once instituted as an authority in an urban collective, it can also be used to *alter* knowledge and history. Nicholson points out that the authorities in ancient, literate regimes could easily ‘turn a tale’ to suit or advance the agendas of the elites, and could create their own internal subcultures with the aid of scribes (1999, p. 16). The Greek historians changed their own histories and those of their relations with Persia (Beck 2002), the Romans changed Greek histories (Ong 1982, pp. 17-20), and the historians of the Greater European traditions continued this practice with stories that elevated the high culture of Greece as the birthplace of all superior cultural goods.¹¹³ Later, Islamic and Chinese contributions to the European sciences would also suffer appropriation and the erasure of their intellectual labours (Fara 2009, pp. 57-81). In her eloquent history of the sciences, Patricia Fara makes comprehensive links between Greek thought, the privileges it demanded, and westernised consciousness. For example, Fara writes:

In the heyday of Athenian supremacy, Aristotle located his fellow Greeks between Europe and Asia, awarding them the finest characteristics of both, and also finding fault with everybody else. Western Europeans inherited not only Aristotles philosophy, but also his self-centred arrogance. Repeat something often enough and people will believe it... [Europeans] placed themselves at the centre of everything, and wrote accounts of the past that confirmed their own supposed superiority (2009, p. 51).

¹¹² Language extinction is still occurring in traditional and indigenous communities at a significant rate, despite considerable efforts to preserve them. The relationships between peoples and place occur in the power of speech, and ‘on the mind’ in those distinct tongues. They are verb-based and *emplaced*. As such, the symbolic relevances that are expressed within languages are specific to *particular* places and all living beings who inhabit these places, which means that the loss of language from a community is also a loss of knowledge of a place (aspects of this are covered in Basso 1996; Crystal 2000; Everett 2008; Filipovic and Jaszczolt 2012; Lucy 1992; Mark *et al.* 2011).

¹¹³ As historian, Roger Beck, writes: “...dry historical accuracy was of no more interest to the Greeks than to the Iranians. The Greeks had two goals for the reconstruction of prophets and wise men. The first was that the reconstructed persona be appropriate in imputed character and biography to the tradition he founded... The second, much more insidious, goal was that the sage be a convincing peg on which to hang home-grown Greek philosophy or other forms of learning and so give it a patina (to change the metaphor) of authority derived from the far away and the long ago” (2002).

Despite this partial analysis, these historical events are central to my assertion that a loss of memory has accompanied the processes of long-ago colonisation, as afflicted upon the westernised body, sense of self, and presence of mind. It is also one of the mechanisms by which biases have persisted, in that particular narratives are reproduced sufficiently often and across enough disciplines to suggest something canonical exists in the texts when, in fact, it does not.

These exchanges that have occurred in the conquests of territories, peoples, and minds, have had the effect of fusing together a number of elements. Monotheism and transcendental sovereignty, a tripartite cosmological structure, hierarchies (in general), authoritarianism, and divine election (exceptionalism, or the manifest destiny associated with ‘chosenness’); soteriology, teleology, eschatology, and providence (all temporal); along with separatist thinking and binarisations (all spatial, and otherwise called a dualist base cosmology, from which hyper-separated dualisms extend), are all the legacies of religious, specifically Persian and Judaic, thought. From the philosophical and political sources that were incubated (dialectically, with religious thought) extend an overt, separatist intellectualism and the superiority of the mind and literacy over orality and religion. These are all *internal to*, not divorced from, the resulting philosophical and scientific projects which became constituted within the Greater European psyche.

The foundations for the eventual emergence of the authorising mechanisms of scientific discourse as mediators of the (newly-divided) human-nature relationship were concretised within western philosophical contexts. This is described by Richard Tarnas (1991) in his cultural and intellectual history of westernised thought; in basic terms, Tarnas identifies three key shifts which calibrated the contemporary cosmological orientation of the modern westernised mind. The first is the Copernican, in which the human relationship with the universe was irrevocably relativised by the link between the movement of the heavens and the movement of the observer, displacing the idea of human centrality within the universe.

The second is the Cartesian shift, in that Descartes “expressed in philosophical terms the experiential consequence of that new cosmological context, starting from a position of fundamental doubt vis-a-vis the world, and ending in the cogito” (Tarnas 1991, p. 417) Having established the absolute isolation of the human subject, the third shift is the ‘epistemological crisis’ beginning with Locke, and progressing from Berkeley and Hume to, finally, Kant, who “drew out the epistemological consequences of the Cartesian cogito” (p. 417). Kant’s legacy is the absolute loss of certainty via the assertion that all knowledge is contingent, all perspectives are interpretative, and ‘truth’ can never be known. Ultimately, this completes the isolation of the human mind/self from Earth, and affirms the

impossibility of establishing the validity of knowledge or information in any testable or verifiable sense.

Thus, the cosmological estrangement of modern consciousness initiated by Copernicus and the ontological estrangement initiated by Descartes were completed by the epistemological estrangement initiated by Kant: a threefold mutually enforced prison of modern alienation (Tarnas 1991, p. 419). I would be inclined to add interpretations of Hume to this list as, regardless of his initial intentions, what remains from his work *On Miracles* is the idea that *no matter how many educated persons can be gathered to form a consensus* and testify to the occurrence of spiritual or unusual phenomenon, this is unlikely to amount to a probability, and much less a proof.¹¹⁴ The notion that consensus can only be held between men of ‘repute’ and character, and that this will forever trump the assertions or claims of the common people, privileges the expert as based upon the *a priori* that the expert, being the expert of good repute, will always know better than the common man.

As expressed by the late French philosopher, Michel Foucault, in his most famous treatise on truth and power:

Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish ‘true’ and ‘false’ statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; and the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; *the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true* (Foucault and Gordon 1980, pp. 131, emphasis mine).

Foucault highlights manifest destiny here, or an authority over the people claimed by way of a theological decree. To suggest that the privileges of scientific expertise have no theological basis, or no *particular* cosmological orientation, would be an error.¹¹⁵ If hindsight logic holds, then the eradication of spirit from Earth, the disempowerment of local priest-healers, the contests between Hebrews, Christians, and philosophers (as manifested in Greece), and the birth of Greco-Roman ways of being, were absolutely fundamental for the *possibility* of westernised sciences in the form that we know them today.

¹¹⁴ For a wonderful account of how Hume has been widely misinterpreted, see the work of philosopher, Robert J. Fogelin: *A Defense of Hume on Miracles* (2003).

¹¹⁵ Cosmology is much overlooked in the philosophical conception of westernised thought, with privilege being given to ontology as an orienting category. I consider this in greater detail in chapter two.

This combination of persistent theological categories and the particular set of philosophical shifts which, together, defined what would count as knowledge into the present day, has also lingered in the hierarchical structures of westernised institutions. Neither the loss of Heaven and Hell, nor the shifting certainty regarding the existence of a High God, changed the categories by which social behaviours were regulated within an urban collective. As the sociologist, the late Peter Berger, theorised, the precariousness of a new institutional order must conceal, as much as possible, its constructed character, through the employment of religious legitimations that locate it within a cosmic frame of reference (1967, p. 33). As he writes:

The institutions are thus given a semblance of inevitability, firmness and durability that is analogous to these qualities as ascribed to the gods themselves [...] The point need hardly be belabored that legitimation of this kind carries with it extremely powerful and built-in sanctions against individual deviance from prescribed role performances (pp. 36-38).

Whilst we cannot go back and alter historical events, it is necessary to recognise the degree to which such transitions have progressively detached modern, westernised humans from a formerly commonplace, intimate sense of place.¹¹⁶ The result, as Kanth argues, is that functional and emplaced societies have become replaced with flat, monotonic, uniform, homogenous, atomised, fragmented and alienated societies, with residents who are privatised, individualised and isolated (2017, p. 242).

Equally, notions of shared identity, as linked to an in-group sense of place and community (originally, *ethnos*), have become *overly* signified in urban environments where religion, ethnic or racial, political, economic, and class affiliations keep diverse and separate groups in a competitive tension for rights and resources. These transitions – these long-time, strategic *processes* of colonisation – are directly culpable in obscuring an insight that is considered common across numerous indigenous and traditional emplaced lifeways: the various capacities for instinctual and intuitive knowledge and conscious interactions with living Earth are not, in fact, primitive magic, or superstition, but are normal, if not *endemic* to the human species.

¹¹⁶ There are many other examples that could be given here, extending right up to the present day. For example, in greater Europe many millions perished in the papal efforts to retain political and spiritual supremacy during the Middle Ages. This was followed by the workings of the Inquisition, progressive industrialisation, urbanisation, and the slow rise of modern scientific medicine (which eradicated all practices that were deemed to be superstitious, such as those practices historically labelled as ‘witchcraft’). As was observed over a hundred years ago: “The noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world” (Wylie 1874, p. 18).

According to the Belgian philosopher, Isabelle Stengers (2008), *we shall not regress*, nor betray hard truths, nor acknowledge the ‘smoke of the burning witches’ still lingering in our nostrils. As she writes: “Learning to smell the smoke is to acknowledge that we have learned the codes of our respective milieus: derisive remarks, knowing smiles, offhand judgments. . .” (2012, p. 6). Our contemporary intellectual and social practices have been mobilised, in her view, by the ancestors of the same protagonists who blessed the burnings and poisoned the past.

For all these reasons, our academic biases need to be understood, eradicated, and decolonised in order to even fathom a worldview that extends from an experience with/in a sentient Earth. The evidence for finding consciousness, sentience, or mindedness *outside* of the human being is all around us. Those working in the natural sciences stumble upon it quite often, and might explore this in a manner that is free from those theological and philosophical biases discussed here.¹¹⁷ Presently, those biases are predominating in scholarship of all kinds. Westernised modes of thought are not dominant because they are unquestionably correct, but have been forged and purified of all versions of Earth sentience from several thousand years of power struggles over people, places, resources, reputations, and ideas.

Indigenous and traditional ecologically-oriented humans, living in place, have known how to interact consciously with Earth as a sentient system of relationships from which life continues to be emergent. In the words of Pueblo Tewa educator, Gregory Cajete, our present crises come from a “narrow view of who we are, what the earth is, and what it is to educate our children so that they may live and think as human beings” (2015, p. 20). Therefore, the strategic decolonisation of scholarship needs to target the collectively experienced after effects of these colonising processes and become a part of the necessary corrective actions we might take as part of our response to planetary crises.

1.9 Decolonisation

The term decolonisation attracts different definitions, and it is rarely used consistently within scholarship. It can, for example, refer to the physical decolonisation of occupied lands in postcolonial

¹¹⁷ There are a great number of discussions and debates on an extended view of consciousness, from a number of disciplines, although I might suggest that those offered by physicists such as Bohm and Laszlo are definitely the most satisfying (see Adams, W.W. 2010; Aerts *et al.* 2005; Baruš and Mossbridge 2017; Benvenuti 2016; Bohm 1994, 2002; Bohm and Edwards 1991; Bohm and Hiley 1993; Bohm and Peat 2000; Castle 2016; Collins, M. 2010; de Quincey 1999, 2000, 2002, 2005; Doyle, R. 2011; Du Toit 2015; Dulany 2014; Goswami 2000; Goswami *et al.* 1993; Gutfreund 2017; King, U. 2010; Koch 2012; Laszlo 1993, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 2003, 2008, 2009; Laszlo *et al.* 2003; Menskii 2010; Tabobondung *et al.* 2014; Thompson 2015; Walach *et al.* 2011; Wallace, B.A. 2000).

contexts and the strategic undoing of the legacies related to this occupation. It can refer to the unsettling of psychic occupation, or the embedding of a colonising mind-set in individuals and communities (such as double-consciousness, the loss of remembered traditions, kinship associated with land-oriented conscious ties, and disruption to worldview). It can also be used to index the various means for intellectual decolonisation, whether of bodies of knowledge (as in the academies), or the various decolonising actions which impact the social processes and practices that must be negotiated alongside westernisation. Decolonisation, like the colonisation we seek to untangle with it, is a very *practical* tool: it works on institutions and human minds, deficient technologies and systems of exchange, power and governance, and, ideally, the removal of fences, titles, and agrichemicals from land.

I follow a definition of decolonisation that includes all of these definitions, yet posit a slightly broader understanding that includes the long-ago colonised, and the decolonisation of our westernised systems and societies. I define decolonisation as the strategic (that is, *considered and informed*) removal, extraction, evaluation or interrogation of whatever practices, ideas, and physical aspects of westernisation have had the effect of reducing, replacing, disrupting, subverting, or destroying what are widely and consensually held to be ‘good practices’ for the survival and flourishing of life on Earth. Decolonisation presumes indigenous futurity over settler futurity on the basis that indigenous futurity is not only necessary reparation, but it includes settlers; whereas, settler futurity will always require the ongoing erasure and assimilation of indigenous peoples, lands, and histories (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). In addition, the Earth ethic which sustains indigenous ways of being, and allows their comparison and correlation with one another, leads definitively to planetary futurity.

Decolonisation requires the interrogation of history, biases, and relationships with oppression or with unequal power relations in a manner that can effectively reconfigure perceptions of humanity, amounting to improved human-to-human relationships, whilst encompassing proper stewardship of the wider multispecies environment in which we are all embedded, as co-inhabitants of a planet we share. Whenever projects are oriented toward ‘querying westernisation’, or interrogating a dysfunctional norm that originates with colonising practices, processes, and ideologies, such projects are employing the philosophical perspectives of decolonisation scholars, if only implicitly.

Decolonisation is about evaluating – literally, considering the value of – what we call modern, westernised, scientific, technological, and progressive, and what of this we can all identify benefit in,

over and against that which creates unnecessary *harm* to life, albeit applied to all of us, some of us, or other living beings.¹¹⁸ I hold that the only possible measuring stick for this evaluative process derives from traditional and indigenous concepts of value. These concepts exceed westernised theological and scientific-secular ideas in their conceptualisation of the human being, and offer proof of conditions for human flourishing that *do not need to involve certain kinds of violence*, whether against other humans, other species, or Earth in general. Acceptance of this idea is also a product of decolonisation, in that decolonisation processes involve reckoning with the forgotten or neglected histories of both the coloniser and the colonised.

Whilst the reversal of colonialism's effects on indigenous communities remains critical to all incarnations of decolonising projects, I consider decolonisation to be a necessary global project. It is not limited to (nor does it replace) the decolonial project, which is instigated in the interests of postcolonial indigenous self-determination, rights, resources, and remedies, and it is not suggested here as an appropriative move or a dilution of that project. Conversely, I argue that decolonisation applies to all those who have been colonised and others who are afflicted by particularly destructive and violent aspects of westernisation, or violences that are *a reaction to* westernisation. I hold that this involves a much larger population than is generally acknowledged when the terms colonisation and decolonisation are used.

This thesis is my contribution to the work of global decolonisation. I have grounded it in critiques of scholarship from indigenous and critical race scholars, and developed it as an amplification of these critiques. It is also an extension of the work recently endeavoured by anthropologists, geographers, and others in their conception of what a decolonised mode of scholarship might look like.¹¹⁹ I have chosen to highlight the largely ignored consensus that exists

¹¹⁸ Despite a focus here on modern westernised societies, these processes of decolonisation can be extended to those colonised via different routes, and lately through globalised power exchanges. The same rubric of analysing what is of benefit versus harm can be widely applied.

¹¹⁹ In present conversations about decolonising geographic knowledges, it is evident that the emphasis on space, place, nature, and time as distinct categories of thought is making the topic rather confusing to think through. Scholars are also debating race and ethnicity in postcolonial terms, which only begins to approach the secular-scientific, colonising mode of engagement that decolonisation seeks to dismantle. Canadian geographer, Juanita Sundberg, defines decolonising as “exposing the ontological violence authorized by Eurocentric epistemologies both in scholarship and everyday life” (2014, p. 34); however, I would push the case even further. Decolonising is only possible by first, exposing the hidden cosmological postulates that reproduce the status quo by centring the conversation on the level of ontology, which has always been, and will always be, subject to cosmological ordering principles that are largely unthought and invisible. Cosmology sets the definitions by which the very terms under debate (albeit, space, place, nature, time, religion, culture,

amongst traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented communities regarding our extended kinship with Earth. If all of our ancestors were once linked to places and traditions with which humans were in relation, and if we have all been colonised, perhaps we should turn to those who can *remember* being colonised for answers to the question of how we should live. Whilst decolonisation cannot undo the past, I argue that it is necessary *in all its formations* for the creative co-production of our collective futures.

race or ethnicity) *appear as valid categories in and of themselves*. What if they are not? Furthermore, what if 'we' – that is, living, breathing westernised humans – are the necessary first subject for decolonisation? What if this notion of 'place' only makes sense when the idea of 'space' disappears, which is an insight that comes with the decolonisation of self? What if time, space, and identity are not how we conceive of them at all, let alone the privacy of 'the mind'?

Chapter Two: Worldview Metaphysics

*It was all a machine yesterday. It is something like a hologram today.
Who knows what intellectual rattle we shall be shaking tomorrow to calm the dread of the
emptiness of our understanding...*
The Voice of Experience, R.D. Laing, 1982¹²⁰

The reconsideration of worldview, whether it is ours, theirs, mine, or yours, and the potential uses of this concept for constructive planetary decolonisation, are central ideas in this thesis. As such, I wish to offer an outline, in philosophical terms, of my own theoretical contributions to how worldview analysis might provide a means for a particular kind of inquiry that can be personally, educationally, and institutionally, transformative.

I argue that the principles internal to a worldview shape our *all* of our symbolic interpretative materials, our values, and our actions, and an explicit awareness of worldview concepts can inform our collective abilities to act differently in/on the world. The aim here is to offer a typological system of relations to demonstrate how worldview can be understood better, following from the assertion that such an understanding is critical in order to make greater sense of the mechanisms through which the world is thought and acted within.

If the responsibility for realising the constructed character of the dominant worldview and the limits it generates lies with each of us, then engaging directly with this problem may better enable scholars to leverage the privileges and resources of the academy to facilitate a better future for the generations to come. Following this assumption, if a significant shift in worldview does prove to be fundamental for resolving the various socioecological crises cascading at this time, then it seems prudent to supply an accessible means to initiate such a shift. In this chapter, I discuss the key components of my theoretical work in this area, how culture and religion are linked with worldview, and explain how worldview can aid an understanding of both the concept, and securement, of successful paradigm shifts.

2.1 Introducing Worldview

This is by no means the only theory of worldview – theoretical models and discussions of worldview are numerous – however, I have found much of the scholarship to be outdated, or too complex for practical application for the purposes of worldview transformation, particularly in an

¹²⁰ The opening quotation is from *The Voice of Experience* by the late Scottish psychiatrist, R.D. Laing (1982, p. 66).

educational setting. Scholarship on worldview can be roughly divided into three areas: academic analysis of indigenous and traditional worldviews, defined using varied criteria (some of which inform the main body of the thesis); psychological studies on worldview; and, studies of the socio-philosophical structures of worldview and their effects (which I am concerned with here).¹²¹ The model described here differs from worldview models that are based upon the traditional ‘five branches’ of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, morality and ethics), the Stoic model (cosmology, physics, and ethics), and most academic ‘research’ models (which include *methodology*). The model I propose is oriented toward understanding lived, in-the-world, practices, whether they are disciplinary, political, cultural, religious, or social. In this model, I posit *cosmology* as the key organising principle for *cohering* worldview, which is not usual.¹²²

Epistemology was a key term of analysis from the 1970s, as evidenced in the work of Gregory Bateson and others, who appear to have mapped what might be historically called an ‘epistemological turn’.¹²³ More recently, *ontology* has taken over as the fad term for scholars, albeit a renewal of a very old category of reference.¹²⁴ This renewal is evidenced by the ‘ontological turn’, which has become increasingly popular during the last ten to fifteen years, especially in social critiques of science and

¹²¹ Of the last type, there are some of particular note: (Aerts *et al.* 2005; Berger and Luckmann 1967; Descola and Lloyd 2013; Hedlund-de Witt *et al.* 2016; Holbraad 2012b; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017; Laszlo 1996a, 2003; Searle 2010; Sire 2004; Underhill 2011).

¹²² I am indebted here to the work of Michael Beresford Foster, a relatively obscure British philosopher whose three essays provide a metaphysics that demonstrates the relations of cosmology to practice (1934, 1935, 1936). The significance of his work for this thesis cannot be understated, as my working typology was at that time afflicted by the dominance of ontology in this field of research, which is of course *secondary* to cosmology and, in fact, derives from it. A second (and perhaps even greater) debt is due to scholar, Seth Asch, whose excellent Master’s thesis (2004) not only introduced me to the work of Foster, but linked the key idea of cosmology to *charter myths* (in his own interpretation of Foster’s essays). Without his extension of Foster’s metaphysics my own typology of worldview could not have come into being.

¹²³ For examples which reflect a growing awareness of epistemology from 1972-2000, see: (Bateson 1973; Fuller 1988; Knorr-Cetina 1999; Somers and Gibson 1994; Stanley, L. 1990; Stanley, L. and Wise 1993; Wautischer 1998). Note, that 2017 geographical debates on decolonisation are referencing epistemology as a *current* focus (see Sarah Radcliffe on the call for multi-epistemic fluency, 2017a). As the next step could be to follow anthropology’s example (a slow process of considering ontology), it is my suggestion that geography skip right over ontology and start thinking about cosmology instead.

¹²⁴ Ontology has long been a focus for metaphysics, largely due to the formulation of philosophical problems as an opposition between thought and being, or subject and object relations. Although recovered by the phenomenologists, Kant leveled this discussion rather effectively with his assertion that the only evidence for the existence of the world was in the hands of unreliable observers, amongst which we must all be counted. In opposition to westernised philosophical constructions, Earth consciousness is rendered in indigenous ecological thought as aware of, but not subject to, human observation, and indeed, existing primary to it.

technology, and in particular, within anthropology.¹²⁵ Despite the new emphasis on ontological difference (also called plurality), I am suggesting that ontology does not take us far enough toward reckoning with the different perspectives humans hold as to the nature of the world, and what are considered to be appropriate actions or behaviours towards Earth, other living beings, and the securement of planetary futurity. Ontology, despite its pre-eminence in post-Aristotelean philosophy, is *always* predicated by cosmology, or those charter myths which set out in cultural forms and related concepts of being the very nature of the universe and what can, and cannot, exist within it.¹²⁶

Using cosmology as the *key organising principle* for worldview is critical for meeting the limits of understanding produced by what we think of as radical alterity, and for overcoming the reflexive limits of westernised scholarship.¹²⁷ Take, for example, the methods of scientific investigation, by which means scholars can make excellent observations. As the philosophers of science have pointed out, this type of inquiry is a very specific sort of endeavour that occurs in a particular way, within certain ontological and epistemological limits.¹²⁸ Whilst good science prompts continual reflection on the value of these limits, bad science can quickly harden into fixity, conclusion, dogma, and suspicion of alternatives. Scientism, as defined by psychologist, Charles T. Tart, is:

¹²⁵ The ontological turn has provoked a great body of scholarship that purports to engage with worldview; however, I have found it to be intellectually wanting when directed toward the actual processes of *analysing* worldview (ongoing debates can be found in Bessire and Bond 2014; Bialecki 2014; Blaser 2009, 2013, 2014; Candea 2010, 2011, 2013; Descola and Lloyd 2013; Evens 2012, 2014; Harris, O.J.T. and Robb 2012; Henare *et al.* 2007; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017; Kohn 2007, 2013, 2015; Lebner *et al.* 2017; Lloyd 2011; Mimica 2010; Mol 1999; Pedersen 2011, 2012; Pedersen and Willerslev 2012; Salmond 2013, 2014; Vilaça 2005, 2015; Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2010, 2011, 2015; Willerslev 2007, 2011, 2012)

¹²⁶ Edward Casey, in his philosophical account of place, writes that place is problematic from a cosmological perspective if creationism is a problem for the philosopher; if it is not, however, then cosmogenesis and topogenesis can be considered identical (1997, pp. 4-5). Casey's work is also notable for delineating how place becomes, philosophically, a container, acquiring geometry of dimension and form independent of cosmological narrative, to an infinite 'nothingness', leading to the bare (yet, confused) conception of place (as associated with space) that now remains in westernised thought.

¹²⁷ Conceptual thinking and theorising about radical alterity has been the topic of some critique for a number of years (for example, see Latour 1993; Rabinow 2011; Wagner 1975, 1991). However, after many years of deep engagement with this literature, I have certainly seen critiques of the ontological turn, but I cannot say that I have come across much that *directly* discusses and offers remedy for the biases I discuss in this thesis.

¹²⁸ A further problem is that despite the existence of a now extensive body of literature which addresses the constructed nature of science (science studies, the philosophy of science and technology, and so forth), the worldview that generates the target and the critique is the same (Aronowitz 1988; Bloor 1976; Collins, H.M. and Evans 2007; Dupré 1993; Freidson 1986; Fuller and Collier 2004; Knorr-Cetina 1999; Serres and Latour 1995; Wallerstein 2004; Weaver, W. 1948, 1960; Weaver, W. *et al.* 1961).

the psychological dominance of a materialistic philosophy hardened into dogma and masquerading as authentic science to draw on the latter's prestige... Scientism results when the process of open-minded scientific inquiry stops or is restricted to 'legitimate' areas and a new requirement for acceptance of data and theories beyond empirical fidelity is added – namely, that results be compatible with a materialistic philosophy of life. Scientism thus becomes a paradigm guiding intellectual thought... At worst, scientism psychologically acts in the same ways that rigid, fundamentalist religions do, constructing a distorted version of reality in our minds that produces a pseudovalidation of itself by distorting our perceptions and feelings... Scientism is explicitly and, even more important, implicitly believed in and practiced to varying degrees by almost all educated people in the modern world, not simply those who work at jobs labelled *scientific* or *technical*" (1992, pp. 78-79).

Scientism, when masked and *labelled* as 'science', fosters biases against what are assumed to be 'anti-scientific' or 'pseudoscientific' inquiry and keeps this active in people's minds (many who have little interaction with, nor understanding of, the sciences), often at the expense of those with other worldviews, and yet bringing scientism into question draws charges of 'being anti-scientific'. As a result, scientism remains largely invisible, except to those for whom it was never a problem in the first place.

The failure of our practical and academic methods for taking seriously have, to date, demonstrated, that indigenous and traditional ecological worldviews become untranslatable in any idiom that has internalised the cosmo-ontological premises (and the particularities of language) specific to the reigning metaphysics guiding westernised academic thought. Anthropologist, Martin Holbraad, who comes closest to addressing these concerns, has said that the traditional anthropological strategies for distorting analysis (the use of 'belief', for example, to render 'relative' cultural differences), amounts to an 'intellectual scandal' that has enabled anthropologists to 'paste over' the failure of their own descriptive capacities (2012a). Worldview change, which deliberately targets those cosmo-ontological levels from which bias emerges, therefore becomes an essential part of the academic project for these times.

The theory I propose can be abridged as follows: A worldview (upon which collectives, such as cultures or religions, are based) is structured in the first instance by a set of charter myths or origin stories (cosmology) that determine which objects or entities are 'allowed' to exist, or not (ontology), as a part of everyday experience. These criteria have a special relationship to knowledge and how it is validated (epistemology), in combination with particular kinds of values (axiology) which, in turn, impact upon practice. The interactions between these metaphysical components (which are not

bounded, nor linear) involve processes of inclusion and exclusion: what is believed to be possible, valid, and true, and their respective opposites, is determined largely by what can and cannot exist (as set by cosmology), which defines what knowledge can be about (thus, determining epistemology), and what knowledge has value (determining axiology). Practice, which shows up in everyday contexts, and also as culture and religion, is oriented by these metaphysical components (from which the *content* of culture and religion derive).

Cosmological interrogation, which I adapt from the work Martin Holbraad (2012a, 2012b; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017), involves becoming aware of those stories that are working behind the scenes to inform our own reality.¹²⁹ Cosmological interrogation is a way into increasing one's own reflexivity and increasing awareness of one's own positionality. Exposing the logic of worldview can be both liberating and transformative, in that it renders explicit those metaphysical inheritances that are maintained within social institutions and by social norms, yet are often unexamined. A signature body of knowledge, once established, orients practice within any designated collective via these epistemological, ontological, and axiological limits. Practices which do not adhere to these specifications may occur within these limits, but if they cannot be classified as 'true', 'good', 'useful', and so forth, they may be perceived as having limited visibility, validity, or relevance.¹³⁰

Worldviews can be theorised as coherent and total ordering systems that are socially (and personally) real, but are *also* socially constructed as reliable, unshakeable, protective, and as a way of discerning right from wrong, good from poor judgement, and truth from falsity. Worldviews are also personalised, which means that they do not appear uniformly regardless of the influence that families, churches, communities, tribal or ethnic groups, or societies may have on our view of the world. Personal worldviews contain elements of greater collective worldviews, which may, in turn, generate plural and contradictory commitments which individuals may struggle to navigate in everyday life.

¹²⁹ The initial inspiration here was Holbraad's method of *ontological interrogation*, which I have developed and expanded upon (2012b, pp. 255-266).

¹³⁰ In her extensive studies of widows' communication with their deceased partners, British folklorist, Gillian Bennett, writes that, with rare exceptions, very few written accounts remain neutral as to the ontological status of spirits: "Whatever the rhetoric, there are some words that are never used—among them, 'soul,' 'spirit,' 'ghost'; and a set of explanations that are never countenanced—that the dead person is interacting with the living one, for example, or that this interaction is happening because human affections and personality can survive beyond the grave, or that there is an afterlife in which the dead continue to exist and from which these communications come" (2000, p. 147). Elsewhere, Bennett writes that, in academia: "No-one will tackle the subject because it is disreputable, and it remains disreputable because no one will tackle it" (1987, p. 13).

Worldviews that appear collective (which moderate, structure, and/or codify group behaviours) entail tacit agreements, or consensus. Shared worldviews are cumulative, in that they can change as they are lived. They are *constantly modified* by experience and history (including the ‘general flow’ of events), although there do appear to be limits on the context for, and nature of, these changes. Worldviews take time to change, and change in individually specific ways. No collective is ever an absolute reference.

To offer an example given by scholar of religion, Sam Gill, within Native American contexts there is nothing permanent suggested by the stories that inform a worldview:

Underlying these global representations of the ideal [stories of creation] are infinitely complex principles of relationship which determine and direct the lifeways. In the whole range of human action, nothing is exempt. . . all human action is continually measured against traditional patterns so that the way life is experienced is dependent on how it is lived (2009, p. 282).

Worldviews involve systems of relationships, so they include feedback loops.¹³¹ One such feedback loop is derived from the context in which worldviews are being lived, or what might be called ‘the total environment’ that they inform. As Gill suggests, feedback from the total experiential environment is constantly tested against worldview precepts, just as worldview precepts constantly inform our perception and interpretation of our experiences.

The most helpful way of thinking about worldview is as a ‘system of relationships’, visualised in a circular (or ‘nested’) form, with feedback loops, via which we might constantly be comparing and contrasting ideas with experiences, forming new conclusions or making decisions as a result.¹³²

Worldviews can therefore be deliberately transformed, or allowed to remain relatively ‘open’, just as I

¹³¹ In systems thinking, positive and negative data is transmitted via feedback loops to the ‘management’ level of any system, in this case, the feedback is direct toward the cosmological-ontological levels of cognitive organisation, prompting constant revision of whether practices and ideas match the implicit or explicit, stated or unstated, assumptions of worldview. To draw on an analogy, we might think of the feedback loops in an industrial setting and in the human individual worldview as somewhat correlated. Those in positions of ‘management’ are not necessarily in full communication with those who are ‘working the floor’ and vice versa, and various agendas may be in play for all parties. Making the operating of the system *transparent*, therefore, in terms of revealing the agendas and the relations between parts, improves overall functionality and communication. The same applies when considering how to make the mechanisms of worldview visible, or bring unstated or unthought assumptions under conscious control.

¹³² It is not difficult to hypothesise how certain combinations of positive or negative feedback loops can have a great influence on worldview change (consider, for instance, the quick adoption of a narrow fundamentalist or extremist cosmology, or, equally, its sudden abandonment).

endeavour to do in this thesis when discussing a wide range of cosmological bases and ontological entities.

Emotions and sensory experiences play such a pivotal role in worldview establishment, change, and modification, that comprehending worldview requires empathy with, and close observation of, human reactions and the chains of argument that contribute to an individual's description, or defence, of their own worldview. One might read about worldviews (perhaps provoking curiosity, or reflexivity), theorise about worldview (as I do here), and think through worldview in intellectual terms; however, the intricate aspects of worldview are very difficult to engage with on paper. Current theories and representations of worldview do not capture an adequate understanding of the slippage between what we say we do, what we think we do, and what we *actually* do, relative to the ordering processes of thought and action that we base upon worldview. Engagement is relational, often personal, and happens most effectively through human-to-human interactions *in situ*. Working with the worldview of any single individual, or one's own (and we are all different), is a *practice* that originates with understanding *cosmologies*, or those origin stories, charter myths, or guiding narratives by which we each make sense of the world we live in.¹³³

2.2 Basic Elements of Worldview

Cosmologies (from *kosmos*, the world) are the foundation for worldview. They capture the story of the origin, evolution, and fate of the universe, and the corpus of cosmological stories which guide any collective is largely to do with these themes. A cosmology (whether it is called theological, scientific, mythological, or a combination of these) is a story about origins which *sets the ontological conditions of possibility* for any community. Cosmologies also retain an ongoing relevance, in that we continue to create from charter myths and origin stories in daily life. A cosmology is the reference point for our symbolic set, which is modified through our daily lived experience within a particular setting (society, community, total lived environment, or context). Cosmologies are *not* dead stories.

¹³³ With this in mind, workers in the area of worldview change within such societal contexts need to be especially attentive to making sure that deliberate worldview challenge is emotionally *safe*. This involves an ethic of care based on safe relationship, and is most effective when endeavoured using kinship principles such as respect, reciprocity, and compassionate deep listening. Worldview threat, terror-management theory (TMT), worldview protection strategies, and the politics of fear have been popular topics for psychologists, in particular, studies which deal with the centrality of death beliefs to worldview defence. Although an in-depth discussion of this is outside the scope of this thesis, familiarity with this literature is essential for direct interpersonal work or teaching with worldview (for examples, see Borum 2014; Goplen and Plant 2015; Hayes *et al.* 2008; Hayes *et al.* 2015; Holbrook *et al.* 2011; Hunt, D.M. and Shehryar 2011; Koltko-Rivera 2004; Pyszczynski 2004; Rogers 2011; Schimel *et al.* 2007; Shehryar and Hunt 2005; Volini 2017; Webb 1998).

They are not static for the reason that they set the wheels of a worldview in motion in a way that influences every action take or decision we make, every day.

Perhaps we could think of cosmologies in the manner explained by the late Tagwseblu Vi Hilbert, an Elder of the Upper Skagit tribes of the Salish Nation.¹³⁴ The father teaches the son, and the son teaches his son, and so on, over and again, but as time passes, one thing and then another leaves the scope of memory until all that remains is the story (in Simms 2009, p. 302). So it is with the stories that we live by.

Vine Deloria Jr. also places stories at the centre of our worldviews:

Every human society maintains its sense of identity with a set of stories that explain, at least to its satisfaction, how things came to be. A good many societies begin at a creation and carry forward a tenuous link of events which they consider to be historical – which is to say actual experiences of the group which often serve as precedents for determining present and future actions (1995, p. 37).

Such stories contain elements or entities which are accounted for by the truth afforded to the tale, and are therefore accepted as ‘real’ (take, for example, the Big Bang or the Virgin Birth – both unquestionably ‘true’ for those who maintain those cosmological reference points).

All objects confirmed by the cosmological tale (atoms, genes, gods, spirits, ‘nature’, and so forth) comprise the ontological content, or the *ontological set*, which informs a worldview.¹³⁵ Ontology is therefore *constituted from* whatever cosmological tenets, origin stories, or charter myths guide a community. These stories demarcate not only what can happen and what can be, but also what is possible, what is reasonable, and what is rational. In turn, the prescriptions set by these stories impact behaviours, practices, norms, and the activities we might classify as religion or culture.

Simply put, a guiding ontology contains the fundamental, base level concepts, entities, or ‘things’ out of which a view of the world is built. If the existence of something is not seen as ‘possible’ or is denied at the cosmological level, then it cannot ‘be’ – it *does not exist* in the ontological set. The ‘facts’ of the matter are not accessible from this level of analysis. There is only ontological agreement or disagreement, if indeed there are ‘facts’ to be determined at all. This is not to say that, as in the tradition of strong constructivism, this reality based upon facts, truths and so-forth just falls apart.

¹³⁴ The late Tagwseblu Vi Hilbert dedicated her life to preserving the Lushootseed language and culture. She was widely acknowledged as a respected Elder, storyteller, and tribal historian.

¹³⁵ Ontology (in literal translation) is the knowledge, account, or philosophical study (*-logos*) of Being (*-ontos*).

What worldview interrogation does is provoke a reflexive stance on truth that reveals its constructed nature and situates this truth as a cultural product that can then be revised through different kinds of comparative activities.

What can be known (epistemology) and what has value (axiology) can be added to cosmology and ontology in order to map out a worldview, and all these elements are embodied in the practices of those collectives, cultures, religions, societies, and communities with inheritances-in-common, including tribal communities or Nations, nation states, ethnicities, and families. Epistemology is the level at which we can ask ‘what counts as knowledge?’ Or, in combination with axiology, ‘what knowledge has value?’ What a worldview *does*, therefore, is provide a reference for organising our thought and action. Worldview supplies coherence across all of the decisions we make as to what can be known, what is good to know, and what is good or sensible (and thus, has value). Upon this, we base our actions, as extended from particular cosmo-ontological premises about the nature of the world, how it came into being, and how best to exist within it.

From all of this comes practice, most especially the logic from which our fact-value weightings are derived, thus guiding our actions as unquestionably rational. The ability to take any practice and think about how it has been rationalised as a ‘good action’ has the secondary effect of destabilising the surety of one’s own worldview and rationalisations, and this is made even more effective by simply returning to the exercise with multiple examples.¹³⁶ In this way, worldview analysis can operate as a

¹³⁶ Worldview analysis can be effectively taught using any number of contemporary practices or examples. Following a number of classes on the religious, philosophical, and scientific contributions to the westernised worldview, I chose to use the example of celebrity Angelina Jolie in a classroom setting, asking students to evaluate the media coverage of her voluntary double mastectomy. Students in this class noted that although such a decision could be viewed as ‘barbaric’ if it were taken in a different cultural context, media coverage presented Jolie as a hero, a good mother, a responsible citizen, and commended her on her attention to duty. They noted the ontological objects (cancer genes, for example) and could track these to a set of cosmological charter myths on the nature of humans, bodies, and the privileging of medical scientific logic as a ‘good’ and ‘trusted’ source of knowledge commanding high value. They also noted the presence of theological and sociocultural constructions of motherhood and femininity in societal responses to Jolie’s decisions. A number of other examples formed the basis for an assignment where class members were asked to use the tools of worldview analysis to look at a range of explicitly westernised practices (dieting, recycling, immunisation, monogamy, use of 1080 poison for possum culling in Aotearoa, among others). Only then, once the processes of personal cosmological interrogation had begun for the individuals participating in the class, did we proceed with worldview analysis of practices in *other* cultural contexts. Engaging with other cultural contexts began with a similar process of locating cosmological stories, looking at how these were contextualised by history and contemporary sociocultural formations, before mapping the logic of practices which might once have appeared ‘irrational’ or ‘exotic’.

kind of ‘rosetta stone’ which unlocks the logic which guides the actions of others, and make visible what was invisible in terms of one’s own cosmological orientation.

Consider how we might ascribe value to practices that are sanctioned as ‘good’ or ‘sensible’ within the dominant cultural milieu, such as vaccinating children, taking medicines, or giving birth in a hospital setting. These practices can be analysed by looking at the manner by which value has been derived from a combination of historically salient cosmologies, modified in social contexts, and thereafter distributed to the general population in particular ways. Therefore, each choice and the resultant action become a matter of reckoning between one’s personal worldview and the public consensus on ‘good’ and ‘right’ action.

An important *a priori* here is the idea that human behaviour is generally rational: there is some logic to it. To quote Choctaw scholar, Thurman Lee Hester Jr.:

People do not purposefully do what they think is ‘wrong.’ When they have qualms of conscience this is most likely an artifact of conflicting values. We all certainly have values that can come into conflict. But it seems crazy to say that we ever do anything that we purely *disvalue*. To do something is to confer value (2004a, p. 182).

With this in mind, the contexts for our collective actions (and inaction) in response to socioecological issues, and the predicates they are based upon, begin to come more clearly into view.

2.3 Worldview, Culture, and Religion

For the purposes of analysis, my definition of culture and religion are the same, in that I consider both to be sites of action (or praxis) that are generated from the total content of worldview. In formulating a definition of culture, I extend the processual thought of symbolic anthropologist, the late Victor Turner (1967, 1969, 1979), who held culture to be: the *significant embodied activities and expressive symbolising practices of a group*, the means by which the members of the group *define* themselves as a group, *maintain* themselves as a group, and *sustain* the traditions of the group over time. In other words, culture is lived, active, and embodied. In following Turner, I diverge from the definitions of culture and religion suggested by the late anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973), and fellow anthropologist, Talal Asad (1993, 2003).¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Whilst I diverge from a number of conventional theories on culture and religion, I do retain the relations between environment (social, political and technological change) and dynamic cultural adaptation, whilst suggesting that environment is not deterministic for adaptation, but rather, part of a system of relations. Adaptation still conforms to

Turner theorised culture as a processual term, which means it is something that is *happening*, rather than something that can be ‘pointed at’, or something that exists only in the realm of ideas. Consider, for example, the concepts of being *enculturated*, *cultivating*, and *culturing*, and the processes of inoculation, seeding, tending, growing, and maintaining that are inherent in these words (all from the same agricultural root, the Latin *cultura*). Whilst definitions of culture and religion have regularly been expanded within scholarship to include beliefs and propositions about reality, I suggest that beliefs and propositions extend from cosmo-ontological predicates that are embodied in action.

In my definition, culture is how worldview is *transmitted* from one generation to the next: via the *process* of enculturation, or its ongoing enactment and maintenance, using the symbolic architecture, or structures, which give that cultural complex its identifying features. Ritual, another linked term, is a part of the enactment and embodiment techniques (praxis) which maintain cultural continuity. Ritual practices, as with the other symbolic and active components of a culture, make sense because they derive their meaning from cosmological predicates sustained across a group, for a duration of time, and are therefore established as a part of that group’s identity and traditions.

Religion can be theorised in much the same way as culture. By this statement, I mean to suggest that both are *instruments* (or tools) for expressing worldview, as employed by human beings to articulate and embody the coherent account of reality that is derived from worldview concepts. I am not arguing that the terms themselves are isomorphic, as individuals classify aspects of experience with these words somewhat routinely and diversely. It is possible, perhaps even common, to think of oneself as having a religion, and a culture, and derive great satisfaction from both, and yet they both express aspects of worldview in embodied ways. Here, and in both cases, I am referring to a patterned or structured set of relations between guiding principles (cosmology) and a symbolic set.

The individualised sorting of life contents into one or the other category does not alter the observation that they play identical (if personally and collectively differentiated) roles, as instruments of worldview. These terms are separated by scholars in a manner that obscures the patterned processes they have in common, made even more evident now that specific definitions of these terms have been adopted widely beyond their institutional places of incubation.

When Robin Kimmerer refers to *being Potawatomi*, for instance, I can understand this as a shared identifier, signified by ‘Potawatomi’ as an index for elements of worldview held in common. A

cosmological predicates in any given collective. A good illustration can be provided by scholarship on ‘multiple modernities’ (Eisenstadt 2002; Klaniczay *et al.* 2011).

worldview is sustained in a cultural context, by a community, and is perpetuated from one generation to the next, through mechanisms of transferral by which (for this example) key elements which make Potawatomi peoples *Potawatomi* are relayed over time. This is how elements of worldview become persistent and reinforced by human communities, yet retain a relative stable symbolic structure, generally distributed through cultural modes of activity that are both flexible and adaptable. This is not to suggest every person who uses the identifier will be Potawatomi in precisely the same manner. Worldview does not ‘script’ socialisation, nor does it necessarily modify or inhibit individuality – a collective worldview simply sets the parameters or limits on a collective identity.

Whilst worldviews become stronger through the constant reinforcement of their elements, they become endangered or extinct when people are displaced, communities are disbanded, kin transfer systems are broken, traditions, beliefs, cultural or ritual practices are outlawed, and languages and Elders die out. Breaking and replacing worldview (although perhaps not stated in such terms) was, for many of the traditional and indigenous peoples of the world, the primary goal of colonialism.

Putting worldview ‘back together’, as is so often necessary in the wake of colonialism, is a practical, human-to-human process of restoring relationships. As Gregory Cajete lays out in his work on indigenous community (2015), the stronger the community and the more coherent their knowledge and practice of their traditions and culture, the greater their capacity for deep healing (Atkinson 2002; Deer, F. and Falkenberg 2016; Dickson-Gilmore and La Prairie 2005; Fox, Leo and Kainaiwa Board of Education 2001; Ross 2006).

I suggest that all definitions and distinctions we might make regarding the *identity* of things are dependent upon worldview. The question of what we are as humans, for example, has no single nor correct and ‘truthful’ answer – all answers depend upon worldview. Also, our actions are a result of worldview in its capacity for structuring values: what is a ‘good’ action versus a ‘bad’ action, or what are ‘necessary’ practices? These are significant questions when thinking through different possible responses to the various socioecological issues that are relevant at this time.

2.4 Paradigm Shifts

Of the rhetoric particular to these times, the idea that we need a *paradigm shift* is as popular as the assertion that we need *a new story*, or *a new myth*, to guide humanity into a different future. However, what the proclaimer has in mind in terms of *practical* solutions does not necessarily accompany these pronouncements. I want to suggest that the meaning of the gesture is clear, and the

two ideas of new story and paradigm shift are related, however I have not seen the basic relationship explained.

By way of definition, a paradigm is not a worldview, but a form of worldview expression: a specific and patterned way of doing things which has some spatiotemporal boundary to it. For instance, as the late American historian, physicist, and philosopher of science, Thomas S. Kuhn (1996), famously pointed out, paradigm shifts happen within a bounded (roughly disciplinary) field: in his examples, the sciences. Unfortunately, Kuhn used ‘paradigm’ in a number of different ways in his work and then ‘lost control of it’ before he could clarify his intended meaning.¹³⁸

The word originally had two uses: to refer to an exemplar (as in *paradigmatic*); or, to refer to a pattern, which is how Kuhn was using it. Here, it was also emphasising a change in the regular pattern, thus paradigm *shift*. Post-Kuhn, it now appears in dictionaries accordingly, as a change in the usual, normal or regular way of doing things. What I am emphasising in my definition is the spatiotemporal aspect of the bounded area within which ‘usual’, or ‘regular’, are indexed in a particular manner. So a paradigm shift (singular) *could not* happen all over the planet, because there are no usual or regular features which could be identified as universal and, further, ‘the planet’ lacks any spatiotemporal limitations – it is a *whole*.

If I am reading Kuhn correctly, then extending his observation to incorporate the effect on worldview, paradigm shifts do happen, sending a ripple through the worldview from cosmology to practice, *when new or previously unthought items are discovered within the ontological set*. This does not necessarily mean that a change at the cosmological level has occurred, but that the new items have been found to be *compatible* with the existing cosmology (although not previously recognised); or, they have been discovered through a *reinterpretation* of the cosmology.

For example, a paradigm shift occurred following the fracturing of Christianity in the sixteenth century. In Europe, what is now referred to as the Reformation resulted in two distinct lines of tradition. The second line of tradition, Protestantism, is thought of as an ‘authentic’ Christian tradition, particularly now that it has ‘settled’ over the centuries. It shares a signifier, Christian, and a spatiotemporal zone with Catholicism, as well as the corpus of tradition that preceded it, and the cosmological reference points are almost identical, however the *reinterpretation* of cosmology created

¹³⁸ This is precisely what happened to the Gaia concept, as formulated by James Lovelock.

new ontological objects which were unacceptable to those who preferred the foregoing interpretation.¹³⁹

Examples in which new ontological objects have been discovered and proved compatible with the cosmology abound in the histories of science, medicine in particular. Discoveries in genetics, the neurosciences, and explorations of human microbiotic ecologies all fit this category, although there is some accumulating hesitation with the last example, which is proving to be cosmologically ‘unruly’ due to its destabilising effect on the respected boundaries of human individuality (see Doolittle and Booth 2017; Gilbert *et al.* 2012; Schneider and Winslow 2014).

In the modern history of science, the *attempted* shift from Newtonian mechanics toward thinking with Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, Karl Pribram, David Bohm, Amit Goswami, and other quantum physicists, is particularly interesting. This shift (technically, plural, as it occurs in several domains, at differing rates, and to various degrees) derives from the discovery of new ontological objects. However, the compatibility of these new objects with the dominant cosmology is still being debated, provoking paradigm paralysis, and the cycle that ought to alter the territory (amounting to what Kuhn called a *revolution*) is not yet complete.

In worldview terms, the feedback loop, by which the (indisputably existent) new quantum objects are fed back into the cosmology and compared, keeps getting jammed on the residual Christianity left over from the birth of science. The territory remains contested, not because the objects are not ‘real’, but because the cosmology which dominates that territory is afflicted with a particular history. Quantum physics provokes obvious scientific discomfort, as the new ontological objects threaten the cohesiveness of the worldview that is presently dominating that territory.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ In this, it differs from the original split of the Abrahamic traditions into the three (consecutively spawned) faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in that these traditions do not share one signifier (i.e. Christian) nor any particular spatiotemporal bounded zone.

¹⁴⁰ In the foreword to Rajani Kanth’s latest book, renowned quantum physicist, Amit Goswami, speaks to this directly: “You know there is a new physics (new? Ha! It has been around for almost a hundred years!) called quantum physics that is supposed to have replaced Newtonian physics. You may also know that the message of this new physics is integrative – among other things it integrates science and spirituality which is the basis of religions. But have you wondered why this message is having difficulties getting traction? I have; I am one of a substantial number of maverick scientists who keep trying to effect a paradigm shift in our entire worldview due to the paradigm shift in physics” (in Kanth 2017, p. xvii).

2.5 Changing the Story

Here, finally, is the opportunity to respond to the calls for a new story. *If there was* more to be known about indigenous and traditional ways of being that posit a sentient Earth, admit prophecy and story as knowledge, and the corpus of other practices that are tacitly designated as academic heresy, we would not be able to access it intellectually without performing a kind of cosmological interrogation. Such an interrogation would need to focus on history, academic and disciplinary conventions, on our own ideas about the topic, along with the ideas of others, in order to overcome these significant biases and conceptually meet the challenges such knowledge might hold. This is what I am suggesting when I say we have a worldview problem.

The need for cosmological interrogation applies to a phenomenal corpus of worldview content that remains largely misunderstood, unexamined, misrepresented, and dismissed as having little ‘real’ value. This dismissal is not scientific; rather, it is *residual Christianity in action*, as extended from a cosmological inheritance that combine religious and scientific notions to fuel the processes of westernisation, which manifest certain practices and limits to thought within the resulting ‘westernised’ societies. In particular, we need to review the specific spatiotemporal assumptions about the nature of reality, as attached to a power-metaphysics of monotheistic dominion (expressed primarily in the history of westernised societies via Christianity), and the dualism that extends from this theological contribution to worldview. As such, the conversations that might be possible if we were to *query* these stories and clean them up, so that the ontological set *matched* the cosmology we wish to move forward with, are yet to begin. New stories will not fall from the sky, but have to be crafted, using feedback loops and whatever hermeneutic and educational tools we might muster to effect the transformation of worldview.

To refer back to my very first example: I am not convinced that Hawken’s revolutionaries can reach their goals without the ignition of a paradigm shift that deliberately targets the dual cosmologies of the westernised worldview (that is, our theological-philosophical and the secular-scientific inheritances) for review. Intervention has to occur at the worldview level itself, where the shared and unstated ideas in the minds of people who make up a society or an institution exist as

paradigmatic orienting structures which, in turn, provide feedback to the system as a whole. The most appropriate starting point for this is in education.¹⁴¹

The most compelling reason for interrogating our realities at the cosmological level are that we are, generally, *completely unaware* of the degree to which they inform our decisions and actions in everyday life. Whilst we may fiercely debate the existence (or non-existence) of various ontological objects, for many of us there is a significant gap between our knowledge (and awareness) of the *origins* of our convictions, and what is a taken-for-granted reality. Socialisation, enculturation, parenting, and education do not (and often, *cannot*) make explicit the cosmological origins for why we believe what we believe, why we think what we think, why we value some things and not others, and why we do what we do. Those habitual day-to-day activities remain largely unthought. The work of worldview transformation requires each of us to make those links and question what aspects of cosmological origin we wish to keep, or discard. Beginning this process within the universities is not only possible, but an appropriate place to start.

The late Donella Meadows, a renowned systems thinker and lead author of the *Limits to Growth* (1972), prepared for the Club of Rome, wrote that: “People who have managed to intervene in systems at the level of paradigm have hit a leverage point that totally transforms systems” (2008, p. 163). In her words, securing a paradigm shift happens very deliberately:

You keep pointing at the anomalies and failures in the old paradigm. You keep speaking and acting, loudly and with assurance, from the new one. You insert people with the new paradigm in places of public visibility and power. You don't waste time with reactionaries; rather, you work with active change agents and with the vast middle-ground of people who are open minded (p. 164).

Ervin László, an exceptional scholar and part of the Club of Budapest, maintains that, whilst the evolutionary pressure to change is acting on everybody in the world, what has been *missing* is the right context for change to happen. He calls this the trigger that creates a tipping point, otherwise

¹⁴¹ Some excellent starting points for revisiting the curriculum in ways that are compatible with these ideas can be found in the work of Four Arrows (2013; Jacobs, D.T. and Jacobs-Spencer 2001), Gregory Cajete (1994, 1999, 2000, 2015), and Eve Tuck (2011; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). Indigenous scholar, Michael Yellow Bird, of the Arikara (Sahnish) and Hidatsa Nations of North Dakota, has widened this field with his work on neurodecolonisation (Gray *et al.* 2008; Gray *et al.* 2013; Yellow Bird 2014; Yellow Bird and Waziyatawin 2005, 2012); and in a related move, Four Arrows offers an approach to worldview change in his significant work on the CAT-FAWN connection, which refers to Concentrated-Activated Transformation as leveraged metacognitively for the interrogation of beliefs and practices relating to Fear, Authority, Words and Nature (2016a, 2016c).

known as *critical mass* (in Ohayon 2013).¹⁴² László says that we cannot expect change from those two or three hundred million people who are invested in maintaining the current system, that is the leaders, the wealthy, and the elites; nor can it come from the very poorest people, the perhaps two billion who are necessarily focused upon daily survival:

It has to come from those who are in between, who have a choice, who are becoming increasingly concerned, and who know that something needs to be done. The hope is that they will wake up (in Ohayon 2013).

As one of those middle-ground people (and to bring this to bear on what scholars might contribute), I hold that incorporating the resulting critiques of what I have proposed into our practices, teaching, and mechanisms for enculturation could, over time, alter the territory.

As long as westernised people continue to be beholden, without their knowledge, to a medieval interpretation of religion, augmented with philosophy and science, then the revolution cannot complete its circle. All revolutions that succeed aim, metaphorically, for the head of the king. This opportunity is no different. Furthermore, the potential for global transformation of our crises and, ultimately, peacemaking practices (with each other, and with/in the interwoven ecologies of Earth), may well lie on the other side of this process.

¹⁴² In studies undertaken at the Social Cognitive Networks Research Center (SCNRC) at Rensselaer in New York, researchers identified the tipping point for any minority belief to become a majority opinion at ten percent critical mass within any population (Doyle, C. *et al.* 2016; Xie *et al.* 2011). Researcher Sameet Sreenivasan was quoted in the SCNRC press release as follows: “As agents of change start to convince more and more people, the situation begins to change. People begin to question their own views at first and then completely adopt the new view to spread it even further” (DeMarco 2011). Note than in any population, the raw percentages do not take into account the percentage of people who relate to the media, to Google, or to Facebook networks as if they were a ‘person’.

Chapter Three: This Anthropocen(e)tric Moment

In times that seem grim and rootless, when even the ground gives way under my feet, I will enter a new geography of hope... The dark, ferny-kneed forest and the shy owls, the soft trails, the smell of pine and bracken are gone – maybe gone forever into a sizzling hot future. I don't know how to bear the dead weight of this sorrow and of this shame. I do know that what remains is a wilderness of sinewy, raw-boned possibility... the creative urgency of life unfurling in the dark folds of the land, the fertility of the human imagination and the expansive embrace of the human heart. The wilderness of possibility is the home of hope.

—Kathleen Dean Moore, 2014¹⁴³

In his preface to *The New Ecological Order* (1995), the French philosopher, Luc Ferry, narrates an extraordinary tale of legal proceedings against a colony of weevils in the year 1545. The villagers of Saint-Julien, in France, sought 'appropriate measures' to demand the expulsion of the beasts from their vineyards, but it was argued that, as 'creatures of God,' the animals possessed the same rights to consume plant life as the residents. The villagers (who lost their case) were required to sincerely repent, through prayer, tithes, and processions around the vineyards, followed by further devotions and penitence. All of this was designed to put right *their* error in the eyes of God. The weevils vacated and the matter ended, only to be brought again to the courts some forty-two years later. However, it appears that the villagers lost, once again. Not only did the judge order the vicar to re-apply the ordonnance (penalty) of the previous judgement, but a compromise was added in which the weevils were to be leased 'a location of sufficient pasture, outside of the disputed vineyards of Saint-Julien' (pp. ix-xi).

Ferry does not give a final conclusion to this matter, but he discusses similar cases involving larvae (who won), leeches (who were ultimately cursed to evacuate by the bishop of Lausanne), dolphins (excommunicated from Marseille, for clogging the port), rats (who triumphed), and beetles (case dismissed, due to their young age and the diminutiveness of their bodies) (pp. ix-xiv). What is fascinating about these cases is how Ferry captures a transitional moment in history that is rarely presented so clearly. His preface is a reminder that, for a certain period in European history, there was the possibility to think of other species in a manner which afforded them agency and equated their rights with those of human beings. Now, as Ferry laments, only humans are 'worthy of a trial' and

¹⁴³ Kathleen Dean Moore is a retired academic who now writes, speaks, and works on behalf of climate change awareness. This passage is from the essay, A New Geography of Hope. *Earth Island Journal*, no. 29.3, (p. 23).

nature is a ‘dead letter.’ “Literally: it no longer speaks to us for we have long ceased – at least since Descartes – to attribute a soul to it or to believe it inhabited by occult forces” (p. xvi).¹⁴⁴

Nearly five hundred year later, on the 13th of November 2017, the second notice from the Union of Concerned Scientists on the state of the planet, was issued to humanity. It reads as follows:

Since 1992, with the exception of stabilizing the stratospheric ozone layer, humanity has failed to make sufficient progress in generally solving these foreseen environmental challenges, and alarmingly, most of them are getting far worse... Moreover, we have unleashed a mass extinction event, the sixth in roughly 540 million years, wherein many current life forms could be annihilated or at least committed to extinction by the end of this century (Ripple *et al.* 2017).

In the words of Australian human ecologist, Charles Massy: “It is the greatest crisis the planet and humanity has ever faced. It makes a world war look like a little storm in a teacup. And we are in denial” (in Chenery 2017). So, what are our ‘matters of concern’ (Latour 2004), given that the predictions of those such as Cambridge astronomer, Martin Rees (2003, 2014), suggest humanity has a 50/50 chance of surviving intact to the year 2100?

The remainder of this chapter is an outline, in broad strokes, of what we are collectively reckoning with when we consider the Anthropocene, or the human impacts on the planet, in combination with what are seemingly cascading and serious social issues. I discuss the idea that humans are caught in a crisis of perception, explain how language features in our framing (and reframing) of socioecological concerns, and introduce some of the ideas already offered by systems thinkers that could be helpful to us as we assess these problems. I also introduce the host of calls for worldview reappraisal (or a ‘new story’).

3.1 Glaciers and Honeybees

If they are perceptive, city dwellers can see that climate change is happening when they look out the window and compare the weather to what it was like when they were children. For others,

¹⁴⁴ The legal personhood of places and animals has very recently been revived following notable cases in India, the US, and New Zealand (see Coehlo 2013; Grimm 2013; Hutchison 2014; Kennedy 2012; Roy 2017). Earth jurisprudence and Rights of Nature arguments can only take us so far, wedded as they are to impoverished definitions of personhood within legal contexts. Whilst such a gesture towards personhood may indeed confer ecological and conservation benefits, it is nonetheless a gesture, albeit one that opens up interesting conversations on what personhood actually means. *Genius loci*, or the spirit of place, as understood from an Earth minded perspective, is neither theoretical, nor symbolic – it is *not a metaphor* – which might provoke thought on what is actually meant by *felt kinship relations* with mountains, rivers, other animals, and place itself.

climate change is a daily threat to human survival. In a recent interview with anthropologist Susie Crate, an example from Kiribati makes the point plainly: “Rising sea levels may sound like an abstract concept from the future — unless they’ve already taken out where your village center used to be” (in Imbrogno 2017). It is not only island communities that have already experienced significant change, but also those who are close to the equator and living in the far north. In 1977, the Iñupiat, Yup’ik, Canadian, and Greenlandic Inuit assembly was formed to address issues of pollution, oil exploration, nuclear testing, and eventually, petroleum in the Arctic Ocean (Sakakibara 2011, p. 80).¹⁴⁵ Now they fight climate change because it is ‘harder to find food’, the landscape is becoming unrecognisable, and water is now ‘where there once was ice’ (Reiss 2010).

Over the last decade, reports have been that ice melt was affecting hunting practices in the Arctic Alaskan region, new species of insects and animals were moving in from warmer climates, key food species were changing, lakes (and thus, nesting grounds for birds) were drying up, flies were making caribou sick, and shifting winds were altering local landscapes so much that Inuit people were having difficulty reading the terrain (Bowermaster 2007; Reiss 2010). As stated by Nunavik author and activist, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, the chairwoman of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (representing 155,000 people): “We are already bearing the brunt of climate change – without our snow and ice our way of life goes. We have lived in harmony with our surroundings for millennia, but that is being taken away from us” (in Brown, P. 2003).

That was in 2003. In 2017, the Nunavut Climate Change Centre (NC³) listed the following current concerns: decreasing sea ice thickness and distribution (changing wildlife habitat and affecting food security via hunters’ ability to harvest); iceberg calving; permafrost degradation, changes in ice conditions, sea levels, rainfall and snow quantity, drainage patterns, temperatures, and extreme weather events; implications for existing infrastructure (such as roads and buildings), which was designed around a permanently frozen soil regime; an increased ice-free season and thus, shipping (resulting in economic benefits, but also the risk of waterway contamination through oil spills and other pollution events, and effects on game); and, lastly, arrival of new insects, birds, fish

¹⁴⁵ The peoples who inhabit the Arctic circle are variously named in scholarship and have close cultural affinities with one another. These communities extend around from the north of Canada and the United States to the Eurasian Arctic regions of Russia, northern Sweden, Norway, Finland and Greenland, and include (among others) the Inuit/Inukituk, Inuvialuit, Aleut, Iñupiat/Iñupiak, Koyukon, Nunamiut/Nunatamiut, Yup’ik, Alutiq, Evenk, Enets, Dolgan, Yukaghir/Yukagir, Yakut, Koryak/Koriak/Koryak, Chukchi, Chikchi, Nga-Nasan/Avam, Nenet, Sámi/Saami/Lapp, Kalaallit, and various combined tribal/kin, historical, language and region-specific variants on stated affinities and territories.

and mammals previously unknown or rare in Nunavut, along with changes in the abundance and distribution of familiar animals (Nunavut Climate Change Centre (NC³) 2012).

Cultural and health losses in the local communities, given that Earthkeeping is congruous with the human communities of the Arctic, are intimately linked to all of these changes. The Yup'ik (also called Yupiaq, meaning *real people*) Elders of Alaska say that *ella* – their word for the sentience of world, universe, weather, and awareness, encompassing all living connection with Earth – is changing. In addition, their explanation is that ‘the weather is following the behaviour of its people’ (in Fienup-Riordan and Rearden 2012, pp. 42, 59-60). They consider a lack of integrity among human beings to be the root cause of the issues.

Australian environmental philosopher, Freya Mathews, offers her summary of these planetary scale changes:

The honeybees are leaving, forsaking not only our crops but the wild plants that depend on them for fertilization. The shells of foraminifera, microscopic marine animals, are thinning as a result of the acidification of the oceans, placing in doubt the future of the entire marine food pyramid, of which foraminifera form the base. Starving creatures, such as polar bears, are resorting to eating their young, ensuring their own extinction. Legions of other species are in retreat as the sixth great extinction event in the history of our planet gets into full swing. There are vast firestorms and other wild atmospheric phantasms on our horizon. Self-interest is manifestly a withered stalk supporting us (2015, pp. 94-95).

The science is by no means exact and may never be (astronomer Martin Rees states that his ‘crystal ball is cloudy’), however the unsustainable anthropogenic stress on ecosystems cannot be denied, despite the twenty plus years of steadfast propaganda against climate science fuelled by the corporate energy sector and associated interests.¹⁴⁶ In late 2017, newspapers all over the world carried reports of a new study that showed a 76-82% decline in insects in well-managed nature reserves since 1989 – insects that make up two-thirds of the visible animal life on our planet (Hallmann *et al.* 2017).¹⁴⁷ The authors predict ecological Armageddon, should we continue down this path. As 80% of plants

¹⁴⁶ A very recent account of climate denial, profiling the new ‘keystone domino’ strategy, suggests this project is ongoing (Harvey, J.A. *et al.* 2017; Nuccitelli 2017).

¹⁴⁷ The insect study can be added to a growing list of similar findings, such as a recent study on butterfly vulnerability in Europe (Essens *et al.* 2017), climate change effects on bees (Cressey 2015; Hagopian 2014; Kerr *et al.* 2015), a 2014 study on defaunation (Dirzo *et al.* 2014), an early warning report on invertebrate extinction patterns (Collen *et al.* 2012), marine life extinction (McCarthy 2011), and bird declines in North America (Nebel *et al.* 2010). The Living Planet Index, which issued a report in 2016, indicated that animal populations have decreased by 58% between 1970 and 2012 with losses predicted to reach 67% by 2020 (Carrington 2016).

depend on insects for pollination and 60% of birds rely on insects as a food source, such a decline (which the authors did not agree on a cause for) risks leading rapidly to no humans. Plant diversity in these areas had also dropped significantly.

None of these horror stories are new, nor hidden in scientific papers; in fact, I could back each tiny detail (and more) with literally thousands of references explaining ‘the mess we are in’ as far as the environment is concerned. However, no amount of research on this topic is amounting to sufficient change. As political and global security author, the late Ronald Higgins, wrote forty years ago (1978), the *seventh enemy*, or the human factor in the global crisis, is our ingrained incapacity to acknowledge, respond to, and resolve our problems.¹⁴⁸ This observation was just recently reiterated in an article from professor of human ecology, William E. Rees: “A curious thing about *H. sapiens* is that we are clever enough to document — in exquisite detail — various trends that portend the collapse of modern civilization, yet not nearly smart enough to extricate ourselves from our self-induced predicament” (2017).

Such statements point emphatically towards the urgency for new kinds of thinking and being. Australian geographer, Sarah A. Robertson, writes that “there remains hope that through improved human connections to place, positive social and ecological change can be achieved” (2018, p. 2); yet, how these moves towards greater place-responsiveness link to desired ecological outcomes remains unclear. Robertson calls upon the ‘relational turn’ (an offshoot of humanistic geography) to place the dynamic nature of place at the centre of her analysis, although she does not altogether reject the notion of place-as-container-for-experience that seems to provoke such confusion.¹⁴⁹ As Robertson notes, more-than-human work has not focused specifically on ‘place’ (p. 5), and yet there is no ‘placeless, timeless nowhere’. Somewhere between topography, philosophy, and phenomenology is a concept of place that is quintessentially more-than-human, related not just ‘to’, but *with/in* an emplaced, embedded, experience of Earth.¹⁵⁰ This kind of *inhabiting*, to follow indigenous

¹⁴⁸ Higgins’ list included overpopulation, food shortage, dwindling resources, environmental crises, the nuclear threat, the spread of technologies, and lastly, humans.

¹⁴⁹ Robertson notes that the relational turn was formulated largely as a response to the work of Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan 段義孚 (1973, 1974, 1980, 1991a, 1991b, 1996, 2003, 2007, 2013), and Canadian geographer, Ted Relph (1976, 1981, 1987), in which the notion of human connection to place (and conversely, disconnection from the world) has been long theorised as a significant foci for human geographers.

¹⁵⁰ Usefully, Robertson draws upon Donna Haraway’s notion of ‘becoming with’ in her concluding sections, pointing to those kinship relations that are also central in traditional ecologically-oriented thought. *Becoming with* is framed here as the ‘act of respect and regard’ when species encounter one another, thus levelling the problems of human exceptionalism and

geographer Natchee Blue Barnd, generates differing and perhaps, unexpected relations to land, rock, air, water, clouds, winds, weather, and the underground (2017, pp. 4-7). Such relations appear in stark contrast to the idea of being ‘contained’ or ‘stranded’ on a planet in peril.

The problems we face at this time appear to be systemic and pathological, encompassing far more than the concern for escalating climate change. Many humans cannot agree on how we should live, birth, parent, die, work, relate, govern, eat, medicate, educate, or deal with race, poverty, crime, justice, industry, pollution, violence and war, other animals, plants and landscapes, migration, addiction, commodities, sexuality, the Elderly, people with disabilities or degenerative diseases, infrastructure, and more. These areas are fraught with disagreements as to how we shall live *together*, and how we can live *well*.¹⁵¹ In light of such disagreements, how might we mediate issues of social and ecological justice as entirely entangled concerns, with sustained attention to the care, and recalibration, of human and ecological flourishing on multiple levels at once? As non-violence practitioner, Miki Kashtan, writes:

I am, indeed, called naïve, idealistic, utopian. Still, I ask: Regardless of how likely you believe a collaborative future is, or how impossible you think that such a vision is, wouldn't you rather live in such a world than the one we have? (2014, p. 415).

Radical ideas and actions seem welcome at this point, no less in scholarly practice and education than in any other realm. Environmental and social commentator, George Monbiot, points to the persistent contradictions between our needs, and our behaviours:

Though our wellbeing is inextricably linked to the lives of others, everywhere we are told that we will prosper through competitive self-interest and extreme individualism. . . . Survival among social mammals is greatly enhanced when they are strongly bonded with the rest of the pack. . . . why are we engaging in this world-eating, self-consuming frenzy of environmental destruction and social dislocation, if all it produces is unbearable pain? Should this question not burn the lips of everyone in public life? . . . This does not require a policy response. It requires something much bigger: the reappraisal of an entire worldview (2016).

William Rees (echoing Monbiot) also observes that “climate change is not the only shadow darkening humanity’s doorstep” (2017). Human life and expansion is displacing other species far

elevating the idea of kinship between species (see Introduction, Haraway 2008). Haraway develops this line of thought fully in one of her most recent books, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016).

¹⁵¹ In capitalising Elderly I retain the possibility for westernised older people to be honoured as Elders where appropriate.

more rapidly, pushing them to extinction, and Rees points to the obviousness of our cascading predicaments with such clarity that he worth quoting at length:

Absent life, planet earth is just an inconsequential wet rock with a poisonous atmosphere revolving pointlessly around an ordinary star on the outer fringes of an undistinguished galaxy... biodiversity loss arguably poses an equivalent existential threat to civilized existence... any complex system dependent on several essential inputs can be taken down by that single factor in least supply (and we haven't yet touched upon the additional risks posed by the geopolitical turmoil that would inevitably follow ecological destabilization). Which raises questions of more than mere academic interest. Why are we not collectively terrified or at least alarmed? If our best science suggests we are en route to systems collapse, why are collapse — and collapse avoidance — not the primary subjects of international political discourse? Why is the world community not engaged in vigorous debate of available initiatives and trans-national institutional mechanisms that could help restore equilibrium to the relationship between humans and the rest of nature? (2017).

These are very good questions: *why* are we not acting more directly on these issues before the Union of Concerned Scientists issues an end-of-humanity warning notice number three?¹⁵² Could it be that, whilst we know something of what is wrong, we do not actually know what to do about it? If this is the case, we clearly need to find out. As the Buddhist authors, biologist John Stanley and David Loy, write: “We are being challenged as a species ‘to grow up or get out of the way’” (2013, p. 45).

3.2 Crisis of Perception

Paula Gunn Allen relays that “it is customary in Pueblo pottery to begin a new pot with the shards of an old pot” (in Parry 2015b, p. 53); meaning that, we must start from where we are and with what we have. To borrow from the Irish Columban missionary, Sean McDonagh: What on Earth do we do when ‘even the arms industry proclaims itself as the peacekeeper of the human community?’ (1987, p. 76). Calls for a new story, or at least an update to the ones we presently draw upon might

¹⁵² The emotional labour of climate scientists has been discussed recently in a wonderful article by Australian geographers, Lesley Head and Theresa Harada (2017), where they list such ‘unthought’ emotional burdens as emphasising dispassion, suppressing painful emotions, using graveyard humour, or ‘switching off’ from work in order to keep the anxieties around climate change work separate from home and family (and perhaps, to remain sane in the face of ‘hard data’). I raise this here, as linked to the work of the Union of Concerned Scientists, to emphasise that these matters *affect us all*, and to reiterate that there really are no ‘lines’ that separate scientists off from the arguments I am making in this thesis. We need it *all* – the sciences, the wisdom traditions, the food gardens, the ocean projects, the snowmobiles, and the internet – everything but the weapons of war, for which I can personally find no purpose.

lead to the renewal our collective sense of responsibility, so that we might learn differently, by means perhaps largely unthought, how to care for our shared planetary future.

It could be useful to consider the work of depth psychologist, Bill Plotkin, who characterises our contemporary industrialised societies as ‘orphan societies’. What he means by this phrasing is that he sees our urban societies as collectives possessed of inefficient (or incomplete) child-nurturing and educational strategies, incoherent social structures, and the absence of Elder leadership, efficient and capable mentoring, or suitable role models.

The entire society takes on the qualities of a foundling fending for itself in a dangerous and uncharitable world. Like an orphan, egocentric society is alienated from its own home (nature), insecure, competitive, vigilant, defensive, aggressive when threatened, chronically hungry, and often depressed (2007, pp. 220-221).

As he writes elsewhere:

In patho-adolescent cultures, ‘caring for the world,’ when contemplated at all, is understood from a limited and shallow anthropocentric perspective – what best serves humanity in our immediate egocentric needs independent of the needs of other species or peoples or even of our own grandchildren (2013a, p. 191).¹⁵³

By extending this metaphor to describe such societies as *patho-adolescent*, infantilised, or ‘devolved’, it is evident that his view dovetails with Stanley and Loy’s advice to ‘grow up or get out of the way’, and yet his observations also have much in common with the perspectives of the late ecologist, Paul Shepard.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ To expand on this point, as Plotkin writes: “There’s absolutely nothing wrong with (healthy) adolescence, but our cultural resources have been so degraded over the centuries that the majority of humans in ‘developed’ societies now never reach true adulthood. An adolescent world, being unnatural and unbalanced, inevitably spawns a variety of cultural pathologies, resulting in contemporary societies that are materialistic, greed-based, class-stratified, hostilely competitive, violent, racist, sexist, ageist, and ultimately self-destructive. . . . No true adult wants to be a consumer, worker bee, or tycoon, or a soldier in an imperial war, and none would go through these motions if there were other options at hand” (Animas Valley Institute 2010).

¹⁵⁴ In proposing an alternative typology of sociocultural evolution, wherein the present achievements of modern societies are portrayed in terms of systemic, progressive, psychosocial and ethical *devolution*, I am quite consciously repurposing this concept to draw comparisons with traditional and indigenous socioecological understandings of what constitutes a ‘good society’. The differing requirements for securing ecological adaptation to specific environments, over long periods of time, impart unique qualities to traditional ecological societies, and generate technologies appropriate sustainable and efficient resource use. Human activities in such societies are moderated by cohesive social structures and cultural traditions

Shepard developed the hypothesis that humans in agricultural and *post*-agricultural societies (but only of a certain type) were susceptible to remaining in an adolescent state, due to the disappearance of important cultural-developmental support systems. He called this *ontogenetic crippling*. Shepard suggested that the domestication of the human, and the animal, transformed the human relationship with land and other species. The idea is that working animals and land for food distorts human-nature relations, splitting practices (and psyche) into ‘wild’ and ‘domesticated’. As Shepard has written:

All Westerners are heir . . . to the legacy of the whole. [Humans] may now be the possessors of the world’s flimsiest identity structure, the products of a prolonged tinkering with ontogenesis—by Paleolithic standards, childish adults . . . and, perhaps worst of all, a readiness to strike back at a natural world that we dimly perceive as having failed us. From this erosion of human nurturing comes the failure of the passages of the life cycle and the exhaustion of our ecological accords . . . Even as socially intense as we are, much of the unconscious life of the individual is rooted in interaction with otherness that goes beyond our own kind, interacting with it very early in personal growth, not as an alternative to human socialization, but as an adjunct to it” (1982, pp. 124-125).

Whilst I agree with both Plotkin and Shepard in their description of the westernised condition, I struggle with the popular notion of viewing the Neolithic transition to agriculture as ‘the critical point’ when the human relationship to the natural world changed irrevocably (the Neolithic transition to agriculture is also posited this way in Caston 2013; Eisler 1987; Glendinning 1994; Kane 1998; Metzner 1999). If my reading is correct, whilst others look for practices as the origin of behaviours, I am inclined to look for the origin of *practices*, or excavate for those origin stories that give meaning to practices. In this instance, the origin to be excavated would be separatist thinking and those practices which extend from this.

Neither agricultural practices and domestication (nor urbanisation and population growth) *necessarily* lead to an impoverished relationship between humans, Earth, and other species. A recent restoration of knowledge has upheld the long-standing cultivation of land in pre-westernised Australia, as detailed by historian, Bruce Pascoe (2012, 2018a, 2018b). Good examples of successful agriculturally based societies are found in the Himalayan Ladakhi communities (Norberg-Hodge 1991), among the Gamo in the African Rift Valley in Southwest Ethiopia (Global Oneness Project

which enable the transmission of the knowledge bases from generation to generation. I am arguing that such societies are representative of a *highly*-evolved sociocultural tradition and model.

2009b),¹⁵⁵ and among the Kogi of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. The Kogi (the descendents of the Tairona civilisation) escaped the full impacts of colonialism, occupying this region for around two thousand years (perhaps longer). They are astute ecologists and agriculturalists, and their management of the environment, which included large urban settlements, is not only metaphysically (or spiritually) advanced, but harmonious, gender-balanced, and entirely ecologically sustainable (see Ereira 1990, 1992, 2012).

Conversely, a broader account of specifically *westernised* historical processes (that which Shepard seeks to explain) points to a lineage of separatist thinking, which begins with a specifically monotheistic cosmology and the social arrangements that are native to a people who are cosmologically divorced from Earth. These origin stories, even in their earliest recorded pre-Biblical forms, separate humankind from a Sun deity, devalue the feminine aspects of the deity (framed as ‘old’ matristic or serpentine religious ideas), and reconceptualise Earth as a place of banishment, whilst humankind’s ‘real home’ is a promised elsewhere (to which humans might go, provided they behave well). This cosmology was augmented by several thousand years of urbanisation and assimilation processes and, eventually, came to a narrow point in medieval European contexts within a particular population. As ecopsychologist, Robert Greenway, has argued, the illusion of separation from nature is “an essential context for domination; domination is the root of exploitation. And thus we destroy our habitat, the very basis of our survival as a species” (1995, p. 131).

Agricultural lifeways (undertaken in particular modes and in particular places) might certainly have contributed to the modern westernised sense of separation; however, the battle to exorcise place-based ‘pagan’ or animistic ways of being from the ‘western psyche’ has been lengthy, and fought in many different places and contexts. What is missing from a simplistic view of the Neolithic transition is an answer to what *motivated* the severance of nature-connections. Given the histories we have from colonial invasions, I think it is reasonable to suggest that enplaced ecological kin relationships with Earth (and associated ways of living) are not willingly surrendered. Furthermore, as we have no substantive accounts that detail a conclusive origin point for these cosmological predicates or by what means they became salient to the first monotheists, it is impossible to speculate

¹⁵⁵ The Gamo highland is located in the Gamo Gofa Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Regional State, about 480 km southwest of Addis Ababa, Southwest Ethiopia (Assefa and Hans-Rudolf 2017).

why those particular peoples looked away from a maternal Earth and invested their faith exclusively in a remote Sky deity.¹⁵⁶

In his extensive work on nature-connection modelling, Jon Young has argued that deep immersion in nature (as Shepard gestures towards), alongside mentoring, initiatory, ritualised, and other communal traditions, are all fundamental to our biological wellbeing.¹⁵⁷ As Young says: “These processes happen below language, outside of belief. . . when you use cultural tools it opens up pipelines in the body which have been blocked” (2014a). In Greenway’s work observing the effects of wilderness connection on westernised peoples, he suggests that there is a gradient of effects that nature has on the psyche. At some point, there is a transition from culture-dominated to nature-dominated awareness. However, Greenway suspects that very few people ‘cross over’ what he calls the psychological wilderness boundary, largely due to naïvety when it comes to really comprehending what is required for deep nature-connection (1995, pp. 132-133).

The culture repair methods that Jon Young has developed over his lifetime have been designed to overcome these issues, and his programmes (helmed by his organisation, *8 Shields*) are among the most successful, if little-known, in the world. His models are based on extensive mentoring and nature-connection practices that have been developed in collaboration with his own, traditionally-

¹⁵⁶ To expand on this here, consider that mythological accounts of the rise of a masculine Sun deity (often accompanied by dragon-slaying, serpent-killing, or similar accounts of political and religious change in which the feminine or androgynous serpent principle, or serpent-bird was eliminated) are found around the world (Miller 2014; Watkins 1995). To give just a few examples: in Egypt, winged snakes, such as the monster Apep, battles nightly with the sun god Ra; in the Sumerian *Epic of Creation*, Marduk slays Tiamat, Medusa is decapitated by Perseus in Greece, the Roman Zeus kills the she-dragon in the *Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo*; and, several accounts remain in the Judaic and Christian sacred texts. The Biblical Leviathan was created as one of a pair of serpents, however his mate was destroyed when the Hebrew God יהוה realised their collective power was threatening the world (Shuker 1995). Casting the snakes out of Ireland (where there are no native snakes) takes on a different meaning when viewed in this light. For an unsuccessful attempt at takeover, consider subcontinental India: Indra slays the serpent Vrtra in the *Rg Veda*: yet the *Yajur Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, and *Mahabharata* increasingly and unambiguously refer to serpent-lore, and the Goddess is codified eventually in the *Devi Mahatmya* as *sakti* of all and consort of none, the essence of ultimate reality. There are other areas of the world (including many indigenous cultural complexes, and in traditional Chinese thought) in which the serpent-bird, or dragon, has remained unchallenged. These are not simple myths, but histories of religious change that are expressed in an idiom often discounted as fiction. Such stories can help to reveal the construction of our own cosmological stories. Another historical place for excavating the development of separation thinking would be the division of language into genders in ancient Rome (Corbeil 2015).

¹⁵⁷ This perspective is shared by journalist Richard Louv, whose book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, became an international bestseller in 2005. His most recent book, which complements the work of Jon Young on a deeper level, is *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder* (2011).

instructed mentor, other indigenous mentors from North America and Africa, and the San Bushmen in South Africa (2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017; Young, J. and Gardoqui 2012; Young, J. *et al.* 2010). His use, and critically, his *adaption* of cultural models for westernised peoples, predominantly in North America, Europe, Australia, and South Africa, is not framed as ‘teaching’, but *modelling*, for the reason that it is not an educational process but an embodied one. The analogy he is fond of is that ‘reading a book about exercise doesn’t make you fit’.

Young’s methods are certainly one way to access what Plotkin describes as ‘authentic adulthood.’ An authentic adult is someone who has experienced themselves as a member of Earth’s communities, has a human community, has a role in that community, knows the value of their own skills, talents, and passions, has found a practical application for these in the community context, has made a commitment to that path, and is living it (2013a, pp. 189-191). In short, Plotkin is describing a typical progression of an individual within many traditional community structures. Whilst compassion and care for one other, as taught by all of the world’s religions, are not cultivated to a high degree in patho-adolescent settings, “a society that has embraced true adulthood is, among other things, sustainable, just, and compassionate” (Animas Valley Institute 2010).

Compassion and care also rely on a *relational* perspective, as cultivated within communities. As described by more-than-human geographers, C. Scott Taylor and Jennifer Taylor, “caring about’ requires the acknowledgement of the existence of a need [whilst] ‘caring for’ assumes responsibilities and how to respond” (2018, p. 5). A relational care ethic also considers all participants engaged with one another, not just those persons (meant broadly) provisioning, or in receipt of, care. If it is primarily the wellbeing of the self and one’s immediate kin that appears as priority in westernised contexts, then who will count as kin? And, how will caring be conceived of: as an adjective, or a verb?

Apparently, westernised people have these priorities the wrong way around. Ilarion Mercurieff (2012, 2015) relays that the Yu’pik call western societies ‘reverse societies’, or ‘inside-out’, for the reason that *everything is done backwards*. The Indigenous Elders say that “we have reversed the laws of living” (2017b).¹⁵⁸ When Mercurieff reviews his own childhood, he emphasises particular

¹⁵⁸ This idea is also supported by Joan C. Tronto in her work on care: “We have got things backwards now. The key to living well, for all people, is to live a care-filled life, a life in which one is well cared for by others when one needs it, cares well for oneself, and has room to provide for the caring — for other people, animals, institutions, and ideals — that gives one’s life its particular meaning. A truly free society makes people free to care. A truly equal society gives people equal chances to be well cared for, and to engage in caring relationships. A truly just society does not use the market to hide current and past injustices. The purpose of economic life is to support care, not the other way around. Production is not an end in itself, it is

foundations: the kinship prerogatives that community life was based upon, a lived experience of connection with Earth, and a total lack of admonishment from those in his community. He experienced absolute trust in his ability to find his own path, as based on the confidence community members shared regarding a child's capacity for intuition and common sense. Traditional child-rearing practices across Turtle Island, in Ladakh, among the Kogi, the San Bushmen, and within Australian Aboriginal communities, follow similar principles.

This approach to child-rearing may be difficult to conceive of in modern societies; however, the separations that many of us continue to make between ourselves and others, ourselves and nature, and in the urban arrangements of public/private space, may not be helping. Of the many significant effects of separatist thinking, feelings of isolation, and often, *fear*, are among the most paralysing.

In her discussion of environmental despair, Joanna Macy suggests that our collective avoidance of socioecological issues have their origins in this fear. As she writes: "What is it that leads us to repress our awareness of danger, miring so many of us in disbelief, denial, and a double life? . . . finding an answer to that question is an essential part of environmental political action" (1995, p. 243).¹⁵⁹ Macy lists fear of pain, fear of guilt, fear of appearing morbid, fear of appearing stupid, fear of causing distress, fear of provoking disaster, fear of appearing unpatriotic (or, breaking with any group), fear of appearing too emotional, fear of feeling powerless, and fear of doubting God, among those many fears she considers to be derived from separatist thinking (pp. 244-249).

I suggest that these fears are logical, when they are considered as by-products of a post-Christian cosmological doctrine, regardless of the extent to which this might be obscured by more 'modern' explanations as to how, or why, westernised societies have incubated such a number of fear responses. This cosmology posits an all-seeing Sky deity who expects separated (fallen) humans to feel guilt and offer penance for unnamed sins, and offers salvation as contingent upon grace or works (but does not specify which, precisely). Given this foundation, even the most irreligious person within a westernised society may well be fearful and confused, without really knowing why. Whilst this situation has been compounded by the variety of social edifices that have been erected *on top* of these theological ideas, the base ideas (as I outlined in chapter one) are not actually *altered*. Despite

a means to the end of living as well as we can. And in a democratic society, this means everyone can live well, not just the few" (2013, p. 170).

¹⁵⁹ Macy defines a double life, following the trauma psychologist, Robert Jay Lifton, as living "our lives as if nothing has changed, while knowing that everything has changed" (1995, p. 243)

the illusion of dominance, westernised ways of thinking and being remain an exception when compared with the vast majority of traditional and indigenous ways of thinking and being.

Nature writer Barry Lopez, in his account of the Yu'pik, says that Yu'pik peoples consider the 'separations' of the outsiders, from nature and other animals, to be 'too complete' – that westernised peoples are the people who change nature (1996, para 9.67). He writes that for Yu'pik to conceive of such a separation would be “analogous to cutting oneself off from light or water” (para 13.134). The late Elder and Yupiaq educator, Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, describes the centrality of the concept of *ella* to the local worldview, as epitomising this sense of interconnectedness:

[there is] no need to separate the things of earth into living versus nonliving or renewable versus non-renewable. Doing so would essentially bifurcate and breach the concept of interconnectedness... in an interconnected world even the unconscious is attuned to the forces of nature (2006, pp. 20, 28).

The Elders' accounts of *ella* as gathered by the anthropologist, Ann Fienup-Riordan, and local oral historian Alice Aluskak Rearden (from Napakiak), state that *ella* is to be paid attention to, well cared for, and thought of as one more knowledgeable than oneself:

[The Elders] say *ella* has teachings and tells what it will do beforehand, and one must listen to *ella* to survive. As important, one must listen to one's elders and peers, whose experiences and admonishments will help one interpret what *ella* is saying (2012, p. 104).¹⁶⁰

Fienup-Riordan and Rearden also note the Elder's common use of the word *qanruyun*, which reinforces their insistence that 'the world is changing following its people':

ella has always been viewed as intensely social, responsive to human thought and deed. The Western separation between natural and social phenomena sharply contrasts with our Yup'ik conversations, which eloquently focused on their connection... As Paul Tunuchuk [March 2007] said: 'We are in this situation today because of not being dutiful to each other. It's as though we are sleepwalking.' To solve our problems of global warming elders maintain that we need to do more than change our actions – reducing bycatch and carbon emissions. We need to correct our fellow humans (p. 42).

¹⁶⁰ Ann Fienup-Riordan, with the Calista Elders Council and other collaborators, has published an extensive and remarkable collection of invaluable materials from this region (Andrew *et al.* 2008; Fienup-Riordan 1990, 1994, 2000, 2005a, 2016; Fienup-Riordan *et al.* 2007; Fienup-Riordan and Kaplan 2007; Fienup-Riordan and Rearden 2012; Fienup-Riordan *et al.* 2005; Himmelheber and Fienup-Riordan 2000; John and Fienup-Riordan 2003; Meade and Fienup-Riordan 2005; Meade *et al.* 1996; Rearden and Fienup-Riordan 2011).

In a Yup'ik worldview, the central point of interaction, relationship, and source of knowledge is always *ella*. As Yup'ik Elder, Stanley Anthony, is recorded as saying [January 2007]: *the instructions aren't mine*, meaning they are not invented, and should not be cast aside (p. 42).¹⁶¹

These perspectives contrast significantly with the sense of disconnection that is keenly felt within westernised societies, and is related to what Joanna Macy (following Viennese physicist and systems thinker, Fritjof Capra) has called a *crisis of perception*: one that has its roots in a misunderstanding of human nature, and human consciousness. This crisis of perception is founded in an outmoded worldview, in which it was also promoted that humans are the masters of the world and, thus, are in possession of a license to exploit it (Boulot and Sungaila 2012; Kofman and Senge 1993). The original insight, proposed in Capra's 1996 work, is instructive here. He writes:

As the century draws to a close, environmental concerns [and] a whole series of global problems... are harming the biosphere and human life in alarming ways that may soon become irreversible... Ultimately, these problems must be seen as just different facets of one single crisis, which is largely a crisis of perception. It derives from the fact that most of us... subscribe to the concepts of an outdated worldview... There *are* solutions to the major problems of our time; some of them even simple. But they require a radical shift in our perceptions, our thinking, our values... we are now at the beginning of such a fundamental change of worldview in science and society, a change of paradigms as radical as the Copernican Revolution. But this realization has not yet dawned on most of our political leaders. The recognition that a profound change of perception and thinking is needed if we are to survive has not yet reached most of our corporate leaders, either, nor the administrators and professors of our large universities (1996, pp. 3-4).

Capra is suggesting a *metacognitive* approach as the foundation for change, which is the usefulness of 'thinking about our thinking', especially those thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions we have about our experiences. Macy expands on this by highlighting a particular aspect of the problem: that this crisis accompanies a dysfunctional view of the self as hyper-individualised.

To extend her thinking with my own, this nexus of perception and dysfunction is, in turn, within a feedback loop which reflects and reinforces *our worldview in our societies*, and *our societies in our worldview*, confirming both. As Macy explains, our crisis of perception is based (in part) on:

the delusion that the self is so separate and fragile that we must delineate and defend its boundaries; that it is so small and so needy that we must endlessly acquire and consume; and that as individuals,

¹⁶¹ I expand upon this insight, and the connection it has to worldview and knowledge, in chapters four and five.

corporations, nation-states, or a species, we can be immune to what we do to other beings (2013, pp. 149-150).

Whilst, through the processes of colonisation westernised peoples may have forgotten what it was like to live consciously in a state of aware connection, no human can claim to be *actually* disconnected: we exist in a web of relationships, both inside our bodies (literally, teeming with life), and outside of them, as any natural scientist would attest to.

This condition of separateness could be more accurately described as a kind of ineptitude, a loss of comprehension as to the meaning of connection or, perhaps, an *inability to respond*. As psychologist, Ralph Metzner, puts it: “It is not that our knowledge and understanding of Earth’s complex and delicate web of interdependence is vaguely and inchoately lodged in some forgotten basement of our psyche” (1999, p. 95). He adds that the feelings of disconnection from (or denial of) our *human nature* – albeit body, instincts, sensations – would be predictably mirrored in the sense of separation from what we call nature outside of ourselves (p. 96). The enculturation systems that many of us are familiar with work to enforce this sense of separateness.

Informed by Ladakhi perspectives, Helena Norberg- Hodge writes that, instead of narrowing our vision, we might deliberately foster a more intimate connection with community and place to encourage a greater awareness of our interdependence. She argues that westernised peoples need to learn to see broader patterns and processes: “Nowadays, one biologist does not speak the same language as another, unless they are both studying the same kind of fruit fly” (1991, p. 189). She holds that we ought to be actively promoting generalism, connections, and processes of relation:

When you are dependent on the earth under your feet and the community around you for survival, you experience interdependence as a fact of life. Such a deep experiential understanding of interconnectedness – feeling yourself a part of the continuum of life – contrasts starkly with the analytic, fragmented, and theoretical thinking of modern society (p. 189).

The late cultural historian, Theodore Roszak, also gestured at this fragmentation across many of his writings (1979, 1992; Roszak *et al.* 1995). Known for coining the term *ecopsychology* (and, interestingly, *counterculture*) Roszak wrote that those who live within “the modern industrial societies have been reared on a vision of nature that teaches people they are a mere accident in a galactic wilderness: ‘strangers and afraid’ in a world they never made” (1992, p. 40).

The elevation of humans, albeit via a sense of manifest destiny, technological competency, or superiority to other humans and species, also works to set some of us apart in what are merely

ideological ways. Yet a lack of awareness regarding our responsibilities towards the future, or connection with the planet, could prove to be very dangerous thinking. As suggested by the evolutionary biologist, Edward O. Wilson, it is unlikely that we are on this planet as a 'way station' to a better world (2016, p. 7).

In a memorable essay on ecological relations, transspecies psychologist, Gay Bradshaw, writes (following Greenway) of the idea that we are all disconnected from the natural world being one of our greatest myths: *we are not and have never been disconnected*, despite the sometimes overwhelming feeling that we are. She states that, to imagine so is artificial and a distortion that minds can be separate from nature:

[The] present planetary state that we wish to heal has been achieved by denying connection. Western society's false sense of separation has led to ethical distancing and legitimized an existence of psychological dissociation, normal... Now when learning of Harp seal mothers who have no ice on which to give birth and garbage islands the size of states floating in the Pacific Ocean, we understand that their plight is intimately connected to the hand that tosses away the plastic bag (2013, p. 134).

I could add to this the insight that if we are (and have always been) connected, then it must logically follow that *the character of our societies are a reflection of the quality of those connections*, or lack thereof.

In contemplating a way out of this state, Macy aligns herself with ways of relational thinking that are common in traditional and indigenous lifeways by proposing (following the late Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, 1988) the concept of *the ecological self*.¹⁶² The premise is simple: instead of self-identifying only with the 'skin-encapsulated ego', an expanded sense of self includes all Earth beings – neither virtues nor moral exhortation are required. As she writes: "Sermons seldom hinder us from following our self interest as we conceive it" (Macy 2013, p. 155).

The words of Naess himself are useful for elaborating this point:

We need environmental ethics, but when people feel they unselfishly give up, even sacrifice, their interest in order to show love for nature, this is probably in the long run a treacherous basis for ecology. Through broader identification, they may come to see their own interest served by environmental protection, through genuine self-love, love of a widened and deepened self (1988, p. 24).

¹⁶² In Roszak, this is called the *ecological unconscious* (1992, p. 320). It has also been called ecological consciousness, and ecological conscience, although definitions of these three terms have differed from what Macy outlines here.

From this perspective, just as I would not cut off my leg (being part of my body), the idea of poisoning a river or destroying the Amazon becomes ridiculous. The trees are our external lungs (Macy 2013, p. 155). As Barry Lopez writes: “For some people, what they are is not finished at the skin, but continues with the reach of the senses out into the land. . . such people are attached to the land as if by luminous fibres” (1996, para 15.83).

Drawing upon the work of Gregory Bateson, Macy writes that the total self-corrective unit that processes information (‘us,’ or the self) is an open, self-organizing system, the boundaries of which do not at all coincide with the boundaries of the body. Breathing, thinking, and acting all occur interactively as currents of matter, energy, and information move through our bodies (2013, pp. 150-151). Everything inside and outside of the human body is therefore interacting constantly and at various levels of complexity, much of which is not consciously comprehended or even well-understood by even the most competent of systems biologists.

The ecological self, as Macy conceives of it, is very closely aligned with many indigenous ways of being with/in the world. The ecological self *includes* the tree, the wolf, the blackbird, and the spider. It is *kincentric*. It extends from a worldview that is based in something quite different to anthropocentrism, and uses a different style of language. This is often without the words and concepts that divide nature and culture, humans and animals, or (and of great concern) humans from sub-sets of Christians, terrorists, civilian casualties, citizens, and criminals. This view makes a great deal of sense, reminding me of recommendations from environmental educator, David Orr: that we reshape *ourselves* to fit the planet, rather than attempting to reshape the planet to fit our infinite wants (1994, p. 9).

3.3 Remaking Language

Ilarion Mercurieff (2015) says that people in western societies are ruled by the mind alone, and have a bad habit of transforming real things into objects and studying those things ‘as if they are not alive. A living tree becomes ‘timber’, cows become ‘cattle’ (then beef), fish become game, and so forth. Most of all, he urges, we are separated from our real selves and observes that the effects of these ‘separations’ on our consciousness are profound. Consider this comparison given by anthropologist, Richard Nelson, who has lived and worked alongside the Koyukon (Alaskan) communities. Among Koyukon people, when you cut down a tree:

you’ve created a reciprocal relationship to that tree and you have to treat the tree in a certain way. If it’s a birch tree, and you cut it in the winter, you wouldn’t just strip the bark off that tree and leave it out in the open overnight. You’re supposed to cover it with snow. . . . When you start to cut down trees

for commercial purposes, then they become a resource, they become a product. Loggers cut down thousands and thousands of trees, and not for their own use... The fishermen kill thousands of fish, so the fish or the trees are no longer individuals, they're resources... And somehow I think that that mass engagement with thing must numb us to the need to be sensitive to their life. We take whole mountainsides and wipe them completely bare of trees, and whole valleys, and take away all the trees, and the ones we can't use, we leave there, lying on the ground (2009, p. 191).

The language of conservation mirrors the language of extraction. As listed by George Monbiot, conservation language refers to 'sites of special interest', 'no take zones', 'resources', 'natural capital', and 'reference areas'. As he sums up: "Had you set out to estrange people from the living world, you could scarcely have done better" (2017). The eminent geographer, Yi-Fu Tuan, also has some insight to add here. Whilst words have the power to render the invisible, visible (as he writes), I cannot help but be affronted by their capacity to do the *opposite*, especially in light of what Monbiot observes here. The casting of a linguistic net over place, as Tuan notes, is how people have traditionally made 'homeplaces' and strengthened their bonds with their places of being, but this is *also* a means by which humans have wielded power (1991a, pp. 686-688).¹⁶³

Robin Kimmerer, lamenting an Earth rendered objectively as 'it', says that even the language that we speak, the beautiful English language, makes us forget via a simple grammatical error that has grave consequences for us all (2015b).

Imagine seeing your grandmother standing at the stove in her apron and then saying of her, "Look, it is making soup. It has gray hair." We might snicker at such a mistake, but we also recoil from it. In English, we never refer to a member of our family, or indeed to any person, as it. That would be a profound act of disrespect. It robs a person of selfhood and kinship, reducing a person to a mere thing. So it is that in Potawatomi and most other indigenous languages, we use the same words to address the living world as we use for our family. Because they are our family" (2017a, p. 131).

¹⁶³ Making a broader philosophical comment on the history of the discipline, Tuan writes: "In studying how places at all scales have come into existence, geographers have focused almost exclusively on material processes and socioeconomic forces, without raising, explicitly, the role of language. It is as though all the socioeconomic (and political) forces can be marshaled and the processes of material transformation occur, in the absence of words. Put this way, the idea is manifestly absurd. If geographers in the past nevertheless appear to have accepted it tacitly, one reason may lie in their long-held belief that geography is a description of the earth, and that words which simply describe have no power to bring about change. On the face of it... this belief is psychologically incomprehensible, for why would anyone want to talk about or write on geography if the effort has no effect whatsoever?" (1991a, p. 692).

Language, both in how it originates (or its etymology) and in how it is used, is intimately related to worldview, for the precise reason that it communicates ideas in local ways, with local inflections conveying meaning.

Whilst the emphasis in English (and European language relatives) is on the *noun* – appropriate, says Kimmerer, for a culture obsessed with things – the emphasis in most (if not all) indigenous languages is on the *verb*. The relation between subject and object is processual; in other words, the form of language based on the relation, rather than the subject or object.¹⁶⁴ The boundaries that apply to persons-as-subjects (those generally ascribed in spatiotemporal terms) and the movement of information *across* these boundaries, are profoundly altered by shifting to a verb-based map for communication.

In real terms, this means that persons and objects exist as ‘things’ only within a particular context, with a shifting metaphysical status and are named only in accordance with that context. Within a verb-based language, it is the action or state (flowing, speaking, angry) and not the noun (river) that is deterministic. This type of thinking has immediate potential for correcting some of our anthropocentric classificatory and separatist modes of thinking, speaking, and being, especially given the manner in which memes, neologisms, and slang, can be so quickly embedded in generations, communities, and academic disciplines.

We need some new words and new ways ‘to verb’ our language as a part of our remedial action. Perhaps we might also recover some of the older words and meanings that have become neglected with the passing of time. For instance: to ask you to *consider*, is to ask you to examine, look closely, or dwell long upon *the stars* (-*com* + *sidus*). To ask you to *contemplate* is to invite you to dwell somewhat upon the *templum* – an area for the taking of auguries, in Roman practice, a part of the sky where the birds enter and leave and, thus, convey portents regarding the future. We have converted these words (and so many others) to every day purposes, but no longer teach their ancestries. What if we were to interrogate our language more closely?

Inspired by the anthropological work of the late Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (1996), naturalist and language-maker, David Lukas,

¹⁶⁴ Objectivity, to cite the brilliant theoretical physicist, Basarab Nicolescu, when “set up as the supreme criterion of truth, has one inevitable consequence: the transformation of the subject into an object. The death of the subject is the price we pay for objective knowledge” (2002, pp. 9-13).

conceives of a reanimated English language. Lukas points to our tendency to forget the potential and plurality of words through their fixture in both form, and meaning:

The word *lake*, for example, has had many different shapes in English, including *lac*, *laca*, *lace*, *lack*, *lacke*, *lacku*, *lacu*, *laik*, and *leke*, yet modern English speakers hold onto *lake* as if this single spelling had a fence around it. And if you try to apply meaning to the word lake, how small can you go before you are talking about a pond, or how fast can the water flow before it is a river? (2015, pp. 15-16).

As Lukas notes, this insistence on singularity derives only from a mutually understood compact, not a universal law or from a higher authority (p. 17).

To consider the lake involves the stars, and to contemplate Earth involves combining the portents of the sky and birds with the feminine *erda* or *eorthe*, the ground, the soil. These are acts of *relation*, something that was once in the English language, and what grounds it was formed *within*, before those who carried it entirely lost the sense of place. The project Lukas has in mind, and Kimmerer also, is to re-*member* how to make language, which might carry two meanings: to re-*member* from *-membrum* ‘limb, joint’ or, from *-memor*, ‘recollect, bring to awareness, make mindful’. Stretching the mind to contain both of these definitions at once demonstrates that there is, in our words, the capacity for evoking a sentient cosmos, despite the invisibility of these roots and branches in our current daily use of language. As Lukas proposes:

We need to reanimate our world: to recognize, honor, and celebrate the unique presences that coalesce at specific points in the landscape or at specific points in our lives. The severing of this bond, and the doubt that this disconnection creates, is what opens up space for corporations to step in and harvest people and resources without protest. We need to protect each other as well as the land, and we need the help of allies we don’t speak to anymore (p. 96).

What would solutions look like if we were to employ a different perspective, in a renewed and vibrant language, in which the body-of-nature, or Earth-as-sentient kin, has a range of symptoms as the consequence of a worldview gone wrong?

3.4 The Difference that makes a Difference

In the preamble to their excellent collection of essays, Australian scholars Katherine Gibson, Deborah Bird Rose, and Ruth Fincher define the Anthropocene as “a new planetary force with accelerating effects on the biosphere. . . [which] calls for new ways of thinking and knowing, and for innovative forms of action” (2015, p. i). Such a moment also calls for different conceptions of

historical processes of cause and effect that stretch our understandings to embrace grander species narratives, certainly lengthier narratives, and, ultimately, *planetary* narratives.

According to Crate, climate change issues result conclusively from a colonial mindset: “If you look at the true causes of climate change... the industrial revolution ‘is a product of [colonialism]... Which, by the way, has not ended. Colonialism continues. It’s just taking different forms today” (in Imbrogno 2017). The grand narrative toward which Crate gestures mirrors my own conception: ‘modern’ (often westernised) humans have *forgotten* how to live ethically with/in Earth, as a result of a long history of becoming progressively disconnected from an ecological *kincentric* worldview. This was once practiced all over the planet, and is still practiced by a significant proportion of the world’s indigenous communities.

I take it as a given that we, the contemporary inhabitants of the planet, *are* the custodians of the future, and that cascading crises *exist*, whatever their origin points might be. I also feel that I, personally, have become very worn down by confusing information, ineffective policies, violent crime, hungry children, racism, housing crises, climate change arguments, propaganda, the wage economy, endless poverty, wars, religious debates, empty scholarship, social media, advertisements, and binarised politics, as have no doubt many others who live in these times. Socioecological change seems not only overdue, but immensely attractive, even if it means taking some risks with how we might think differently about the world.

As I mentioned in chapter one, the processes of colonisation and its eventual progeny, westernisation, can be considered culpable in what might be colloquially called ‘forgetting’. This might also be framed as the loss of our First Teachings, Original Instructions, or Laws regarding how to live well. To recall the central difference between colonisation and colonialism: traditional and indigenous peoples possess a *living ancestral memory* of the collective losses wrought by colonialism, but the long-ago colonised masses, the children of many ancient and multivariant Empires, do not.

To cite the brilliant urban theorist, the late Jane Jacobs, mass amnesia is the least mysterious symptom of a culture in decline into a Dark Age, or a culture’s dead end (2004, pp. 3-4). She writes: “During a Dark Age, the mass amnesia of survivors becomes permanent and profound. The previous way of life slides into an abyss of forgetfulness, almost as decisively as if it had not existed” (p. 7).¹⁶⁵ This is precisely where we are. For the long-ago colonised, life within westernised societies is the

¹⁶⁵ Feminist activist and scholar, Gloria Steinem, has lamented: “I come from the tribe that has lost its memory. And the loss of memory is the root of oppression” (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 95).

normative way of being in the world. In short, this ‘normal’ sets a divide between private beliefs, traditions, and practices, and a public life in which secular rationality is expected to dictate personal conduct, participation in various social spheres is somewhat standardised, and ‘the individual’ is the standard unit of production. Prescriptions of ‘normality’ persist through the re-articulation and re-inscription of codes, standards, and in-group politics which, taken together, are hegemonic.

The worldview content I collate and discuss in the forthcoming chapters, which I offer as my own contribution to securing these ends, is *not* new – many of these teachings are, in fact, very old. What is new is my synthesis and collation of these materials in service to indigenous and planetary futurity. *So many voices* converge on these points: that what lies between us, and all Earth-others, is an imaginary wall erected in service to a materialist worldview.

Hope – albeit radical hope, active hope, spaces of hope, and hope for our time – is oriented toward a better world in which a different kind of good life is possible. A description of the ‘path of hope’ and a call for the conscious embrace of that hope in the quest for a better world – a global sense of belonging – is the final statement that trauma expert and psychologist, Robert Jay Lifton, makes in the conclusion to his epic account of the human condition, *The Protean Self* (1999). Hope is what motivates movement and transforms idle wishes into something of substance.

In her work with Chris Johnstone, Joanna Macy (2012) devotes an entire book to the ‘how’ of *Active Hope*, aptly subtitled: *how to face the mess we’re in without going crazy*. In this work, they suggest that the shift from ideas to change must be consciously enacted. Macy and Johnston describe this as a practice in which we take a clear view of reality, identify in what direction we would like things to move or shift, and then move ourselves or our situation *in that direction*. In a co-creative universe, this suggestion appears to be a matter of focus, *then* action.

As Kenny Ausubel, one of the visionary founders of the Bioneers, suggests, *forecaring* or caring into the future is ‘our charge’ (2012, p. 19). To add Robin Kimmerer’s graceful summation, we not only have to ‘remember to remember’ the things we did not know we had forgotten, but we need to do this because the future is a *collective concern* to which we all must attend (2015b, 2016). If we can collectively decide how we would like the future to look, then we might be able to trace out some steps and follow the appropriate instructions for how to *create* that future. As David Orr has famously phrased it: “*hope* is a verb with its sleeves rolled up” (2011, p. xix).

Freya Mathews uses the word *attunement* (literally referring to the many-voiced landscape which we might bring into musical accord) and compels us to *choose differently* at this point in history:

Final extinction is perpetually postponed by way of an exquisite attunement of all beings to the needs of others... This earth-truth, at once scientific and spiritual, is one that belongs to us all, regardless of cultural provenance. It is becoming visible now because it has been so sorely breached. We have not observed the proto-ethic... So the conditions for life are not being perpetuated. It is time we remembered that only our earth root, the root of all morality and meaning, will sustain us, and that it is our common heritage. Let us bring this, and not our cultural differences, to the negotiating table (2015, pp. 93-95).

Cultural differences, though usefully deployed for a number of political national purposes and to secure rights or resources, may not be the *most* relevant distinction if they obstruct better recognition of our shared species-being. What is most relevant is, to follow Gregory Bateson, ‘the difference that makes a difference’ (1973, p. 427).¹⁶⁶ Put simply, what he refers to is the difference that can alter any system of relationships on the level of the ‘map’.

The map is a ‘captured’ image of the organisation of abstract information, as it travels between units of a system (like people), within a broadly encompassing ‘mind’ (something Bateson never restricted to mere individuals). He was conceiving this in similar terms to the Yup’ik *ella*, or an aware and interdependent system of relationships within which human (and other) interactions occur. Cybernetics (more properly, *second-order* cybernetics) is a science of thinking in circles rather than lines, in terms of flows, interactions, and relationships within open circular systems which involve inter- and intra-dependencies. Differences are those informational expressions that have the potential to change an entire *system*.¹⁶⁷ Donella Meadows, whose work on systems thinking is perhaps some of the most accessible in print, described a system as follows:

¹⁶⁶ The collected works of Gregory Bateson (especially his transdisciplinary scholarship and his method of abduction pattern seeking) inform much of my thinking in this thesis. The oft-cited ‘difference that makes a difference’ is Bateson’s extension of the work of Alfred Korzybski (1933), founder of the field of general semantics and originator of the idea that the ‘map is not the territory’. There is also evidence to suggest that Bateson innovated his concept of information from the scientist-mathematicians, Claude Shannon (the ‘father’ of information theory), and Warren Weaver, specifically the idea that the purpose of information is to ‘reduce uncertainty’ (Shannon and Weaver 1949). If communication, information, or an idea, doesn’t *reduce uncertainty* in a system of relationships, then it doesn’t ‘make a difference’.

¹⁶⁷ My use of the word ‘information’ here is extremely broad, as it was in Bateson’s thinking. He used the term isomorphically with the word difference, to render the meaning he inferred by ‘difference’ as more intelligible and

A system is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a ways that achieves something... A football team is a system... A school is a system. So is a city, and a factory, and a corporation, and a national economy. An animal is a system. A tree is a system, and a forest is a larger system that encompasses subsystems of trees and animals. The earth is a system. So is the solar system... Systems can be embedded in systems, which are embedded in yet other systems” (2008, pp. 11-12).

Meadows also defined those things that are not systems, such as sand scattered on the road, or anything else randomly extracted and isolated from its system and thus, has no particular interconnections or function. “There is an integrity or wholeness about a system and an active set of mechanisms to maintain that integrity... Systems can be self-organizing, and often are self-repairing over at least some range of disruptions. They are resilient” (p. 12).¹⁶⁸

Usefully, this kind of systems thinking also shows up in the dialectical modes of scholarship, described by David Harvey as follows:

Dialectical thinking prioritises the understanding of processes, flows, fluxes and relations over the analysis of elements, things, structures, and organised systems. The latter do not exist outside of the processes that support, give rise to or create them... I, as an individual, do not in practice internalise everything in the universe, but absorb mainly what is relevant to me through my relationships (metabolic, social, political, cultural, etc.) to processes operating over a relatively bounded field (my ecosystem, economy, culture, etc.). There is no fixed or a priori boundary to this system. Where my relevant environment begins and ends is itself a function of what I do and the ecological, economic and other processes which are relevant to that. Here, too, setting boundaries with respect to time, space, scale and environment becomes a major strategic consideration in the development of concepts, abstractions and theories (2016, pp. 196-197).

Harvey’s attempt to demonstrate that all ‘things’ are in relation, that systems in themselves are a part of greater systems, and that all ‘parts’ thinking is therefore contingent, is emerging as a profoundly influential model for problem solving across ecological and social platforms.¹⁶⁹ Harvey’s use of

accessible. His thinking was also contextualised by the scholarly emphasis on epistemology, as the epistemological ‘turn’ was occurring at the time he developed these thoughts.

¹⁶⁸ Some fusion between systems thinking, sustainability, relationality, and geography has been occurring in recent years, with educational strategies appearing more frequently in journals along with increasingly transdisciplinary approaches (see Batzri *et al.* 2015; Cote and Nightingale 2012; Cox *et al.* 2017; Cox *et al.* 2018; Jones, M. 2009; Martin, R. and Sunley 2007; Martin, S. *et al.* 2005; Metoyer and Bednarz 2017; Schuler *et al.* 2018; Schwanen 2018; Welsh 2014).

¹⁶⁹ There are numerous examples of this, for a selection see the work of Nora Bateson (Bateson, N. and Brubeck 2016), Chet Bowers (1994, 1995, 2001, 2011), Peter Senge (2010), Fritjof Capra (1982, 1996; Capra and Luisi 2014), Ervin Laszlo

dialectics (or, thesis – hypothesis – synthesis) to engage with these interrelations is just one example, but there are variations of this used across the disciplines.

What is most interesting is that these circular ways of interrelated thinking are absolutely compatible with the majority of indigenous and traditional ecological ways of conceiving the world. Cycle-based worldviews, such as those that are found in a majority of traditional and indigenous lifeways, and in Tao, Shinto, and Zen, a range of Indian sub-continental philosophical traditions (among many others), are also employed by people who work on/with land – their own, or others – often in a traditional manner. Particular ways of living tend to beget ‘circle people’ and a greater emphasis on relationships. I am suggesting that, perhaps with Bateson and Harvey, we could use more converts to these circular ways of thinking and being.

The cultural (and thus, informational) differences that will matter most at this time will likely be those differences that *alter the map* in just this way. The ‘difference that will make the difference’ hinges upon the flow of knowledges *from* indigenous and ecologically sensitive cultural complexes, *toward* and *into* westernised societies. This fits the classical idea of a feedback loop designed to alter the system, however it will not ‘take’ unless there is some transparency and flexibility cultivated in the host worldview – the westernised worldview. A flow of different information into westernised lives, minds, and societies has the potential to create worldview transformation and alter the map. David Orr writes of this as a destination:

A world that takes its environment seriously must come to terms with the roots of its problems. This is not a simple-minded return to a mythical past but a patient and disciplined effort to learn, and in some ways, to relearn the arts of inhabitation. These will differ from place to place, reflecting various cultures, values, and ecologies. They will, however, share a common sense of rootedness in a particular locality (1994, p. 170).

3.5 The Point of Departure

The dominant way of ‘doing things’ within modern westernised societies is now sufficiently old so as to seem very familiar; perhaps, even comfortable. It has also proven to be metaphysically resilient and well-established as either a core organiser of human practices, or a significant (and growing) influence throughout the world. In light of this, empowering a different kind of Earth awareness calls for significant structural change, which, to quote Orr, will reply upon ‘tossing

(Laszlo 1996c, 2006, 2008) and Daniel Wahl (2016). For a film that synthesises some of this thinking, see *Crossroads: Labor Pains of a New Worldview* (Ohayon 2013).

overboard' many of the foundational myths of the modern world: "to make the task of preserving a habitable planet and creating a fair, decent, and durable civilization in record time 'the great work' of the twenty-first century. Anything less or later won't do" (in Ausubel 2012, p. x).

This myth-breaking involves 'taking a sledgehammer' to many of the ideas and assumptions that have propelled humankind in the direction of socioecological crises, and exposing the elements of worldview that present as obstacles to a renewed and invigorated Earth ethic. Orr is talking about *cosmological stories* – those charter myths or origin stories from which various aspects of worldview and, ultimately, our practices are generated.

Worldview reappraisal sounds difficult (and in emotional terms, it *is* difficult), but it is not particularly technical. Worldview reappraisal which is consistent with the evaluative processes of decolonisation requires that all of us (at the species-level) closely interrogate the usefulness of whatever unexamined cosmological premises may be preventing changes in our perspectives or behaviours. Where we find a disjunction between our cosmological precepts and an appreciation of Earthlife, we make changes to those stories, augmenting them (in the case of westernised metaphysics, for example) with better charter myths and concepts for living well, together. *If* we have enough time granted by Earth, given the ecological changes unfolding all around us, and work to transmit a different value set to the incoming generations, we could begin to establish thriving communities, mentors, and teachers, and create new generations of Elders with a renewed Earth ethic.

Jon Young refers to this value reorganisation as *culture repair*. His view is that westernised societies are not really cohesive cultures at all, but dysfunctional substitutes. Helpfully, Young says that culture is easy to repair, because once we remember what it is (he calls it a verb), we would not *want* anything else (2015).¹⁷⁰ By all accounts from indigenous Elders, it will take two *full* generations of deliberate intervention with children and young people (which, in North American indigenous terms, refers to two hundred years) in order to create a worldview shift sufficient to preserve our collective future. Ilarion Mercurieff also speaks to this directly:

¹⁷⁰ The westernised worldview generates a cognitive map that replaces cohesive cultures with a degree of cohesiveness *sufficient* to have appeared functional. Jane Jacobs, in her list of westernised decay zones, describes a bad culture as one that prevents people from understanding/realising the deterioration of fundamental resources on which the entire community depends. Yet, as she writes hopefully, "companion cultures can be rescued by one another, in part by welcoming exiles and their ways"(2004, p. 26).

Either human beings will survive or they won't, and that's the only question. It's not a question of whether Mother Earth is going to survive... We have to change our level of thinking... train our young people to invest their energies in this way, educate the whole person... it's going to take a long time" (Mercurieff *et al.* 2017).¹⁷¹

Times of crisis *should* provoke useful and critical disruptions to certainty, in which the basic foundations upon which we individually and collectively built what we hoped were 'best practices' can come under review. Times of crisis are an opportunity for making the westernised worldview *visible*, which is the most critical precursor to the transformation of our situation. Four Arrows calls this a correction to the 'point of departure' previously taken by a particular group of humans (the ancestors of the long-ago colonised) – a departure that was contrary to indigenous and traditional teachings as to how to live well *with* (as opposed to *on*) Earth. As he writes:

The point of departure from our relatively harmonious and healthy Nature-based existence to a more anthropocentric and hierarchal one led to the creation of an extremely destructive worldview that has brought us to the dire circumstances we now face. By showing that it is in our nature to live more sustainably and peacefully than the dominant worldview allows, and reclaiming some specific Indigenous understandings about being in the world, we can rebalance our life systems (2016c, p. 5).

Four Arrows is very clear: our dominant westernised worldview is toxic, and fundamentally antagonistic to life, so to address the world's problems we need to *reclaim some specific indigenous understandings*. His phrase has a double meaning, in that we are now at a second crossroads, or another point of departure, one where we might start reversing the devolutionary flow and head toward balance.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ William Rees suggests that worldview change has to occur on the levels of emotion, meme, and action: "[given] a sufficient level of fear, international agreement on the nature of the problem, general commitment to a collective solution, unprecedented political will, and the creative engagement of modern communication technologies, the world community could theoretically choose to educate the next generation from scratch in a whole new sociocultural paradigm for survival. This new narrative is essential to override humanity's now maladaptive expansionist tendencies and to enhance other behaviors and predispositions regarding our present cultural fitness" (2010, p. 11).

¹⁷² Reclaiming specific understandings or reorienting the westernised worldview does not mean taking on a specific traditional or indigenous worldview, but rather, ethic and practices inspired by traditions that are compatible with Earth. Consider the words of Yuchi member of the Muscogee Nation and scholar, Daniel R. Wildcat: "The world is changing, and it's time to pay attention - for humankind to find value in our lives as intrinsically related to the other-than-human. Like our Ancestors before us, we may learn something about ourselves, and find insights in our oldest indigenous traditions. If we demonstrate respectful attentiveness to the world we live in today, it is likely that we will find new techniques, songs, practices, and even ceremonies for our life enhancement" (in Evers 2015).

What may not be obvious is that, in this work (published in 2016), *Four Arrows* is patiently presenting, once again, concerns that indigenous communities have been speaking out about for years. Consider the Haudenosaunee view. In their September 1977 address to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, the Haudenosaunee (also known as the traditional Six Nations council at Onondaga, or Iroquois) stated that human beings are in trouble, and that *a call to basic consciousness*, with ancient roots, was needed.¹⁷³ The address offered a geological kind of perspective, which saw the modern human as an infant: it was “the perspective of the oldest elder looking into the affairs of a young child and seeing that he is committing incredibly destructive folly” (Mohawk 1978, pp. 83-84). This address, although in some places afflicted with a dated view of events, clearly detailed the state of the world as viewed through Haudenosaunee eyes in 1977:

The processes of colonialism and imperialism which have affected the Haudenosaunee are but a microcosm of the processes affecting the world. The system of reservations employed against our people is a microcosm of the system of exploitation used against the whole world. . . The majority of the world does not find its roots in Western culture or traditions. . . and it is the Natural World, and the traditions of the Natural World, which must prevail if we are to develop truly free and egalitarian societies. It is necessary, at this time, that we begin a process of critical analysis of the West's historical processes, to seek out the actual nature of the roots of the exploitative and oppressive conditions which are forced upon humanity. At the same time, as we gain understanding of those processes, we must reinterpret that history to the people of the world. It is the people of the West, ultimately, who are the most oppressed and exploited. They are burdened by the weight of centuries of racism, sexism, and ignorance which has rendered their people insensitive to the true nature of their lives. . . The traditional Native peoples hold the key to the reversal of the processes in Western Civilization which hold the promise of unimaginable future suffering and destruction. Spiritualism is the highest form of

¹⁷³ At the 2004 Bioneers Conference, John Mohawk recounted how the Hopi Elders (including Elder and leader of the initiative, the late Thomas Banyacya of the Wolf, Fox and Coyote Clans) initially came to Onandaga country and asked the Six Nations to help them ‘go to a house of mica on the edge of the waters in the East’ to explain to all the world that society was letting greed, animosity, and unclear thinking to take over, that they were destroying the earth, that it had happened before in histories retold by the Elders, and it was going to lead to disaster. Mohawk says he was puzzled because he wondered what the point was, given the United Nations was not going to listen (and had not listened to the Haudenosaunee address in 1977). “They said, ‘Well, we were told that’s what we were supposed to do. We go tell them.’ Then they said something else I thought was kind of interesting: ‘The evidence, the proof that what we’re saying is true, they have that already. It’s in their libraries, it’s in their science – they already know that this is true, they just haven’t absorbed it yet so our job is to go there and tell them that this is the case. This is what’s going to happen’” (2008a, p. 132). Thomas Banyacya, who was one of four leaders selected by Hopi Elders in 1948 to begin revealing Hopi teachings and traditions as prompted by the bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, finally managed to take the Hopi message to the United Nations in 1992.

political consciousness. And we, the native peoples of the Western Hemisphere, are among the world's surviving proprietors of that kind of consciousness. We are here to impart that message (Mohawk 1978, pp. 90-91).

This address, just as relevant today as it was forty years ago, also argued that a particular sector of humanity is afflicted with what the Haudenosaunee call a 'sickness' – the evidence for which they found in western histories.

The late Jack D. Forbes, a scholar of Native American Powhatan-Renape and Lenape, Celtic, and Swiss lineage, gave this topic a book length treatment in 1978, in *Columbus and other Cannibals: the Wetiko disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism*. Forbes describes the concept of *wetiko* (adapted primarily from Anishinaabe and Cree traditions), as a cannibalistic spirit or a devouring disease that totally consumes and destroys nature, humans, and other species.¹⁷⁴ Jon Young also picks this up, warning that it continues across the globe: "the historic trauma that caused the western society to developed amnesia, and become the most disconnected active social system on the planet... is like a virus that can't stop eating the people who aren't like that, so the indigenous people who are still trying to hang on are still being consumed by this machine" (2015). The symbolism of this metaphor is powerfully evocative.

Jeannette Armstrong spoke of the 'devouring monoculture' in her (2011) TEDx talk; the famous Santee Dakota-Mexican activist, John Trudell, spoke about this as 'predator' in an interview in 1991 (Brown, F. and Kakkak 1991); and, controversial Native American scholar Ward Churchill then wrote about it as a virus in *When Predator Came* (1995).¹⁷⁵ Chumash, O'odham and Raramuri legal scholar, Deborah Sanchez (2016), discusses this 'great deception', via Forbes and Trudell, and links it to the bloodthirsty activities sanctioned by the Doctrine of Discovery and the centuries of

¹⁷⁴ *Wetiko* is also known as *windigo*, *wihtiko*, *wendigo* or similar, depending on the language and region of origin. The concept of *wetiko* sickness or a consuming/devouring virus as associated with colonialism, westernised peoples, and the 'excess' of modern societies has become a powerful cultural meme that is now referred to in other books, public talks, blogs, online articles, and academic works. See, for example, the popular book, *Dispelling Wetiko: Breaking the Curse of Evil* (Levy 2013).

¹⁷⁵ Ward Churchill, a former professor of ethnic studies, activist, and prolific author, was fired for his alleged use of the phrase 'little Eichmanns' to refer to US government workers killed in the 9/11 events. This framing is consistent with his work on depicting the colonial violence inflicted on the indigenous Americas as genocide, which he is known for equating with the Shoah/Holocaust. He has been called out as an Indian imitator for his refusal to verify his heritage, however, not only has this requirement been critiqued as overtly racist, but it has also been suggested that even if he is indeed a 'race traitor' then his allyship is both productive and welcome (Kelly 2011; Lyons 2005). For a very recent account of these issues, see Enzinna (2017).

violence, continuing into the present day, and enacted under various names, all across the world. The San Bushmen concept of the All Devourer and the Peruvian concept of the Black Jaguar mirror this wetiko metaphor, as do the various deceivers, succubi, vampires, and devils of the world's religio-mythological stores.

Leading scholar on indigenous communication and ethics, Thomas W. Cooper, writes that Native Americans quickly characterised the colonials as deceptive:

On the one hand, promises and treaties would be made; on the other, promises and treaties would be broken, or just as quickly amended, adjusted, or reinterpreted by government officials, soldiers, or settlers. . . . Many Native Americans. . . saw lying as a sign of insanity. 'A person who does not speak truth must not know reality, and thus is to be pitied,' Native elders told me. Thus some Native tribes treated their dishonest members as Westerners treat the legally insane (Cooper 1998, p. 3).

The increasingly popular notion that the westernised nations have reached the 'cancer stage' of growth also belongs with this mythic set (Hern 1993a, 1993b, 1999; McMurtry 1999; Southwick 1996). As Thom Hartmann defines this, a cancer (and inevitable collapse) happens whenever "a single element in a biological system rises up and begins to consume more of the local resources than the system can sustain" (2009, p. 78). Cancerous growths do not respect boundaries, they consume beyond their own territory, they have bad instructions, and they have no 'off-switch'. The difference, as the American physician, Warren M. Hern, has been arguing now for over twenty years, is that humans can think and therefore decide at any point to *break* from this metaphor (1993a).

Paul Shepard asked: "What can one say of the prospect of the future in a world where increasing injury to the planet is a symptom of human psychopathology?" (1982, p. 128). Yet he expressed hope that the future was not as bleak as it might seem. For Shepard, the ecological harmony he and others posit betwixt/between self and world:

[is] the inherent possession of everyone. . . the legacy of an evolutionary past in which human and nonhuman achieved a healthy rapport. . . The civilized ways inconsistent with human maturity will themselves wither in a world where children move normally through their ontogeny. . . Beneath the veneer of civilization. . . [is] the human in us who knows the rightness of birth in gentle surroundings, the necessity of a rich nonhuman environment, play at being animals, the discipline of natural history, juvenile tasks with simple tools, the expressive arts of receiving food as a spiritual gift rather than as a product. . ." (1982, pp. 128-129).

Shepard's list is long, aspiring to what he calls a healing metaphysics. This is precisely, if phrased differently, what many indigenous and traditional Elders are offering. Chris Peters, of Pohlik-

lah/Karuk lineage and the president of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, says that human beings who have a relationship with/in Earth can understand a different way of life and a different reality that could be of benefit to all humans in the healing of the westernised psychosis:

it's our responsibility to help them move their consciousness, their thinking, and through... indigenous thinking. In minds we come together and we be able to understand these concepts and offer them out because they have no other choice, no other choice other than to look for alternatives, and alternatives exist here in our thinking (2016).

Westernised peoples have permission, so clearly expressed by the Haudenosaunee and others, to begin the processes of re-indigenising humanity to the planet, to do so under the direction of traditional Elder leadership, and to ally with indigenous communities for collective planetary healing. In fact, it could be argued that westernised peoples are being pleaded with – then and now – to stop acting in ways that are destructive.

A request such as the one put forward by the Haudenosaunee does not involve appropriation, but asks that we respectfully come into line as a junior in pedagogical relationships with traditional and reestablished forms of Elder wisdom. So, as opposed to objecting (via elaborate scholarly devices which re-inscribe colonial power relations in a number of subtle ways), it might be wise to stop and listen, reckon with this situation, and plan alongside the more recently colonised in order to remake the future for the generations to come. Difficult as it may be, breaking an implicit social contract could be necessary to confront the discomfort of a reality which, if acknowledged, should require action. As sociologist, Eviatar Zerubavel, argues:

denial inevitably distorts one's sense of reality, a problem further exacerbated when others collude in it through their silence. After all, it is hard to remain convinced that one is actually seeing and not just imagining the elephant in the room when no one else seems to acknowledge its presence... Lacking a firm basis for authenticating one's perceptual experience, one may thus come to distrust one's own senses... silence is not just a product, but also a major source, of fear... To overcome fear we therefore often need to discuss the undiscussables that help produce it in the first place (2006, p. 80).

Inaction is wearying, so a good place to start might be to review the evidence we use to support what we *currently* do.

In a very famous article by the mathematician and philosopher, William Kingdon Clifford (written in 1877) he stated that “it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything on insufficient evidence” (p. 295). Drawing on philosopher John Locke's argument that *the proportion of our assent to any proposition ought to be evaluated on the strength of the evidence,*

Clifford took a view of the scientific method which celebrates its ultimate purposes: to facilitate a better world, for all. The date of this paper reveals an historical subtext, a time of great debates which must have compelled in him concerns, sparked by the danger of substituting religious morality with scientific evidence, *or* the substitution of level-headedness with religious dogma. Clifford objected to the discouragement of free thought within religious organisations, or any obstacles of thinking which might block or subvert the road to inquiry.¹⁷⁶

Clifford gives the example of a ship owner who knew his ship was not seaworthy, and yet convinced himself that she was, sending her and those she carried to the ocean depths. As he writes, this represents the ultimate moral failing in service to ‘belief, as the ship owner ‘had no right to believe on such evidence as was before him’, and had, in fact, formed his faith by stifling his doubts (p. 290). Choosing to examine our beliefs about the world *in foro conscientiae* is the subject of Clifford’s paper, and he holds to the maxim that no belief is entirely a private matter in a world shared with others. As he says:

No simplicity of mind, no obscurity of station, can escape the universal duty of questioning all that we believe. It is true that this duty is a hard one, and the doubt which comes out of it is often a very bitter thing. It leaves us bare and powerless where we thought that we were safe and strong... We feel much happier and more secure when we think we know precisely what to do, no matter what happens... we naturally do not like to find that we are really ignorant and powerless, that we have to begin again at the beginning, and try to learn what the thing is and how it is to be dealt with – if indeed anything can be learned about it. It is the sense of power attached to a sense of knowledge that makes men desirous of believing, and afraid of doubting (p. 293).

One hundred and fifty years following the penning of these words, I must agree. It begins again at the beginning, with taking an entirely new direction when it comes to evaluating our evidence (and ourselves, as evaluators). Although certainly not what Clifford had in mind, *to take indigenous and traditional worldviews seriously* is to agree firstly on what we do not know, and consider our questions differently in order to try and learn *what we need to learn* at this point in history, lest the ship sink in its entirety.

¹⁷⁶ As biographer, Timothy J. Madigan, notes, Clifford’s paper created a ‘storm of controversy’ among religious minded men (2009, p. 85), the most notable forwarded by philosopher, William James (1897), in his essay *The Will to Believe*. Clifford’s argument is complex, but it is neither weighed towards science nor religion: it is evidence and morality he is most interested in, however he is often misread as being anti-religious and solely in favour of science.

3.6 Scholarly Obligations

The suggestion that we should discard entire chunks of the westernised worldview and start supplementing with traditional and indigenous knowledges has the potential to raise some major questions for scholars. For instance, why should we recognise these knowledges as important? Haven't we already studied indigenous religions and cultures enough? Aren't these just truth claims? Why should we think this is a better option than continuing with the status quo? What scholarship is there on this purported 'status quo'? Is that even a field of study? If we choose to change strategies, how do we begin to do this? What are the risks? What are the benefits? What controls will we use for a trial exploration of its viability? How will we measure the results? Can we test this on an isolated cohort? How will we market the project and who to? What methodology is appropriate? What will the outputs be? Do we have the time and resources? How will we justify this project to our superiors? What will it cost? Who will fund it?

This would be a good place to pause, and laugh at how all those questions must come across to anyone outside of an academic institution. Humour is an *essential* part of any comprehensive indigenous and traditional worldview, used frequently to offset tensions and diffuse conflicts, whilst reminding people not to take themselves too seriously (Mercurieff and Roderick 2013, p. 26). To be fair, the programme undertaken for academic training progressively excludes many other sorts of knowledge and, once employed, the academically inclined often have insufficient time to explore much beyond a single field in between keeping up with research, teaching classes, and filling out forms. It is not unreasonable to suggest that individual scholars working in contemporary conditions have to struggle to maintain relevance and the ongoing securement of their positions, and thus must choose their alliances carefully. However, it *would* be unreasonable for these same scholars to deliberately ignore the substantive critiques from indigenous and traditionally living peoples on the paucity of a western-dominant worldview.¹⁷⁷

Traditional schooling processes, by which many have been educated, also play a part in obscuring some of what eventually (hopefully) becomes obvious, given enough time in these institutions of learning. Scholars have demonstrated that schooling is very effective in crafting in the

¹⁷⁷ The limitations of a neocolonial, neoliberal academic environment are acknowledged again here, as detailed in the introduction, along with the time pressures put on academics. Nonetheless, I am of the mind that the more attention you put on a problem, the more of a problem it will surely be. Solidarity and community in the face of perceived domination may be a better place to start thinking through how the curriculum might be progressively shifted in the direction of change.

young a compliant citizenry through establishing patterned subservience to authority.¹⁷⁸ In fact, the origin of the westernised public education system, now reproduced across the world, was founded on the idea that parents needed help raising their children properly, especially those who were considered morally insufficient, i.e. the poor, the foreign, the irreligious, and so forth (see Gatto 2002; Katz, M.B. 1987). Educator, Cheryl Woolsley Des Jarlais, writing on the American system, summarises as follows: “It was assumed that schools would provide good substitutes for poor family environments. They would provide good role models and socialize all children, but especially the lower classes, in the high morals needed for a stable society” (2008, p. 9).

Derrick Jensen’s view is that school ‘lasts’ thirteen years because “it takes that long to sufficiently break a child’s will” (2004a, p. 102). Whilst not against education (he is not only an activist, but a teacher), he describes the twisting of *educere* (from the Greek ‘to lead forth’ or ‘draw out’, and a midwife’s term meaning *to be present at the birth of*) into leading us away from our own experience:

Each fresh child is attenuated, muted, molded, made – like aluminium – malleable yet durable, and so prepared to compete in society... ever more submissive to authority, ever more pliant, prepared, by thirteen years of sitting and receiving, sitting and regurgitating, sitting and waiting for the end, prepared for the rest of their lives to toil, to propagate, to never make waves, and to live each day with never an original thought nor even a shred of hope (2004a, pp. 104-105).

Education was historically the means by which colonialism extracted children from cultural connections, kin, and the total context within which they could maintain any identity separate from westernisation. It is an equally assimilative force in any modern westernised society today, a Pied Piper against which most working parents have little or no power. As Jensen (2006) writes, we have become *dependent* upon the very system of governance and occupation that is also exploiting us.

The ‘costs’ of our currently dominant worldview are all too obvious. The universities train the teachers who deliver a certain kind of education to children, some of whom then enter the universities to receive their own training so that they might become intellectual participants in the systems within which they, along with all those who did *not* go to university, sell their labour in exchange for basic survival. From generation to generation, labourers, managers, service providers,

¹⁷⁸ Scholars working in the area of critical pedagogy have been detailing multiple aspects of this for some time (see Apple 1982, 2004; Apple and Buras 2006; Aronowitz 2000; Aronowitz and Giroux 1991; Freire 1972, 1998; Gatto 2002; Giroux 2001; Kincheloe 2008; Kincheloe and Hewitt 2011; McLaren 2000; McLaren and Kincheloe 2007; Robinson, K. 2011; Stenhouse and Broudy 1972).

producers, and consumers operate the mercantile systems from which only a very small percent of people profit. To follow Jensen here (echoing Marx): when whoever owns your labour owns *the very means of your survival*, perhaps it is not so unexpected that we are inclined to behave obediently (2006).

In academia, the corporatisation (and mechanisation) of the institutions delivering higher education has been ongoing, drastically reducing the potential of these institutions and the capacity of those working within them. To consider this in systems terms: the internal flows are restricted, the quality of the information is fair to poor, the feedback loops which feed intellectual labour into societal improvement are very narrowly conceived of, and the entire system is operating in service to economic, rather than societal and ethical goals. Historian, Page Smith, suggests:

The vast majority of so-called research turned out in the modern university... does not result in any measurable benefit to anything or anybody. It does not push back those omnipresent 'frontiers of knowledge' so confidently evoked; it does not *in the main* result in greater health or happiness among the general populace or any particular segment of it. It is busywork on a vast, almost incomprehensible scale (1990, p. 7).

This critique was penned in 1990. Clearly, our academic institutions are sorely in need of creative, courageous, and relevant reinvention.

The spirit of *pedagogy* and concept of *paideia*, both Greek in origin, are useful to think with here. Pedagogy, which is literally for a guardian to lead a child, suggests the facilitation of a kind of education and mentoring that directs the passions, talents, and interest of new learners. Paideia, which involves self-mastery within a community, suggests that education is the process of transferring to each new generation the fruits of one's own labour, experiences, wisdom, passions, talent, and interests *as one who has lived them*. Taken together, these concepts refer to the shaping of character, skill, and knowledge in the context of mentoring and experienced direction under the leadership of Elders. Whatever the context in the Greek *polis*, the concepts extend from ideals that are fully compatible with the inculcation of values and practice within indigenous and traditional contexts. These ideas could find a place in the heart of scholarship and teaching practice.

The Tao concept of *transmission* might also be relevant here. The basic premise is that you can only teach to the limit of your own experience, that those teachings should occur directly and with physical proximity between teacher and learner, and that you are obligated to pass along all that you have learned through your experience; in particular, the wisdom of your journey, and certainly your mistakes.

Drawing on a parallel set of ideas, Jon Young delineates the processes for San Bushmen mentoring, suggesting that knowledgeable Elder teachers are fundamental to human flourishing, and yet they are now almost entirely absent within westernised societies. In the San context, *not* passing on what you know or being the *only* holder of certain knowledges is considered a failure – it is *expected* that that knowledge and wisdom will be passed on. Young says:

High conduct role models let others take up the knowledge places they were just occupying, then everyone learns quicker. If you die holding all the knowledge then you have dropped the ball, culturally. This puts the onus on us to make sure everybody has what we have. The more you give away, the more you've made room to get more to share. Mentoring is a life commitment (2014a).

In Yup'ik contexts also, the failure to pass on or speak publicly about what you know is frowned upon (Fienup-Riordan and Rearden 2012, p. 29).

Right now, if responsibilities for future generations were to be divided amongst us, scholars are in line for providing responsible, reliable, knowledgeable, ethical, and respectful contributions to sustainable future-building. We already *have* this job, although our instructions as to how to do it may have been delayed. In order to do this, we would have to possess a clear sense of direction, and a good understanding of what our obligations to the future really are.

3.7 Manifesto for Change

I am prepared to suggest that leveraging the unique (and elite) positionality of university research and instruction for transforming Earth relations are actually vital for securing different futures. Academia is a critical territory for decolonisation, if not one of the most contested terrains, possessing some of the most significant resources. The power invested in educational systems of all kinds is profound: all around the world, universities *train all the teachers*, along with a vast populous who go on to be in positions of power within businesses and communities, to be innovators, scientists, politicians, bankers, businessmen, and warlords.

I suggest that culture repair, of uniquely located varieties and degrees, is necessary all over the globe. What would culture repair look like in African nations, Afghanistan, Indonesia, China, or India? What would it look like in Papua New Guinea, or Australia's Northern Territory, if the questions local peoples have about the promised benefits of resource extraction were answered conclusively with '*no*, we have tried this and you do not want it, it is a *bad* idea, trust us, let us work

together to find another way?’¹⁷⁹ Cost and benefit analyses (or academic debates)¹⁸⁰ often profile the complexity of introducing industries of this kind: this will provide jobs, pay for schools and hospitals, build roads, improve your nations’ status in the global market economy, reduce national debt, allow you to buy consumer goods, and so forth. However, failure to respond to these half-truths is a failure of nerve, of spirit, and of our collective responsibilities to other human beings.

Whilst the institutions of modern westernised societies are organised, both in practical and ideological terms and by this largely unexamined, peer-regulated, and often, self-governed, *compliance* (the malevolent progeny of what critical theorist, the late Hannah Arendt, called ‘rule by nobody’),¹⁸¹ the terms of modern human confinement are often *self-imposed among those who comply without necessity to comply*.¹⁸² The late Max Weber, German social theorist and philosopher, in conceiving of this as the ‘iron cage’,¹⁸³ said that the only question that is important for us as

¹⁷⁹ In a stunning critique of exploitation, the late economist John P. Powelson, with Richard Stock (1990), detail the enrichment of the westernised nations on the backs of peasant communities around the globe, emphasising the deception involved in ‘promises’ of development.

¹⁸⁰ See the work of Australian International Relations scholar, Ciaran O’Faircheallaigh (1984, 2002, 2015, 2017; O’Faircheallaigh and Ali 2017), for examples of the complexities of cost-benefit analyses and impact assessments for resource extraction regarding indigenous peoples and ecology.

¹⁸¹ To quote Arendt in full: “...the latest and perhaps most formidable form of... domination [is] bureaucracy or the rule of an intricate system of bureaus in which no [one]... can be held responsible, and which could properly be called rule by Nobody. (If, in accord with traditional political thought, we identify tyranny as government that is not held to give account of itself, rule by Nobody is clearly the most tyrannical of all, since there is no one left who could even be asked to answer for what is being done. It is this state of affairs, making it impossible to localize responsibility and to identify the enemy...)” (1970, pp. 38-39).

¹⁸² Author Margaret Heffernan adopts the term wilful blindness, a state of mind in which one ‘wilfully shuts one’s eyes’ to the facts when there is an opportunity for knowledge and a responsibility to be informed, but both are avoided (2011, p. 3). She hypothesises that the divide between our public and private lives, prompting many social drivers which mould and modify our behaviours, are culpable in how we filter out unsettling and challenging information: “Ideology powerfully masks what, to the uncaptivated mind, is obvious, dangerous or absurd and... fear of conflict, fear of change keeps us that way. An unconscious (and much denied impulse to obey and conform shields us from confrontation and crowds provide friendly alibis for our inertia” (p. 4).

¹⁸³ Weber’s concept of *stahlhartes Gehäuse* (commonly known as the iron cage), appears even more relevant now than when he first formulated it in *The Protestant Ethic* in 1905. The literal translation is ‘shell as hard as steel’ (see latest translation, Weber 1920). Weber’s great lament was that the processes of intellectualisation and rationalisation, despite a several thousand year history, had *not* amounted to sufficiently increased knowledge or capacity with regard to the conditions under which one lives (Weber *et al.* 1946, pp. 138-139). Weber’s philosophy, in this work and others, oriented towards recovering some integrity of the human spirit and, indeed, an ethic of care between disparate human groups: some meaningful pursuit that could be set apart from the bare rationality of everyday ‘workaday’ life. Weber died in 1920,

humans, is: What shall we do and how shall we live? (1946, pp. 140-149). Weber was convinced that as people in society had constructed the ‘cage’, they must also be able to *un*-make it. The prerequisite, however, is knowledge of the existence of this cage. Rajani Kanth takes up this point. He writes that the governed, though occasionally beneficiaries of the policies of the governing elites, *cannot be seen as accountable or responsible for these conditions*, nor be expected to become suddenly aware of their state of imprisonment (2017, pp. 176-194).¹⁸⁴

Having reckoned with the ‘small print’ on the promised benefits of westernisation of all kinds, my questions are: can educated, ‘middle-ground’ peoples in largely westernised societies transform western folly into some sort of gift that is not paternalistic? Can those who already see these problems in sharp relief be better with our truth-telling as to the nature and consequence of embracing westernised systems? Can we coordinate a better response to those big corporations modelled on western interpretations of capitalism, starting with an educated and responsible *no*? Working with local communities and the educators for change, who are often a minority voice in their own nations, could we join them not only in acts of *physical* resistance, but psychological and properly informed resistance, as led by those Elders who know what a good future looks like? Could we go into those many places where the power of everyday people has been all but erased and say, ‘*this is what culture repair is*’, followed with the question, *what would culture repair look like for you?*

Academics, with others, are by no means idle. Clearly, resistance is everywhere, as demonstrated by the portrait of revolutionary change painted in *Blessed Unrest* (Paul Hawken’s account from 2007). However, resistance is not *co-ordinated* in accordance with the basic ethical principles suggested by what the Elders of Turtle Island call First Teachings, or the Original Instructions.

The Kogi Mamas (Elder Brothers) of the Sierra Nevada, speaking from what they call the *Heart of the World*, have said:

It is very difficult for younger brother to listen, and to hear. It will be even harder for him to give things up. But he’s going to have to learn. Younger brother is going to have to listen carefully to the

having struggled for many years with a deep depression ignited by the state of the world and the absence of what he considered essential: an empathetic perspective, or *Eklarendes Verstehen*.

¹⁸⁴ Kanth’s view is that the governed should be supported to realise the conditions of their existence, remedied appropriately, and empowered to correct these conditions, with which I agree, however, I also hold that it is the work of the humans who *are* cognisant of these conditions to participate in this process fully, without resorting to paternalistic or saviour models for said empowerment.

histories of the Mama, the Law of the Mama, the beliefs of the Mama... If we act well the world can go on (in Ereira 1990).¹⁸⁵

The Mamas name for Earth is *aluna* (meaning thought). They say she is not a distant god, but the mind inside nature; that Younger Brother mutilates the world because we do not remember, and will not listen.

Watching in horror at the changes in their ecosystem, as the water at the very top of the mountains fails to thrive and feed the ocean (from which point, it cycles back again to become glaciated mountain tops), the Mamas, who have a duty of care for the future of all kinds of creatures and all kinds of people, were initially perplexed. They consulted *aluna*. Their questions, given their emphasis on integrity and knowledge, were not to do with causes, but rather their role in the solutions. For the Mamas, as detailed by their first ethnographer, the late Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff:

It is not so much the question of what causes these phenomena which occupies the priests, but the problem of how to integrate them into the established cosmogonic scheme... What ritual or moral attitudes do they imply for the individual and society? (1974, p. 300).

This was in 1974. More recently, they have said:

Ignoring the health of our Mother ensures our self-destruction. This understanding will change things, if it is shared. Exploitative commercial interests are putting all people at risk. Younger Brother is violating fundamental principles -- drilling, mining, extracting petrol, minerals --continually stripping away the world. This is destroying all order. BBC, tell Younger Brother: 'Open your eyes!' Hear the Mama's Law and story, hear how things really are (in Ereira 1990).¹⁸⁶

How do we bear witness and take seriously these words that are offered (and *insisted* upon) as authoritative, as *truth*? What arrogance to decide that these are truth 'claims' or matters of 'belief' to

¹⁸⁵ *Máma* (sometimes rendered as *Mamo* or *Momo*) means 'of the Sun' or 'enlightened'. They are the Elders of the Kogi/Kaggaba (also, Kogui, Cogui, Kágaba, Cágaba), Wiwa, Arhuaco and Kankuama peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. The first significant ethnographic studies with their communities were conducted by anthropologist, Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, as based on fieldwork undertaken from the 1940s to the 1970s (1965, 1974, 1977, 1978, 1990, 1991; Reichel-Dolmatoff and Reichel-Dolmatoff 1999).

¹⁸⁶ Just as the Mamas are very concerned about the ongoing removal of gold, or Earths blood, as they call it, Lorraine Mafi-Williams relayed that the Aboriginal Australian peoples were very concerned about the energy grids of Earth. She says that leaving minerals in the ground is far more valuable than extracting them as ornaments or fuels: "They are there to help the Earth maintain balance. Crystals and other minerals feed energy to the energy grid... But now mineral, metals, and jewels have been removed from the Earth to such an extent that the balance is in jeopardy. Uranium, in particular, is important for this task. When it is all gone, the Earth will be right out of balance" (in McFadden 1992, p. 92).

be evaluated according to scholarly classificatory mechanisms, or dismissed entirely, for no better reason than an outdated subservience to theological suspicion that is embedded so deeply within scientific methods and westernised philosophies as to appear entirely rational. The westernised self and ways of thinking cannot remain privileged, or set apart, from those same processes of deep inquiry that have historically been deployed to dismiss the purview of others. The spirit of inquiry demands more than this from those of us who claim a commitment to critique, or devote our energies to effecting planetary transformation.

I would also suggest that the dominance of elite powers (in all countries) is sustained as an outcome of our dependencies – *we are the source of their income* – and the corporate-governmental control of the resource-extraction, industrial-military, pharmaceutical, information and consumer-service industries (under the heading of globalisation) will not be disrupted unless the feedback loops are significantly altered. As suggested already, this will take time.

Furthermore, capitalism ‘happens’, absorbs, consumes, and will likely keep happening, which requires us to transform our dependencies so that we interact differently with those monsters of industry, withdrawing some dependencies and replacing these with others. The challenge here is to stop *needing* big business, in all its forms, which is a struggle for the commons, for rights, and for access to holistically conceived basic needs goods, services, and resources, *for all 7.6 billion of us*.¹⁸⁷

Paul Hawken describes the movement for change in the language of Earth biology, which is a beautiful fit with the idea that Earth’s mind and body is the origin for us all:

fundamentally the movement is that part of humanity which has assumed the task of protecting and saving itself. If we accept that the metaphor of an organism can be applied to humankind, we can imagine a collective movement that would protect, repair, and restore that organism’s capacity to endure when threatened. If so, that capacity to respond would function like an immune system, which operates independently of an individual person’s intent... the shared activity of hundreds of thousands of [people] can be seen as humanity’s immune response to toxins like political corruption, economic disease, and ecological degradation... Just as the immune system is the line of internal defense that allows an organism to persist over time, sustainability is a strategy for humanity to

¹⁸⁷ Some of the most relevant academic literature on ‘commoning’ is extended largely from the work of the late political economist, Elinor Ostrom, who wrote on the benefits of common pool resources and institutional change (De Angelis 2017; Dolšak and Ostrom 2003; Keohane and Ostrom 1995; Ostrom 1990; Poteete *et al.* 2010; Ricoveri 2013; Ruivenkamp and Hilton 2017; Wall 2014a, 2014b).

continue to exist over time. The word *immunity* comes from the Latin *im munis*, meaning ready to serve (2007, pp. 141-142).¹⁸⁸

As scholars, then, in what ways can we serve? Transformative education, broadly conceived of and distributed well beyond the confines of the university, is essential.¹⁸⁹ The Mamas message begins with the articulation of their main desire: that this *information* is shared. Yet, in the academic bottlenecks of concentrated, mediated, and governed power, their message is not classified as valuable knowledge or useful information. This is their ‘religion’, their ‘culture’, or perhaps their ‘beliefs’.

And yet, when they say “we wish to send a message to the world of how we have lived for thousands of years in accordance with the laws of nature” (Ereira 2012; Soltani and Arce 2014), the expectation is that this will be heard, and respected, as they are sharing wisdom they expect their Younger Brothers to accept, preferably without question.

¹⁸⁸ The prevailing idea that the immune system is only for defence, for which we commonly employ war metaphors, underestimates its nature and purpose, as psychoneuroimmunologists (those who take a systems approach to mind, the nervous system and immunity) have come to discover. The identity of a living being and the manner in which its boundaries of self are constructed is also fiercely contested, and yet we also know of our intense microbial commitments and obligations, of which our immune systems partake, and that the entire network engages in information exchanges on a relational level that is not yet fully understood (for the latest approaches to holobiont, microbiome, immunological, identity, and tree of life perspectives, see Broom 1997, 2007; Catania *et al.* 2017; Chiu and Eberl 2016; Chiu and Gilbert 2015; Cohen 2000; Doolittle and Booth 2017; Forterre 2015; Gilbert 2014; Gilbert *et al.* 2012; Gilbert and Tauber 2016; Helmreich 2009; Hug *et al.* 2016; Lorimer 2016; Pradeu 2012; Sagan 2015; Schneider and Winslow 2014; Skillings 2016; Sternberg 2001; Stolz 2017).

¹⁸⁹ There is some excellent literature on transformative education in for the purposes of worldview change, developed from the synthesis of the work of the late sociologist and education, Jack Mezirow, and Brazilian critical educator and philosopher, the late Paulo Freire (see Fisher-Yoshida *et al.* 2009; O’Sullivan 1999; O’Sullivan *et al.* 2002). Indigenous and anti-racist scholarship from leaders in education such as George Sefa Dei (Dei *et al.* 2000; Dei *et al.* 2004), Marie Battiste (Barman and Battiste 1995; Battiste 2000; Battiste and Henderson 2000), and numerous other excellent authors and compilations could certainly be used to support this work (see Ah Nee-Benham and Cooper 2008; Arbon 2008; Archibald 2008; Bruyere 2008; Cajete 1994, 1999, 2000, 2015; Denzin *et al.* 2008; Fixico 2003; Grande 2004; Malott 2007; Nakata 2007). Environmental or eco-education also has a number of brilliant thinkers, especially David Orr (1992, 1994, 2002, 2004, 2011, 2016) and Chet A. Bowers (1994, 1995, 2001, 2011), and there are entire volumes devoted to transformative ecological educational models, theories, and suggestions for global change (see Desha and Hargroves 2014; Jardine 1998; Kahn 2010; Krzesni 2015; Lin and Oxford 2012; Seidel and Jardine 2014; Sterling and Schumacher Society 2001; Stevenson 2013; Young, J. *et al.* 2010). Integral philosophies, human potential, and psychology volumes are overflowing with theory developed from key educational thinkers (Bodrova and Leong 2007; Britton-Joffick 2001; Childs 1999; Daniels, H. 2001; Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 2006; Oers 2008; Robbins 2001). Lastly, there is the entire corpus of *Sense Publishers*, a publishing house dedicated to monographs and edited volumes on the importance of cultural and spiritual perspectives, and the critical functions of nature values and humanism for education.

How might we conceive of a collective future if we cannot (or will not) hear what is being said? How will we identify sensible responses to collective socioecological issues if we do not *know* what people really want, nor teach what is recommended by the indigenous and traditional Elders of the world? If we fail to know what good questions are, how can we ask them? If we fail to care deeply for all other life, or to appreciate what this really means to people who live with/in Earth, how can we possibly work together for the answers?

The late historian, theologian, and novelist, C.S. Lewis, writing here in a mode of deep reflection following the death of his wife, challenges us to interrogate the very foundations upon which we build our reality. He writes:

You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you. It is easy to say you believe a rope to be strong and sound as long as you are merely using it to cord a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a precipice. Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it? (1964, p. 64).

What I read in his words is the mandate to question our worldview, those orientations, orderings, and commitments to the unthought cosmos that nonetheless manifest in the largest and smallest elements of daily life.

As such, I want to pose some questions to think on: how sure *are* we that we have good answers to the difficult questions which confront our species? How sure *are* we that our current worldviews are really equipped to secure us the certainty we seek? In specifically academic terms, what are the effects of the long-standing impetus to exclude certain things from our collective knowledge bases, often in the pursuit of an ever-more sterile objectivity? What if there are other questions we could be asking, but refuse to consider due to inherited theological precepts and biases that we may not even be consciously aware of?

The academic project *now* is quite possibly the securement of our survival. So how might we transform education so that it is oriented towards justice for all life, for the preservation and flourishing of the planetary life that is yet-to-come? How do we endeavour to do this across the many disciplines that might define themselves so *specifically* by reference to their differences from one another? How do we *teach the teachers*, so that they might teach the children in ways that can make a difference to the futures we share?

In the chapters that follow, I relay, as faithfully as possible, what I have gathered of the knowledges, wisdoms, insights, and the laws, First Teachings, and Original Instructions of those

peoples of the world who orient by worldviews quite different to that with which westernised peoples are accustomed. Perhaps, as the collective Elders have recommended, taking these ideas seriously would be a good place for us all to begin.

Chapter Four: Listening to the Elders

In the old times we had great wisdom, given to us by Mother. We had the knowledge of everything we were and are. We knew, according to our law, not to kill too many animals, and not to cut down too many trees. We knew what complies with the law bequeathed us. The law is not written in books but in nature, which is itself a book... The Mamas used to say that Serankua [Mother] told them, five thousand years ago: "The younger brother is going to come and harm us... Another time will come, however, and they will see what they did. Then they will want to learn the word of old. It will be time to make it known..."

—Ramon Gil Barros (2009)¹⁹⁰

In his written account of Kogi wisdom and practice, Alan Ereira, a long time ally of the Kogi Mamas, supplies a context for the opening prophecy. In Ereira's view, Kogi prophecy is a description of, and derives its nature from, *aluna*, or the mind of Earth; *a total living system* that is constantly reshaped by the passing of time and interactions with all minded things. Another way to describe *aluna* is as *thought*, experienced as a total field of interrelations, expressed as what we call 'nature', that is both the origin and context for human and all other life. Direct relation and discussion *with*, respect *for*, and observance *of*, *aluna*, is the practical and metaphysical source of Kogi knowledge.¹⁹¹

In this view, prophecy always retains the capacity for different creative outcomes, as it is ultimately derived from the potential inherent in *aluna* (1992, pp. 214-215). In the Kogi view, time can be manipulated for specific ends (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1990, p. 9). Time is malleable; with specific

¹⁹⁰ Ramon Gil Barros (Kangemna) is a spiritual and political leader for the Kogi/Kaggaba and Wiwa peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, selected by Elders to be educated in Spanish, in order to liaise on behalf of the Kogi Mamas (2009, pp. 23-24).

¹⁹¹ Without wishing to reduce *aluna* by way of comparison, the idea of a minded and sentient Earth, sometimes deified, sometimes not, is also at the root of a number of other traditions. Among these can be counted Tao, Shinto, Buddhism, Jaina, a number of other Greater Chinese and Indian subcontinental philosophies, along with all traditional and indigenous ways of conceiving Earth-as-Mother. These traditions have a history of rejecting the word 'religion' as too limited to describe their views. Deep ecology, systems sciences (such as systems biology and systems ecology), and quantum physics converge on these ideas also, yet do not converge coherently, nor (as yet) simultaneously. In addition, explorations into the vast microbiotic life on humans and Earth (Bordenstein and Theis 2015; Catania et al. 2017; Chiu and Gilbert 2015; Doolittle and Booth 2017; Forterre 2015; Gilbert 2014; Gilbert et al. 2012; Helmreich 2009; Hug et al. 2016; Kramer and Bressan 2015; Lorimer 2016; Sapp 2016; Schneider and Winslow 2014; Skillings 2016; Stolz 2017) along with embodied or distributed mind interpretations of cognitive science (such as the extended mind thesis and quantum phenomenology) are slowly working to dissolve perceptions of difference between a distinct self identity, or individuality, and Earth (Bateson, G. 1979; Clark and Chalmers 1998; Heersmink 2017; Menary 2009, 2010; Rowlands 2010; Thompson 2010; Varela et al. 2016). What is presently missing is a transdisciplinary focus that can incorporate a range of scientific and philosophical perspectives, yet remain free from the binds of post-Christian theological bias.

moments that are ‘potentiated’ in terms of the effect human actions can have upon shaping events. According to the Kogi, the time to correct the imbalance in Earth is *now*.

The Mamas’ predictions are not ‘fixed’, except in one critical sense. The Kogi Mamas say that, if the Elder Brothers are no more, and Younger Brother does not change (which includes looking after the Elder Brothers, and listening to them), the world will end: “The Mother said to the Younger Brother long ago, ‘One day, you will look after the Older Brother. One day’” (Ereira 1992, p. 214). The Mamas are not yet sure if this will ever happen.

After Ereira made his first documentary profiling their message in 1992, the Mamas “watched, waited, and listened to nature. . . They witnessed landslides, floods, deforestation, the drying up of lakes and rivers, the stripping bare of mountain tops, the dying of trees” (Reddy 2013). They did not know why their words had gone unheeded. They concluded that they were responsible for the failure of their message:

We have not spoken clearly. Our deep analysis has repeatedly confirmed the need for Alan to make a new film. The earth is a living body, it has veins and blood. Damaging certain places is like cutting off a limb. It damages the whole body. . . Younger Brother must listen and stop causing damage or Nature herself will finish us off. We must renew this message to our English brother so that he will explain it to the world (in Ereira 2012).

In their bid to be heard, the Mamas summoned the (now retired) Ereira to film with them a second time. They travelled with him to speak with scientists around the world in order to have their worldview legitimated in terms that they hoped Younger Brother might understand. They wished to share their own sciences, ‘prove’ their ecological observations, and encourage Younger Brother to think differently on nature, and “to show our scientists the way Nature interconnects” (Ereira 2012).

In the Kogi world, as described by anthropologist, Wade Davis, the equilibrium of the world is utterly dependent on the moral and spiritual integrity of the Elder Brothers, and in these times, they are compelled to communicate their sacred obligations to ensure the ongoing flourishing of Earth by way of their labours (2001, p. 42). In their first message, they said:

We must show them how we work and how we offer our tribute to the Great Mother, so that they know that we are here working for the Younger Brother too. The mamas work not only for the Kogis but for all the people in the world. The máma stands up. The máma is not angry, not even with Younger Brother although he did harm. The máma must look after Younger Brother and Elder Brother, the animals, the plants, and all that is natural, because the máma has a duty to care for the future of all kinds of creatures and all kinds of people. . . The máma have been thinking what can we

do to make sure the Younger Brother fully understands... We're all in agreement the world does not have to end. If we act well the world can go on (in Ereira 1990). We must speak these things... it is good that we speak... We have to speak about what has happened, so that the Younger Brother listens. Perhaps there are some Kogi over there in their land... So here we have to speak well and tell only the truth. Yes, we have to think that over there in their land there may be Kogis, who will listen to this and think that we are just playing about. So we must speak the truth. So musn't we speak straight? (in Ereira 1992, p. 218).

In their second message (twenty years later), they reiterated many of the same sentiments, although there was an added sense of urgency. Younger Brother was still choosing self interest over respect and care for the systems of Earth. They reiterated that, he must see the damage he is creating, understand, and assume responsibility. Their final bid was from the Kogi women:

Our message is not only for people here but people all over the world. You don't have to abandon your lives, but you must protect the rivers. When a baby is born, the Mother is rejuvenated. A daughter is like the Mother. She is the guardian of the Mother. The Mother is the owner of everything. All the rivers, all the mountains. Without women, daughters, who would guard all of this? When a baby is born you must have good thoughts. Teach the example of others who have lived well. If we don't teach this baby anything he will not know how to think. This baby will teach the next generation. She will carry on the thread (in Ereira 2012).

If there is a scientist like the Mama who knows the earth, they said, then, perhaps he can verify what the Mamas say.¹⁹² This, they have hope for, and they are not alone.¹⁹³ As environmental scientist, David Suzuki, has expressed:

¹⁹² Professor Jonathan Baillie, Zoological Society of London, as profiled in the Mamas 2012 film, says "I don't find it such a surprise really at all, people living with Nature understand a lot more about it obviously than a world that has become much, really disconnected from it. Living with Nature you realize that certain species have certain strongholds or certain refuge areas that are essential to them. They are telling us some from their experience which we should easily recognize but for some reason we find it very difficult, and I think it is very important to have that message, they are the ones who are going to know these particular areas in the forest that will be important to the long-term survival of species. So I think we have much to learn from them" (in Ereira 2012).

¹⁹³In their educational text, storytellers Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, write: "The science of ecology, the study of the interactions between living things and their environmental, circles back to the ancient wisdom found in the rich oral traditions of American Indian stories. Time and again the stories have said that all of the living and non-living parts of the Earth are one and that people are a part of that wholeness. Today, Western ecological science agrees" (Caduto and Bruchac 1989, p. 5). In Canada, First Nations Saskatchewan Cree Elder, William Ermine, has said: "We have to study nature. Nature is the greatest teacher if you take time and listen" (in Erenberg 2011). In Australia, as David Mowaljarlai writes:

We are the planet's most recent iteration of life's forms, an infant species but one that has the precocity to see our place in the cosmos and dream of worlds yet to come. I believe we are capable of even greater things, to rediscover our home, to find ways to live in balance with the sacred elements, and to create a future rich in the joy, happiness, and meaning that are our real wealth (2010, p. 96).

In the remainder of this chapter, I relay and discuss some of the prophecies that hold the balance across multiple traditional and indigenous kincentric contexts. Here, I am following the directive of Oren Lyons Jr., as I stated in my introduction: "There are instructions in our histories and a responsibility to pass these on to the peoples coming" (Lyons Jr. and Mann 2016). In detailing prophecies, I wish to challenge the demand from many of those operating from within a westernised worldview that events be 'properly situated' in a sequence of explicit and linear cause and effect which conform to prevailing scientific ideas. Perhaps time and space, as pointed out by the eminent theoretical physicist, the late Albert Einstein, are best thought of as *modes by which we think*, not conditions by which we live (in Forsee 1963).

In beginning the discussion on my findings with prophecy, I am deliberately choosing a novel entry point to indigenous and traditional worldviews, and perhaps one of the most challenging for a westernised audience. Prophecy breaks at least three major 'rules' of a westernised worldview: the linearity and causative aspects of time, the materiality of objects in space, and the isolation of the human consciousness from other minds and locations (be they past, present, or future). Precognitive knowledge of what westernised minds call future events, should they come to pass, provokes an inquiry into knowledge, along with the related and compelling question of: *how did they know?*

Furthermore, in this and the following chapter, I wish to demonstrate that, outside of the westernised worldview, there are some basic, shared assumptions about time, space, and how knowledge can be obtained. These assumptions appear with relative consistency across communities that are otherwise separated by geographical distances or cultural difference. I argue that these similarities obtain regardless of the specific symbolic set (or mode of description) that is considered to be native to a particular indigenous or traditional worldview. Here is where the theoretical components of worldview analysis become useful for mapping relationships, as these examples of prophecy may come from cultures with significant symbolic differences, yet they converge on basic principles: *laws* (or the correct conduct toward Earth and all living others), *kincentricity* (or the requirements of relationship), and a *conception of knowledge* that is not limited by spatiotemporal or

"These stories are not written down, but that are written on the land, into nature... they are there for everyone to see – not just to read about" (Mowaljarlai and Malnic 1993, p. 82).

individualised conceptions. These convergences reveal that it is possible to map similar relations and emphases between the different parts of indigenous and traditional Earth minded worldviews.¹⁹⁴

In tracing these lines of thought across multiple traditions, I am hoping that there are edgewalkers in these times – those who are willing to traverse the shoreline and mix the old ways with the new.¹⁹⁵ In Bawaka Country, North East Arnhem Land, home to the Yolŋu peoples, this concept is expressed in the word *gänma*, which means knowledge sharing, or ‘the place where the salt water and the fresh water meet’. Aboriginal Elder for the Datiwuy people and caretaker for the Gumatj clan, Laklak Burarrwanga (with her co-authors), explains:

As the fresh water comes off and out of the land and sky, it meets the salt water of the sea. There is a mixing, a meeting and mingling, that brings difference together without erasing it. *Gänma* thus means new life and new ideas. It evokes knowledges coming together. There is power and knowledge with two waters mixing . . . *gänma* has to be actually be two ways. Western knowledges too need to learn . . . people are not separated from nature. The earth is not separated from the sky. Songs and stories are not separated from people and objects. All these things exist as part of one another and come into being together . . . you have to start from the place—whoever, whatever clan you are you start from your own land. And then you sing what’s there in the land (in Lloyd, K. *et al.* 2016).

In calling for edgewalkers, I am hoping for a response to the bid for alliances, as has been articulated by Elders from every direction. Their teachings ask us all to reconsider whether our constructed borders – physical, ideological, spatio-temporal, or figurative – really *are* so impassable. I am hoping that there *are* scientists like the Mámás (as they say, the ‘Kogi in other lands’) who can read these

¹⁹⁴ This is the foundation for pan-indigenous scholarship. These commonalities are spoken of in the majority of orature I have incorporated into this thesis, and yet historically, scholarship in academic realms has been concentrated (almost solely) on the differences between the symbolic architecture and cultural expressions of one community or another. The *purposes* of rituals and protocols, the *ethics* of conduct, and the *mechanisms* of relation are far more relevant when different peoples meet one another, than are their different symbolic sets. It is these commonalities that indigenous scholars and speakers, such as Four Arrows, Veronica Arbon, Chief Yeye Luisah Teish, Jeannette Armstrong, Ilarion Mercurieff, Chief Oren Lyons Jr., and many others, focus upon. According to these speakers, indigenous and traditional peoples do not have trouble getting along with one another, respectfully, as the ethics and terms of relation *match*.

¹⁹⁵ Nanabozho, the great rabbit or hare, is an ‘edge-walking’ spirit or culture hero recognized by the Three Fires Confederacy of the Anishinaabe. He is described by artist, Rabbett Before Horses Strickland, on his website: “Nanabozho is a complex character from Ojibwe mythology. Possessing supernatural powers, he creates medicines to heal the sick and gives assistance to the weak and oppressed. But like humanity, Nanabozho has been “subject to the need to learn”. Nanabozho is an emissary from Gitchi Manitou. He did not come into the world but rather came from it. Both spirit (manitou) and human, Nanabozho embodies that which everyone must decide: are you a part of the earth or did you come from someplace else?” (2017).

collected teachings with new eyes and bring their own creativity to bear on the perspectives the Mamas, and many others, add to our circle of concern.

4.1 Prophecies and Peacemaking

Prophecies, found across the world in various bundles, point to a fundamental change ahead and, combined, indicate a crossroads specific to the Earth changes which have already ignited concern within many conscious communities. Those enrolled in these traditions situate the responsibility for fulfilling these prophecies with the generations who are currently alive on earth. The projected changes detailed in such prophecies are estimated to take two full generations (two hundred years), provided that humanity does indeed overcome the challenges of this age.

One of the most well-known prophecies from Central and South America is that of the Condor (the South) and the Eagle (the North) flying together again:

Prophecy stated that in the late fourteen hundreds, the two paths would converge and the Eagle would drive the Condor to near extinction. Then, in five hundred years, a new epoch would be possible... [and that] they have much to teach each other... When the People of the Eagle help the Condor soar again, they will cease making the choices that are destroying the Earth, and their own sense of isolation, unhappiness, and stress will vanish. Together, they will make a new design for the children and for future generations (Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, pp. 125-126).

This prophecy refers to the point of convergence of two paths: indigenous knowledge and the technologies of science, the feminine and masculine, the intuitive and the rational, the North and the South. The Peoples of the North, of the Eagle, or the Younger Brothers, are the holders of technological 'fire', but they have expressed this at the expense of the Heart, as held by the Peoples of the Condor – a descriptor that includes the Mamas (p. 125).

In the Prophecies of the Seventh Fire, as recounted by Robin Kimmerer, the choice between paths is also one of a crossing point between the old and new, or a *choice* within a moment that the Kogi might recognise as *potentiated*:

For isn't the earth always shifting under our feet? Aren't we all at some time falling into a new world? And trying to make a home? And in this era of accelerating climate change, in the era of the sixth extinction we know we stand at a crumbling edge... what are the gifts that we can carry with us through this time to make a home on the other side? ... And it's said, that we would know, in the time of the Seventh Fire that we stand all together at a fork in the road, and one of those paths is soft and green and all spangled with dew, you could walk barefoot on it, it invites you; and one of those paths is black and burnt, and it's all cinders that would cut your feet. And we know which path we want...

What do we find along the Ancestor's Path that will heal us and bring us back into balance? The prophecy... tells us that the people of the Seventh Fire will need great courage and creativity and wisdom, and they need to do it *together* – but that they will lead the way toward the lighting of the Eighth Fire. And it's said that that is *us*, today; that *we* are the people of the Seventh Fire who will begin to re-weave the world. And that path that we're called to travel is one of many, each on our own good road, and we're asked to mark that path for those who follow us – just as it was marked for us. (Conference Keynote, 13-15 March 2015).

Known commonly as The Anishinaabe Circle of All Nations Prophecy of the Seven Fires, this prophecy is perhaps one of the best known, and the Elders who hold it recognise that the time prophesied is *now*. There is a story of how this realisation came to be.

The late F. David Peat, a holistic physicist and author, recounts the experiences of the late Chief William Commanda of the Kitigàn-zibì Anishinàbeg First Nation. During his lifetime, Commanda was the keeper of the wampum belts that hold the Seven Fires prophecy and, for a long time, he was angry with white people and would not share in what he knew. As Peat writes, Chief William Commanda then experienced a great change: “He was visited by a dream, or vision, that told him the time had come to make a bridge between the two peoples. He was to show the belts and to speak about the prophecies they contain” (1994, p. 62). Following this vision, he began to speak openly.

There are similar prophecies of this critical Earth shift right from across the Americas. Many are formerly restricted, or were once secret. The common theme is that all humans must evolve their consciousness and change their ways. Structurally, these prophecies are about a purification period, followed by restoration. Alongside the Kogi message from the Heart of the World, *Pachakuti* (or the earth-turning, in which the Condor and the Eagle fly together again), and the Anishinaabe Seven Fires prophecy, can be counted: Hopi Kachina teachings, the return of Pahana (white brother), and the Hopi shift from the Fourth to the Fifth World, the Apache Fifth World of Peace, the return of the White Buffalo Calf Woman, the Cherokee Rattlesnake Prophecy, the sounding of the Sacred Drums, the Yu'pik return of the White Raven, the Time of the Black Jaguar, and the return of Quetzalcoatl, or Kukulcan, as linked to the significance of the close of the Great Cycle (end of the Long Count) in the Maya Calendar, and the beginning of the Sixth Sun. This list is not exhaustive: there are many, many others that animate time, place, and history from the Alaskan North, right down to Tierra del Fuego.

Other traditions tell of a Third Millennium, the time of the Sun All Devourer, the shifting of the veil or curtain, the astrological Age of Aquarius (an event linked to the precession of the equinoxes and accompanying cycles of world change), the coming of the Fifth Sun, the whirling of the Rainbow,

the coming of the Rainbow Man, Children of the Rainbow and/or Rainbow Warriors,¹⁹⁶ the coming of the Maitreya Buddha (or Buddha of Love), the First Coming of the Messiah in Judaism, the Second Coming of Christ, the age of the Cosmic Christ, the end of the darkness and chaos of the Kali Yuga, the inception of the next Yuga, and the coming of Ratu Adil (or Ksatriya, Kalki, or the king of justice), as prophesied in Indian subcontinental philosophical traditions (and Indonesia). Thich Nhat Hahn has said that in his tradition, the next Buddha (the Maitreya) will be a *sangha*, or beloved community (2008).

The coming together of the International Council of the Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, who are a group of Elder women from around the world, was also prophesied. Yup'ik Grandmother Rita Pitka Blumenstein began to see visions and prophesy at nine:

[Her own grandmother] took her aside and gave her 13 stones and 13 eagle feathers. She told her that she would one day pass them out at a Grandmother's Council. Over half a century later—in 2004—true to her great-grandmother's vision, Rita found herself in a circle of 13 grandmothers from five continents who had gathered in rural New York. Many of the grandmothers were living legends among their people—wise women, *curanderas*, shamans, and healers of their tribes. Like Rita, each one, in different ways, had been foretold of their participation in a sacred grandmother council that would fulfill a prophecy for the world (World Pulse 2009).

The Grandmothers describe prophecy as a 'puzzle' that unfolds in consciousness from the heart, revealed and confirmed in different pieces to different people over a long period of time: "Prophecy manifests in this way so that all isn't lost if the one or few people who hold the whole story pass away" (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 116).¹⁹⁷ Just as the Kogi Mamas understand prophecy to be mutable, the Grandmothers consider prophecy to be an ever-evolving dialogue between Earth and humanity, one

¹⁹⁶ There are many versions of 'Rainbow' prophecies, some of which are gross caricatures of original teachings that have been generated by people *outside* of the traditions within which the prophecies originated. Nonetheless, the basis of the teaching is that Earth will become very sick and the 'returning people', those of many colours, will help to restore the planetary balance, with Elders to guide them. In any early popular press account of the 'Legend of the Rainbow Warriors', published in 1992, author Steven McFadden notes there will be no 'heroes' or 'rescuers' in this time – each person must come to the task by themselves (1992, p. 5). McFadden points out a number of other prophecy details which correlate with traditional teachings, however on this point he mirrors Mercurieff's latest talk precisely. Mercurieff says: "in this time, there are no gurus, you have to do it yourself" (Mercurieff *et al.* 2017).

¹⁹⁷ The Grandmothers alliance is represented in Aotearoa by Ngāti Rongomaiwahine *kuia* Pauline Tangiora, who was invited to be their Goodwill Ambassador in 2006. In this role she joins Jyoti Jeneane Prevatt, Madrinha Rita Gregório, of Mapia-Brazil and Princess Constance de Polignac of Monaco. The Council gathered in 2013 in Gisborne, Aotearoa, for the He Ohonga Hou Conference. *Kuia* is the Māori term for an elder woman, a Grandmother, or a female Elder.

that unfolds in response to human decisions. The links between the prophecies given to humans over time and the fate of Earth express an unquestioned connection to Earth as a conscious and creative source, ground, and origin of being.

As the indigenous Elders carrying these prophecies reiterate time and again, none of these are prophecies about the ‘end of the world’, nor are they referring to fixed points in time. They are prophecies about transformative moments which involve all of humankind. The words of Quero Apache teacher and storyteller, Maria Yracébûrû, are instructive:

Although the legends are very old they should not be considered relics of the past. The value of their lessons cannot be ignored... Now more than ever the legends and prophecies of the Tlish Diyan – with their lessons of love, mutual respect, and awareness of responsibility – must be embraced, actualized, and passed on. They are the strength of a whole, healed, spiritual Fifth World of Peace and Illumination... We must share Earth, listen to the legends, heal, and live in peace with each other, and in harmony with All Our Relations” (2002, p. 5).¹⁹⁸

The Grandmothers are relaying this same message in simple terms and say that we must all learn to love one another again. They add: “we must be willing to make conscious changes in the way we view life and in our actions toward all Creation” (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 121).¹⁹⁹

In the words of Grandmother Agnes Baker Pilgrim, an Elder and the oldest member of the Takelma peoples of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, the Grandmother’s mission is to promote peace and healing. They want to stop spiritual blindness so that we may all ‘walk a better path’ together: “We joined with all those who honor the Creator and to all who work and pray for children, for world peace and for the healing of our Mother Earth” (2018). Of Earth, as the Grandmothers say:

Our waters are Her blood; the rainforest that is our pharmacy is Her lungs. The rocks we use for building are Her bones. Yet most of humanity never thinks to bless and thank Her, much less repay her. Mother Earth is a conscious, alive, and responsive being, the Grandmothers say... They feel the Earth’s suffering as if the pain were their own (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 161).

¹⁹⁸ Maria Yracébûrû is a healer, storyteller, and teacher of the Quero Tlish Diyan ‘tsanti is a snake wisdom tradition of the South American Inkan Q’ero and North American Quero Apache, the point of which is to instruct on how to live well in relation, and in accordance with sacred laws.

¹⁹⁹ Good introductions to the work of the Grandmothers Council can be found in the published teachings, collected by Carol Schaefer (2006), and the documentary film, *For the Next 7 Generations*, by Carole Hart (2009).

This pain is evident in the horror expressed by the Kogi Mamas at the Younger Brother's disrespect of the Mother. They ask: "Does the Younger Brother understand what he has done? Does he?" (in Ereira 1992, p. 205). According to the Kogi Mamas, Younger Brother has lost his knowledge of the Laws of the Mother.

Grandmother Aama Bombo (or Buddhi Maya Lama), who is a Mother shaman in the Nepalese Tamang tradition, relays similar sentiments through her connection with Kali Ma, an expression of the Great Mother who is central to the Indian subcontinental and Buddhist traditions:

Kali is not happy with what is going on in the world. She sees that humanity is lacking in good values, and she is not happy with the cruelty of the people... They are poisoning the Motherland and the sky. This has led to the suffocation of all the creatures... Spirituality and its values have been subordinated to the ego and to injustice (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 121).

The Grandmothers say that Earth has been warning us for a long time, but until we heal the unresolved conflicts within ourselves and find peace of mind within, we cannot recognise the damage to the planet that we unconsciously create (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 139).²⁰⁰ Maria Yracébûrû expresses similar sentiments. The Path of Beauty, as it is called in the Quero Apache tradition, calls for inner healing. As she writes:

Love is the weapon. Therefore, a Warrior of Light heals all dysfunction contained within... In combat with the Shadow of Fear, he calls upon two aspects, wisdom and truth... Only the Way of the Dreamer eliminates all dysfunction. It is said that the Dreamer no longer has fear... The Dreamer goes beyond the concept of duality. The Dreamer knows that time is an illusion, that life is but one dream flowing into another... The wounds of dysfunction can be the greatest weapons of the Shadow of Fear unless we find them all and heal them. This process takes time, but it is possible... How can we do this? We heal the source of what drew fear to us in the first place: the illusion of isolation and disconnection (2002, p. 147).

²⁰⁰ Jaki Daniels, a Canadian woman initiated into the local traditions of her landbase, conveys a teaching she received from the Mountain to whom she was mentored: "Your people have forgotten how much of a Mother she is. You have forgotten all the ways that she cares, that she prepares, and that she supports you entering into the state of being that is required for any given situation... Love is a condition that exists between and amongst. We fear that humanity may never return to those [ways]... But we can begin the process of sharing and reminding what is real and what is possible... Those who initially experienced it, those of the old ways, they didn't write it down. And those who knew it and those who lived it had no reason to write it down. There is reason now" (Daniels, C. and Daniels 2016).

Prophecy and associated wisdoms, when viewed from the perspective of an intensely westernised worldview, are difficult to hear or to see as valuable. To make Earth *matter*, by bringing the connections between humans and ‘nature’ into conscious awareness so that many destructive practices towards Earth and Earth beings change, is the point on which all these voices converge. The remedy, to open the minds and heal the hearts of those peoples of the world who are suffering separation and despair, is necessary *because we are connected* to one another, whether we realise this or not. This is relayed by the Grandmothers many times.

Albert Einstein, an Elder from another tradition, knew this also, as he wrote in a letter to a distraught father who had lost his son in 1950:

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us ‘Universe,’ a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. The striving to free oneself from this delusion is the one issue of true religion. Not to nourish it but to try to overcome it is the way to reach the attainable measure of peace of mind (in Calaprice 2005, p. 206).²⁰¹

To fail to be aware, acknowledge, or accept of this state of connection with Earth does not seem to make the fact of it (and its impacts) any less true, nor any less significant to those Elders who are still walking with us. They refer to our ignorance of our condition constantly, and in many different ways.

In Teionhehkwen Joel Monture’s account of Mohawk prophecy, he tells the story of creation, followed by prophesied insights into the current state of the world:

[The] Council of Chiefs would weaken, and would no longer be of one mind... the worlds of [the Creator] would be ignored, a sign that the Creator would make big changes in the world. We were told that the sky would be filled with flying objects made of metal. Women past the age of childbearing would bear children. Young children would bear children of their own. Trees would die from the top down, dead fish would float on top of the water, and the water, even from the deepest wells, would be undrinkable. Our language would vanish, and people would change shape and openly practice bad things in public (2009, p. 45).

In his story of the Ghost Dance movement, the late Chief John Fire Lane Deer, a *wicása wakan* (or medicine man) of the Mineconju Lakota Sioux, writes that Sičhánǰu (Brulé) Lakota man, Short Bull,

²⁰¹ Einstein is said to have remarked that, among all peoples, “twelve-year-old children of the Uto-Aztecan language groups (which include the Hopi) were probably the best prepared to grasp his Theory of Relativity” (as recounted in Matthiessen 2009, p. 139).

and Oglala Lakota man Kicking Bear (also known as Mathó Wanaáhtake) became known for telling people they ‘could dance a new world into being’:

There would be landslides, earthquakes and big winds. Hills would pile up on each other. The earth would roll up like a carpet with all the white man’s ugly things. . . the sheep and pigs, the fences, the telegraph poles, the mines and factories. Underneath would be the wonderful old-new world as it had been before the white fat-takers came (Lame Deer and Erdoes 1972, p. 228).

The Ghost Dance (or more properly the Spirit Dance), that originated with the Nevada Paiute peoples and was associated with the prophecies of Wovoka (affectionately called Ute), sought cooperative peacemaking across the Nations of Turtle Island. These two men took the dance to many Nations in order to unite them according to Ute’s vision, and it is still danced in some communities in the South East of Turtle Island.

As told by the late Tekaronianeken Jake Swamp of the Wolf Clan and sub-chief of the Kahniahaka, Mohawk Nation (Haudenosaunee/Iroquois), the story of the Great Peacemaker is also a record of Nations coming together, admixed with prophecy.²⁰² To summarise, the Peacemaker plants a pine tree, known as the Tree of Peace, and its four roots spread out in the four directions. The Peacemaker then binds the arrows of the people (Nations) together as one and, symbolising their union, invites the leaders of these Nations to stand in a circle and hold hands around the tree. The Peacemaker says:

In the future, this is what’s going to happen: there will be a people coming from somewhere, and they will not understand the meaning of these roots. They will hack at these roots and try to kill the tree, and the tree will weaken and it will start to fall. What is going to happen in those times is that you, the leaders, will be burdened with its heaviness. As this tree falls, it will land on your joined hands. It will rest there for a period of time on your arms, but you must never lose your grip. . . When you are burdened with its heaviness and its weight, near the time when you’re about to give up, when you’re about ready to lose your grip, there will be children born. And when these children observe the leaders burdened with heaviness and the weight of this tree, they will come forward. One by one they will notice and they will lend a hand, and they will help to raise this tree again (2009, p. 125).

The Peacemaker then invites those outside of these Nations to shelter by way of their connection through these roots: “If any man or any nation shall obey the laws of the Great Peace. . . they may

²⁰² The personal name of the Great Peacemaker is not spoken without purpose, so I omit it here.

trace the roots to their source... and they shall be welcomed to take shelter beneath the Tree” (Parabola Magazine 1989, p. 35).

Grandmother Mona Polacca, of the Hopi, Havasupai and Tewa Nations, also extends an invitation. She says that any person can be re-rooted in Earth, as old knowledge and original instructions are there for those who are open to it: “Part of the purpose of the Grandmothers is to point to commonality, what we all have in common as human beings” (2012). Grandmother Mona says we all have a responsibility to take care of these things that give us our life, to be thankful, to leave things in good order, and ‘better than the way we found it’ for those generations who are yet to come (2012). The Mamas, and the collected Elders of *many* indigenous and traditional ecologically-oriented communities, know this also. “We share the vision,” they say. “We are all human” (Daza 2011).

It would appear that it is *Younger Brother* who is late to this Council meeting. It is Younger Brother who does not respect Earth, the Guardians of the Heart of the World, the Grandmothers, the Indigenous Nations, or the Elders who are speaking for all. It is Younger Brother who does not understand. And yet, it is Younger Brother (or, the ‘people of the Fire’ we might refer to as westernised) who is said to hold the key. Younger Brother is the violator of Earth, thus he is the gatekeeper whose actions block planetary restoration and transformation. Younger Brother is *responsible* for initiating those processes that are needed to restore Earth’s balance. If he does not, the Mamas warn, then it is over: “We can no longer repair the world. You must” (in Smith, G. 1992).

4.2 Weaving the Four Directions

Ilarion Mercurieff is not only an Elder among the Unangan peoples of the Alaskan Pribilof Islands, he is a speaker and teacher. His traditional name, *Кийуух*, sets his role among his peoples as ‘extension’, or ‘an arm that extends out from the body’. He describes himself as a messenger and carrier of ancient teachings into modern times (2017). Mercurieff has said that the peoples of the world, of the four sacred directions – red (earth), white (fire), black (water), and yellow (wind) – are carrying various parts of the teachings which make up what the people of Turtle Island call the Sacred Hoop. The Hoop (also, Medicine Wheel, or Sacred Circle of Life) is a way of understanding how to

‘make a good life’ or to live well, and it is not a simplistic racialised typology, but is multivalent, and incorporates a number of interpretative levels.²⁰³

The Hopi, who also relay this message, situate the four colours and relations between them on the medicine wheel, hoop, or circle that holds Creation together:

at the beginning of the world, when the Creator created four races of four colors, each [was] assigned a task that together would ensure a world where all life was held in one sacred circle... the Hopi Prophecy states that not until all four races of humanity come together will there be true peace (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 11).

Whilst the divisions are set according to four colours and directions, the prophecy also suggests that, in mixing up humanity over time, the holders of tradition in each of the directions will be mixed together and not be of ‘pure blood’. The relationship is not *directly* representative of particular groups or places, yet it retains this possibility.

The late Elder, Sun Bear (Vincent LaDuke), of the White Earth Ojibwe Nation, said:

[people would return as] rainbow people in bodies of different colors... and unite to help restore balance to Earth... If you wake up and realize that we are Rainbow Warriors now, that we are a rainbow people upon the Earth, then the next step is becoming a spiritual warrior – someone who is willing to put their energy into something that helps heal the Earth and restore the balance, and who is interested in doing that consistently” (in McFadden 1992, pp. 17-18).²⁰⁴

Marlene Brant Castellano, scholar, and a member of the Mohawk Nation and Wolf Clan, explains that this wheel (according to the Plains peoples) also corresponds to different qualities. Red relates to natural world and animals, white to movement and intellectual activity, black to vision, and yellow to time and patience, and as the wheel moves it keeps things in balance.

²⁰³ These are English words for a concept that has different local terms and the colours also vary, as do the levels of emphasis. This encirclement is also illustrated by the Aboriginal notion of the Rainbow Serpent, or Mother Snake (variously named *Waugul*, *Wungurr*, *Waakal*, *Nyungar*, *Beemarra*, *Warlu*, *Mardjit*, *Marghet*, *Kaleruny*, *Arkuru*, *Unggud*, among others), that features in all aspects of Creation Time, is with/in Australia, and continues beyond this land to embrace the globe. The Medicine Wheel is opened by calling the four winds. In Judaic thought, the four winds which correspond with the sacred circle are called *arba ruchot* ארבע רוחות (see Berger 2010). This translation was kindly provided by Ofir Yudilevich of Aotearoa.

²⁰⁴ Sun Bear, father of Winona LaDuke, was a controversial figure across Indian Country as he lived according to the prophecies and did not discriminate when it came to sharing the wisdom traditions with non-Indian peoples. This stance attracted disapproval from some peoples in other Nations, and yet his actions could now be viewed as prescient.

Humans also move through the colours and qualities over a life-span, and certain stages of life are typified by a certain colour on the wheel; for instance, Elders are represented by the black quadrant, or that which gives wisdom, emotion, and connects to the element of Earth (Lyons Jr. and Mann 2016). Castellano, being an academic, identifies strongly with the white quadrant, which she initially rejected (as it linked her with the people of the Fire, or the west), until she came to understand the wheel was far more than simply racialised. She writes:

The medicine wheel teaches us to seek ways of incorporating the gifts of the other quadrants. It encourages us to bring more balance into our own lives and to form relationships and work in teams... people united in a circle (2000, p. 30).

The medicine wheel is a model that layers circles over circles and blends human lives, histories, strengths, and paths according to many different criteria. This complicates and interrupts simplistic ethnic, geographical, and historical distinctions that might be made between peoples and places. As relayed by Chief John Fire Lame Deer:

The Great Spirit wants people to be different. He makes a person love a particular animal, tree, or herb. He makes people feel drawn to certain favorite spots on this earth where they experience a special sense of well-being... The Great Spirit is one, yet he is many. He is part of the sun and the sun is a part of him. He can be in a thunderbird or in an animal or plant. A human being, too, is many things. Whatever makes up the air, the earth, the herbs, the stones is also part of our bodies. We must learn to be different, to feel and taste the manifold things that are us. The animals and plants are taught by Wakan Tanka what to do. They are not alike (1972, p. 156).²⁰⁵

The wheel places unification, in the interests of peace with/in Earth, as the highest goal. Grandmother Maria Alice Campos Freire, a Brazilian Elder and Santo Daimé healer, has observed that many different Nations have already been gathering for peacemaking purposes:

Japanese, African, Europeans, Americans, Chinese, people from all over the world are coming together to share hope. They are blending traditions without suppressing each culture's truths. The gatherings are teaching forgiveness, to forgive all enemies of the past, all the misunderstandings of the sons of the Earth. Mother Earth is showing us how, the forest is showing us how (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 125).

Grandmother Bernadette Rebienot of Gabon, who is respected among her people as 'the awaited one', has said:

²⁰⁵ Wakhánj Thánjka is a Lakota word for the sacredness, spirit, and power in all things, perhaps equivalent with *aluma*.

In Gabon, when the Grandmothers speak, the president listens. There is war all around but there is no war in Gabon. . . The spirits of the forest of Gabon have said that we can't go backwards anymore. We can't have fear anymore. Time is short. Time is calling us. . . In the words of the Grandmothers from Africa, spirituality is no different among the races. No one chooses where they are born. . . We accept that. We all share ancestors because humanity is humanity" (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 25).

Composed nearly 1400 years ago in another continent, the Chinese *Tui Bei Tu* also contains a 'figure prophecy' of peoples coming together. This text contains 60 chronologically ordered prophecies which appear to be strikingly accurate – 55 are said to have already passed.²⁰⁶ A predicted conflict regarding war over a distance is still 'pending' (poem 56), followed by the coming of a peacemaker (poem 57). The text states then that the last bastion of resistance to global peace is located North-West of China. The 58th poem summarises the coming together of a number of countries, except a holdout in the North-West which prevents the incoming global peace. The 59th states that there is 'no city or palace; no you or me; all are one family, united the eternal way'.²⁰⁷

In Aotearoa also, nearly a century ago, the late Ngāti Apa and Ngā Rauru prophet and faith healer, Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana, te Māngai (mouthpiece) or 'the lantern', told of a coming White Sun (which he also equated with the second – spiritual, not physical – coming of the Christ). Rātana prophesied that a new generation would emerge who would take up the *whetū mārama tohu* (symbol of the five-pointed multicoloured star, with the crescent moon) and would live in service to *wairua* (spirit).²⁰⁸

Remembered as a peacemaker, Rātana stated that his mission was to bring Māori peoples together as one by emphasising their common spiritual bonds. He saw his peoples as having descended into a darkness (*mākutu*, curse-belief) and 'land-sickness' that was not a true expression of

²⁰⁶ This text is attributed to two astronomers and historians, Yuan Tiangang 袁天罡 and Li Chunfeng 李淳風, and was possibly created during the reign of Emperor Taizong of Tang between 627-649 C.E. Details of this prophetic text have been gleaned from multiple sources on the internet, for the reason that official information (or its analysis in scholarly contexts, written in English) has proved impossible to come by. According to Wikipedia it is well known in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan but has been banned in the People's Republic of China as superstitious (Library of Congress 2017; Peters, K. and Wang 2017; Wikipedia 2018). Multiple versions appear online (which proved helpful), examples of which can be found here: <http://projectavalon.net/forum4/showthread.php?27051-An-introduction-to-the-chinese-prophecy-diagrams-Tui-Bei-Tu> and <http://www.alexchiu.com/philosophy/superichingtuaybaytu.htm>

²⁰⁷ This translation was kindly provided by Anmeng Liu, University of Canterbury, Aotearoa.

²⁰⁸ This image of the two books and the arrival of Rātana (1873-1939) were prophesied by Ngāpuhi prophet Aperahama Taonui in 1863, by Ngāti Huirapa Chief (Hipa) Te Maihāroa in the 1870s, Ngāti Maru and Ringatū founder Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki in 1891, and Elder Akuhata Kiwi in the early 20th century (in Newman 2006, pp. 37-38).

how they might live peacefully together, and with Pākehā. His biographer portrays him as holding the Bible in one hand and the Treaty of Waitangi in the other, as he looks to the future (Newman 2006).

Speaking in the late 1920s, Rātana referred to the third and fourth generations (alive at that time), into which the sins of the ancestors had come down. Then, however, there would be a fifth generation who would be made pure, and in whose time the fruits of his prophecies would be revealed to all (in Newman 2006, pp. 15,23). The Rātana congregations in Aotearoa, who are still committed to peacemaking practices between all peoples of the country, have been waiting for this ‘door’, as he called it, to open.²⁰⁹

Kuia (grandmother, Elder) of the Ngāti Rongomaiwahine, Pauline Tangiora, has expressed similar sentiments. Despite the long and continuing processes of bringing Pākehā to an awareness of colonial violences, she says that dedication to peacemaking (for which she recently won the International Bremen Peace Award) is our collective goal: “It is time to move on. We can’t let it rule our lives anymore. . . . If the world supports each other, it would be a better place” (in Neilson 2017).

4.3 Mending the Sacred Hoop

Within Mercurieff’s many talks and writings, he offers some history which helps make sense of the strong similarities that can be observed across so many traditions, along with the reasons why certain restrictions on speaking about sacred teachings appear to be lifting. Whilst, as Four Arrows has noted, Indian Nations remain divided on a number of issues, the debate as to what teachings remain protected is changing with time (2016c, p. 13).²¹⁰ As Four Arrows states:

We must understand the pain and politics behind our division, while realizing that we are all in the same boat, which is sinking. We share the legacy of our ancestry and our roots in Grandmother Earth. If you maintain authentic respect, avoid profiting from any Indigenous representation and

²⁰⁹ Rātana prophecies from the 1920s and 30s, in which he said ‘a woman would rise from the Labour Party and become Prime Minister’, alongside ‘the lion who has honey dripping from his mouth’ match the recent change in government in Aotearoa in 2017. Rātana said that at this time we would know we were ‘at the doorway’ to the changes he spoke of (in Newman 2006).

²¹⁰ This insight is also true for Aboriginal Australian clan, language or skin groups, and Māori iwi.

support Indigenous rights and activism while standing against genocidal forces, you cannot go wrong in re-embracing Indigenous traditions, even if you have not mastered the ‘protocols’ (p. 13).²¹¹

Protocol is an inseparable part of ceremony, and what Four Arrows suggests by reference to ‘mastering’ is that there is room for learning, if it is accompanied with the correct intent, and if there is authority or permission granted according to the correct lineages or representatives within a specific tradition.²¹² Doing so *in the absence* of this line of authority and Elder instruction would be appropriation. Four Arrows writes that if we were all to have a greater understanding of worldview (mine, yours, theirs, and ours):

[we could] dedicate ourselves to preserving Indigenous cultures struggling to survive, while learning to re-embrace thinking that can return us to being Indigenous in our communities. If the heart is sincere and a oneness-oriented worldview is practiced authentically, how you are in the world has as much, or more to do with being Indigenous than blood quantum, genetics, or haplogroup typing (2016c, p. 14).

In a story relayed by Mercurieff, there was a time before the ‘masculinist’ period of colonial imbalance, when the indigenous Nations of the world were forewarned by their ancestors, spirits, other beings, Earth, Elders, or by prophecy, as to what was to come. They began to make preparations (2017). The Grandmothers agree with this timing. They say “the circle of life was broken around five hundred years ago when the white people first came to the Americas” (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 115). Mercurieff recounts that, before this time, the collected peoples of Earth were aware of one another by way of the language of Earth. Despite being separated from one another by great

²¹¹ Four Arrows is not suggesting anything beyond the call from Elders that westernised peoples follow the ethic and Earth centredness modelled by indigenous and traditional peoples, that tradition be *re*-membered, or put back together in a mixture of new and old ways, in accordance with the specific places humans inhabit. The rest of his statement reads as follows: “This does not mean we should not empathize with those who are worried about misrepresentation or misuse of tribal practices, as there are longstanding reasons for protecting protocols that keep traditional ceremonial realities secret, ‘in the circle,’ even removed from non-Indians, Misappropriation of spirituality and ceremony has followed the theft of children, land, and dignity... In *The Appropriation of Native American Spirituality* by Suzanne Owen, Cook quoted Chief American Horse in 1896: ‘Anyone may dance the sun dance if he will do as the Oglalas do’... I agree with American Horse that Indigenous worldview is a mandate for all inhabitants of Mother Earth; I hope you will re-embrace it before it is too late” (2016c, pp. 13-14).

²¹² As Owen writes of non-Native appropriation: “It is the ignorance of protocol rather than their ethnicity that is the issue... there is a difference between non-Native ‘appropriation’, conducted without proper authorization, and indigenous ‘sharing’ or ‘borrowing’, conducted according to an internal line of authority often expressed as collectively recognized protocols” (2008, p. 2).

distances, they could understand each other and what was to come, whilst receiving collective guidance from Earth. He calls this ‘the original language of one’ (2017).

Forewarned of the danger, the Elders across all traditions were told to ‘dismantle their teachings’ and to not speak of certain aspects of their practices for at least two full generations; in other words, to take apart what he refers to as the Sacred Hoop, and to protect the teachings by bundling them in separate pieces all over the world. For a long time after, the remaining teachings were to be kept hidden so that they would remain safe. When the time was right (as determined by prophecy, and to be confirmed when it was near), those fragments that were deliberately concealed by Elders in many traditions would be pieced back together (Mercurieff *et al.* 2017).

The Mayan daykeeper of the Itzá tradition, the late Hunbatz Men, recounts that members of his family were entrusted with the safe keeping of part of their wisdom traditions more than five hundred years ago:

Now, because it is time, he has begun to share the secrets. ‘The eyes of modern civilization see only a shortspan of time,’ he says. ‘To the European-American culture, five hundred years seems to be a lot of time. But five hundred years is nothing in the eyes of the Maya. It is written in the time and in the memory of the Indian peoples that our sun will rise again, that we will be able to reestablish our culture: its arts, sciences, mathematics, and religion. It is for this reason that we of the Amerindian communities are once again uniting to reestablish our entire culture’ (in McFadden 1992, p. 25).

Mercurieff says that when the Elders were told it was the right time, they would begin to share their teachings, as initiated by the willingness of what the Kogi call Younger Brother, to listen. This timing, as I understand it, has to do with ensuring that Younger Brother (the people of the Fire, or those who physically or spiritually occupy the white, Northern quarter of the Medicine Wheel) are invited to participate, and are given a *choice* as to what contributions they can make at this time. As Kimmerer asks: which path will we choose (2015b)?

The late Lorraine Mafi-Williams, a filmmaker and activist of Bundjalung and Thungutti heritage (who was also known as Alinta, Woman of the Fire), says that Aboriginal Elders met in Canberra, in 1975, to discuss the incoming Earth changes:

At the time they gave out their predictions of the changes that are happening and coming... It was exactly what the Native American people are saying... back in 1975, the elders said, ‘You will know, when the time comes, what decision to make.’ And whatever it was, it would be fine by them because each and every white person must know our story and our teachings before we go into the new world. Despite all that’s happened to our people, our elders said that we must teach the white people our

culture. We've got to go into the new world as one people. We were told to go out and start teaching because, as our elders put it, 'Not one white person should turn around and say to us, 'We were not told. We were not warned.' ... They said we would go back to a cultural beginning, to meeting again in a circle, in the Sacred Hoop. It was all mind blowing to us then, in 1975, but it has made more and more sense as time has gone on (in McFadden 1992, pp. 98-99).

Merculieff says that 'white' thinking – westernised sciences and technologies – and aspects of modernisation, along with other intellectual goods that are associated with westernisation, have a part to play in the solution, especially given the considerable resources and privilege that might be leveraged as service to a better world (2015; 2017). On the experience of being westernised, he says: "Under that history, in deep ancestry, is guidance and ancient knowing, and how we can connect here and now. Not knowing, not having place, means *starting over differently*" (2017).

Merculieff has said that Elders agree that the time to mend the Hoop is now, that it is now critical to restore this hoop of sacred teachings and laws that were 'templated' identically all over the world. To this end, the Elders have been getting together and sharing what 'were once secret and sacred teachings', now that there are ears and hearts willing to listen (2015).²¹³ He also said that, the changes (which had now been initiated by those the Mámamas call Younger Brother) would be led by those *women who can remember what they are*.

4.4 Restoring the Balance

Grandmother Agnes Baker Pilgrim says: "I do believe we will see a change, as the prophecies state. Our prayers are for the whole world, for all the people. We are at the threshold. But it is up to the women" (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 126).²¹⁴ The imbalance that has caused all our issues, as suggested by the Grandmothers, Mercurieff, and others, is an imbalance between masculine and feminine energies.²¹⁵ Vusa'mazulu Credo Mutwa, an Elder and *sangoma* (or traditional Zulu healer)

²¹³ F. David Peat writes of his own experiences regarding this shift from secrecy: "Although what I heard represented only the tiniest fraction of a great history, nevertheless I understand that it was a matter of great controversy that even that much had been told to a stranger. Some Elders teach that the stories are sacred and must never be passed on to outsiders. Others are beginning to argue that the time has come to speak openly and share their knowledge" (1994, p. 87).

²¹⁴ A contemporary example can be found with the women of Standing Rock leading protest on the Dakota Access Pipeline (Arasim *et al.* 2016), and in the numerous examples of female activism given by Pi'ilani-Kahakumakaliua (Hawai'ian) scholar and activist, Haunani-Kay Trask (1999, pp. 87-100, and pp. 108-109).

²¹⁵ Vusa'mazulu Credo Mutwa has endured marginalisation, scholarly dismissal, and violences in his homeland for responding to this call and revealing sacred teachings (for his first book, see Mutwa 1964). As commentator, Jay Naidoo, writes: "I wonder about this great African Prophet. Why have we not learnt more from him? His sacrifices are as great as

from South Africa, has said that we must all ‘think like grandmothers’ at this time, with the ‘mother mind’ and not the ‘warrior mind’ of the separate self (Global Oneness Project 2008).

The Grandmothers say that it is a female power residing in men *and* women that is essential to the sustenance and healing of Earth and her inhabitants (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 133). Mercurieff calls this ‘a connection to the Womb at the Centre of the Universe’ (2013), and this idea of balancing the masculine and the feminine is similarly described by the Kogi Mamas (in Ereira 1990, 2012). Speaking to the necessity of feminine awakening in men as well as women, Grandmother Flordemayo, a *curanderismo* from Nicaragua, has said:

Prophecy states that it will be the women who walk with the power. We have an incredible journey and responsibility as women. All of our life we are caretakers, walking with the Mother. For women to have the freedom in the heart to be able to express ourselves spiritually is very, very important. We must learn to stay balanced in the moment and give each moment 100% of our prayer” (in World Pulse 2009).

It is as if the Grandmothers Council are the self-aware embodiment of this call to maternal leadership. Grandmother Agnes says that it feels like the Grandmothers are carrying traditions ‘handed down to us since time out of mind’, working in accordance with a script laid down for them (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, p. 121).

In his history of westernisation, Rajani Kanth proposes that matristic leadership has always kept masculinist impulses in check: “that murderous male violence was at least out of bounds *within* intra-tribal boundaries” (2017, p. 263). He writes that the kin based-societal entity is the base for culture, and its “*provenance lies in the evolutionary need to sustain the vulnerable human infant within the insecure minefields of male aggression*” (p. 263). Kanth asks if modern westernised societies are a worst-case scenario in which the very *opposite* conditions to those essential for human flourishing have come to prevail. He sets up a number of provocative questions:

Can one imagine a political party that is solely *of women, by women, and for women*? What might it aim to achieve, i.e. what might be its Agenda? How would it go about trying to implement that

those faced by the Mandela generation... His home and sacred shrine in Soweto was destroyed, his fiancée was gunned down by apartheid police and his son, Innocent Mutwa, was necklaced by angry youth in the 1976 Soweto uprising. And then his wife Cecilia was murdered in hospital” (2018). Noted conservationist, Linda Tucker, in her account of Mutwa’s teachings, writes that that Mutwa is ‘an enemy of all sides’ in South Africa: “a humble individual, fired by the courage of conviction and the love of humanity. Swearing to tell the world the truth as it had been entrusted to him, so that modern European and African consciousness alike might eventually gain an understanding of old Africa’s heritage” (2003, p. 67).

Agenda? ...What would their notions of 'Justice' be? Or War? Or Empire? Or Science? Or the State? If such queries seem 'odd,' perhaps one might reflect: *is there nothing, similarly, 'odd' about gender-singularity when that gender happens to be men, as it has, in all history?* (p. 69)

Kanth suggests that women would pursue politics differently, and that they should assert themselves in order to fundamentally feminise societal goals in a *maternal* way, by dismantling and diffusing masculinist institutions (p. 64). Women, he says, "*are, and have to be, the original peacemakers*" (p. 71).²¹⁶

For Kanth, maternal leadership is the source for dynamic governance and the only route forwards at this stage in history.²¹⁷ This emphasis makes his project fundamentally different to many that are enacted within contemporary feminisms, and more in line with the matristic strands of ecophilosophical and indigenous feminist thought. Kanth's rematriating rhetoric may place him at an angle to popular feminist readings of what women are, could, or should be, yet he does not reject feminism, but identifies as a feminist. His point of difference is the elevation of the maternal qualities within both sexes. In the partnership model espoused by Kanth, maternally-oriented empathetic nurturance of humans in community is the foundation for peace because a mother ethic, by necessity, is essentially protective.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Kanth does note that there are also a number of women in powerful positions who are what he calls 'token' women (he gives the example of Hilary Clinton), moulded by the masculinist societies to behave in masculinist ways whilst claiming to possess maternal qualities. He argues that history shows very few examples of women building Empires involved in initiating mass slaughter, genocide, mass rapes, looting, plundering, or dropping nuclear devices on children (2017, p. 64). Whilst this perspective might be critiqued for appearing to divide men and women into gross stereotypes, a longer reading of Kanth's thesis correlates his perspectives more fully with those being expressed by the Elders herein. He is advocating for a return to the maternal principle, and a feminising of leadership, without necessarily splitting this into biophysical 'female' and 'male' blocs.

²¹⁷ Kanth's argument could be peripherally linked with the backlash against feminist leftist positions in the United States. A conservative pro-family perspective is surprisingly well argued in the work of Suzanne Venker and Phyllis Schlafly (2011), although the binarisation of positions (liberal/conservative) and pro-family stance delimits and prescribes a feminine 'norm' in other ways. There is no mention of marriage between any parties other than a 'husband and wife', nor any discussion of gender diversity, nor do they define 'woman' or 'man'. Nonetheless, they do point to something which resonates with the argument here: "It is women who have the upper hand when it comes to gender relations... These words are foreign to young people. They have never heard anyone suggest women are the superior sex... Women of yesteryear had enormous power, just of a different variety... women were revered for their unique sensibilities" (pp. 88-89).

²¹⁸ This statement does not assume all 'actual' human mothers embody this quality, nor is it intended to delimit the lived experience of motherhood, but rather, points to an archetype for societal redesign. Good mother/bad mother arguments are beyond the scope of this thesis. In favouring a partnership model under maternal leadership, Kanth's arguments not

The Kogi (consistent with Kanth's ideas) consider unbalanced masculinity to be dangerous, and the complementarity of the masculine and feminine is basic to their culture. They initiate the young men in those communities over which they preside by 'civilising them', which means to constrain the energies of young men by ritual processes that tie them to the Mother (in Ereira 1990). As Ereira writes:

Every female is the Mother, every female is Nature herself. . . . When we look at the Kogi world, we do not see what they see. Men and women are not simply people, they are the embodiment of principles. . . . The harmony and balance of the world is constructed out of the partnership of masculine and feminine, the dynamic process of weaving the loom of life (1992, pp. 92-96).

Young Kogi men are bound to their *poporo*, an object they carry with them always, which represents a womb (or, the Mother), on which they focus their thoughts. "The Great Mother told us what to put in to *poporo*," the Mamas say: "You mutilate the world because you don't remember the Great Mother" (in Ereira 2012): a task that occupies them constantly through their attention to the *poporo*, and thus, to *aluna*.²¹⁹

What if the grandmothers and mothers were the decision makers within our communities? What if we might collectively trace the motherline to a relationship with Earth as the archetypal Grandmother, and elevate our Elders to their rightful places as leaders? Ngā Puhī seer, activist, and *whaea* (mother, or aunty), Te Wharetatao King, suggests that in the pursuit of global unity, the indigenous grandmothers of the world should all come to the table without any concerns but for their grandchildren, or *mokopuna*, and that this ought to guide all our peacemaking actions (2010a).²²⁰ She calls for the reinstatement, in Aotearoa, of a traditional nurturing society, as transmitted from the *kuia*, to the mother, to the child, to (re)create a society that is not dependent on war.

In Aboriginal Law, *Grandmother's Law* is the highest Law of all, presiding over the rituals of birth, and yet this is still balanced by the Grandfathers (themselves, raised under Grandmother's

only dovetail with those Elders who are calling for a return to Earth-as-Mother, but also with scholars extending the traditions of Thomas Berry (1988), cultural historian, Riane Eisler (1987), and ecofeminist, Carolyn Merchant (2004).

²¹⁹ Contrary to the idea that devotions of this nature might sharply divide gender roles and sexuality, Kogi communities do not encompass binary heteronormative prescriptions, and celebrate feminine-masculine balance in all individuals as a highly valued expression of human experience.

²²⁰ As she relays, *moko*, as blueprint or design, when combined with *puna kōrero*, the well of grandmothers knowledge, has the power to etch the lifepath into the child. A recent film on her worldview and work is entitled *Te Wharetatao King, a Journey through the Mind of a Seer* (Epiha 2016).

Law), who have their own place as wisdom keepers and Elders. In her article on contemporary Aboriginal social issues and law, Irene Watson, a Tangane-kald, Meintangk-Bunganditj (Coorong) scholar and solicitor, asks: “How do we turn power around to bring greater presence to the laws of the grandmothers?” (2008, p. 29).²²¹ Citing the well-known Aboriginal Elder, activist, politician, and Traditional Custodian of Central Arrernte Country, Betty Pearce, Watson writes:

Get the Grandmothers to start standing up... the women’s stories are stronger than the men’s... because the women are the backbone of any society, whether it’s black or white it doesn’t matter. And the women are going to have to get up and save the kids and the whole society and the social structure and this is the only way to do it (in Watson 2008, p. 15).²²²

In Gabon also, as Grandmother Bernadette says: “nothing in our country is done without consulting the women. Our wise people, our elders are like libraries. We consult them whenever we have to make big decisions” (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, pp. 136-137). Matristic (or matrifocal) societies with traditions of prophecy have always been prevalent across African Nations. These can be counted in Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, among the Diola of southern Senegal, Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau (Baum 2016), along with the syncretic traditions found throughout the Caribbean and into South American and African-American syncretic communities (Teish 2012b, 2015).

Grandmother Margaret Behan Red Spider Woman, Cheyenne/Arapaho Elder, also speaks of the role women will play in the fulfilment of prophecy. She says: “There is a saying among my people, that our nations shall continue *until the women’s hearts are on the ground*” (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, pp. 126, emphasis mine). She explains how this refers to the women’s roles in the fulfilment of prophecy by reference to *resilience*. Matristic societies are also common across Turtle Island, exemplified most famously by Iroquois women, who are charged with appointing and removing

²²¹ In considering the shift of Aboriginal women’s bodies into legal spaces, Watson writes: “In calling for the grandmother’s law to have space to function, what support can we muster from the keepers of power? ... our calling up of the sovereignty of the grandmother’s law causes a disruption to the stability of a colonising white patriarchy... The emancipation of Aboriginal women will come once we have dismantled patriarchy, but also the colonial institutions that patriarchy has assembled along the course of its own history... When did it begin, violence against women? I wasn’t here in the beginning, but my grandmothers were... what happened to the laws of the grandmothers[?] ... When the frame remains limited, so too does our search for solutions. When we focus solely on male power, we exclude the possibility of an inherent power held by women” (2008, pp. 27-28).

²²² Betty Pearce is known for a prophecy which forewarned people of Cyclone Tracy, a major disaster that hit Darwin in 1974 (Liston and La Canna 2014).

their Chiefs in the Great Laws of Peace.²²³ Historically, as recorded by Muskogee Cree scholar, Sarah Deer: “Native women had spiritual, political, and economic power that European women did not enjoy. That power was based on a simple principle: women and children are not the property of men” (2015, p. 15).²²⁴

Given the socioecological conditions that are so prevalent in contemporary times, it would be good to realise that *not all societies make war*. Matristic communities are not precisely *matriarchies* to be set in a binary with patriarchy, but can be defined as those in which women maintain a balance of energies that secure the wellbeing (and thus, the maternal orientation) of the whole community, largely by enacting roles which establish the harmony of the group from childhood.²²⁵ In the view of Heide Goettner-Abendroth, philosopher of science and founder of the academic discipline of Matriarchal Studies, motherhood is the most important and basic function in all societies. On this basis, she argues that maternal values, such as community-building, peacemaking, and nurturing,

²²³ In his account of these procedures, the late Beaver Clan Chief, Irving Powless Jr., writes: “My cousin Oren and I were put in, installed, in the same ceremony. . . so we’ve been sitting there since 1964. And a clan mother can remove me, if I do certain things. . . In our society, a political leader can be removed by a woman. The clan mother can come up and say to the leader, ‘You are not conducting yourself in the manner in which you were in there to do. And because of this I’m removing you from your position.’ And through this process they get removed” (2016, p. 78).

²²⁴ As she notes, this is not to say violence against women never happened in matristic societies, only that absolutes always have exceptions (Deer 2015, p. 15). None of the authors I have read for this thesis have claimed, at any point, that indigenous and traditional ecologically-oriented peoples have had a perfect or violence-free history, even when living with matristic principles.

²²⁵ It is difficult to find westernised scholars who will allow for the idea of matristic societies, although these are commonly found in history and are still present among indigenous and traditional communities. Even if not documented as matristic in orientation, the structure becomes quickly apparent when peoples are asked specifically about the role of women, mothers and grandmothers in a community. Matristic societies are Earth-oriented and, thus Mother-led across multiple spheres of activity: they are quintessentially *matrifocal* (which is subtly different from typical definitions of *matriarchal*) but have not been well-studied as such. Many Turtle Island peoples, South and Central American peoples, Aboriginal Australian, Polynesian Island peoples (for instance, in Hawai’i), the Nagovisi in New Guinea, the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, many African Nations (including the Aka and San), indigenous Ainu (Japanese), the Kalash of Pakistan, the Garo and Khasi in India, the Mosuo, or Na, on the border of China-Tibet, and others across the Chinese continental region, and in nearby countries, the Indian subcontinent, Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, are, or were at some point in history, very obviously matristic (see the collected works of Heide Goettner-Abendroth 2009, 2012a, 2012b). Although matristic social organisation (and westernised scholars fascination with it) is sometimes posited as a myth to explain sexism, the actual existence of matristic societies disproves this theory (for the history of this fascination, see Eller 2011).

held across a whole society (without the biological necessity to be ‘mothers’) are a far more appropriate model for our species than masculinist patriarchies (2012a).²²⁶

Helena Norberg-Hodge also came to these conclusions, if unexpectedly, during her long years spent in Ladakh. In these traditional communities, she observed that women occupied a stronger position in Ladakh society than any other culture she knew, and they held the power; but, always in a dynamic balance with men (1991, p. 68). Here, she also observed kinship ties within closely structured communities, traditional relationships with place in which nothing was ever wasted, and a profound model for child-rearing in which unconditional love and support abounded, and no child had to prove themselves, nor ‘earn’ the right to be precisely who they were.²²⁷ Watching the Ladakhi people being ‘developed’ was horrifying to her – they became progressively colonised with westernised ways right in front of her. As Ladakhi’s adopted these western ways, they also lost vital aspects of their sense of wellbeing, which provoked Norberg-Hodge into pursuing the reparative actions that continue to occupy her today. She came to the following understandings:

The broader sense of self in traditional Ladakhi society contrasts with the individualism of Western culture... The closely knit relationships in Ladakh seem liberating rather than oppressive, and have forced me to reconsider the whole concept of freedom... Ladakhis score very highly in terms of self-image. It is not something conscious; it is perhaps closer to a total absence of self-doubt... Whilst decentralization is the most necessary structural change we must make, it needs to be accompanied by a corresponding change in world view... The dominant perspective of our society is now out of balance. A shift toward the feminine is now overdue... We are spiraling back to an ancient

²²⁶ From a review of her (2009) edited book: “Goettner-Abendroth prefers to use the word ‘arche’ which in Greek means both ‘beginning’ and ‘domination’. Further she depicts matriarchy as ‘mothers from the beginning’ from their capacity to give birth to life- thereby mothers being the ‘beginning’” (Natarajan 2016). The review also point out the holistic and gender-egalitarian nature of matristic societies, in stark contrast to societies where women were transformed first into witches, then housewives, a reduction to reproductive capacity that makes no sense in a matristic society, and would be inconceivable: “At all levels in the society, economic, social, political and cultural matriarchal societies maintain the balance between genders, generations, between humans and nature. These go a long way in fostering an atmosphere of peacemaking” (Natarajan 2016).

²²⁷ Grandmother Tsering Dolma Gyalton, now exiled from her homeland in Tibet, has said that a cornerstone of the Tibetan spiritual tradition is loving-kindness: “We took care of each other and shared our love... Grandparents looked after the young children and were the ones to teach the children to have a positive mind and to do no harm... grandparents and children sought wisdom from each other... The most important thing is to make good people, good human beings. How we teach children affects the world, because eventually they will go on to teach their children what they have been taught. They mothers of our future are being taught right now. What are we teaching them? For the future to go well, we need a very good and auspicious connection. We need the thought of benefiting others to be uppermost in our minds. This is extremely important” (in Schaeffer *et al.* 2006, pp. 150-151).

connection between ourselves and the earth... New movements are springing up, committed to living on a human scale, and to more feminine and spiritual values... These trends are often labeled 'new,' but, as I hope Ladakh has shown, in an important sense they are very old. They are, in fact, a rediscovery of values that have existed for thousands of years... (1991, pp. 186-192).

The knowledge that she gained from the peoples of Ladakh is precisely in line with the words of so many Elders: that still exist other ways from which we might learn.

Speaking from her Pi'ilani-Kahakumakaliua (Hawai'ian) tradition, activist and scholar, Haunani-Kay Trask, writes: "We are stewards of the earth, our mother, and we offer an ancient, umbilical wisdom about how to protect and ensure her life... *The land cannot live without the people of the land who, in turn, care for their heritage, their mother*" (1999, pp. 59-60). In contemporary Hawai'i, the politicising agents for self-determination are women: the younger, as led by nationalist indigeneity, and the older by virtue of their cultural *mana*, or power (p. 91).²²⁸ As Trask explains:

Women have not lost sight of the *lāhui*, that is, of the nation. Caring for the nation is... an extension of the family, the large family that includes both our lands and our people. Our mother is our land, *Papahānaumoku*, she who births the islands. Hawaiian women leaders, then, are genealogically empowered to lead the nation (p. 94).

In her remarkable and elegant prose, Trask puts out many calls for change. Among these are expressed the essential securement of indigenous futurity and a politicised and active process of rematriation; or, the rising up of indigenous nations to self-determine and fulfil their obligations to the Mother. In her view, Earth care is a *family* responsibility.

Rematriation, or the restoration of balance, is ultimately the restoration of the Mother by direct *reference* to our species relations with Earth, and the respectful, non-hierarchical, reciprocal, responsible, reverent and relational kinship that this restoration implies. This call to rematriate includes those of us who are beyond the range of westernised binary gender positions, or those who

²²⁸ In her history of ongoing colonial violences in Hawai'i, Trask writes that: "Hawaiian women, including our chiefly women, lost their place just as Hawaiian men lost theirs... [now] on the front lines, in the glare of public disapproval, are our women, articulate, fierce, and culturally grounded. A great coming together of women's *mana* has given birth to a new form of power based on a traditional Hawaiian belief: women asserting their leadership for the sake of the nation" (1999, pp. 93-94). In addition, she lists a number of women-led movements that were active throughout the Pacific region at the time of writing: in Belau, Aotearoa, Guam, West Papua and East Timor, Kanaky (New Caledonia), Tahiti, and Vanuatu (pp. 108-109). Such movements tend to coalesce around issues such as peace, provision of basic needs and human rights, health, education, and other loci of care.

identify as what some indigenous scholars have referred to as *two-spirited* (or LGBTQ+) people. Such discriminations do not appear in traditional teachings, and even the terms of reference that classify two-spirit people negatively are foreign to many indigenous and traditional communities.²²⁹ As Mercurieff says:

Women, you need to rediscover who you are, because you are sacred, and sacred in a particular way... And I'm also talking about two-spirit people... as two-spirit people are already considered to be spiritual leaders because they understand the masculine and the feminine, which is what we're trying to achieve right now. [These people] were destroyed by the masculine imbalance as it was a great threat to them to have two-spirit people, so they were smashed the hardest in that time, up until today (2017).

Whilst it is clear that this call does not line up precisely with traditional understandings of feminism, there are powerful allegiances that could be made by combining intersectional feminism with directives from indigenous, black, and southern feminists, along with women working in associated fields (see Anderson and Lavell-Harvard 2014; Collins 1991; Connell 2007; Green 2007; Lavell and Lavell-Harvard 2006; Valaskakis *et al.* 2009). Ecophilosophers who weave with an understanding of Earth wisdom *alongside* matristic thinking, such as that from Vandana Shiva, comes close to representing the balance of these teachings (Mies and Shiva 1993; Shiva 1993, 2005, 2015).²³⁰

In her discussion of what it means to elevate the maternal alongside the particularities of feminism, philosopher Luisa Muraro writes that, in discovering how to love the mother she has had to turn toward philosophy differently. As she puts it:

[My quest] entirely contradicts a very typical feminist idea, which I share and perhaps also support. The idea is that we women have been invaded and colonized by a male culture and consequently we must rid ourselves of it through a process that will inevitably be long, full of struggle and pain... But in

²²⁹ For further discussion of LGBTQ+, two-spirit and related gender concepts within indigenous and traditional thought and practice see the collected works of Will Roscoe (Murray and Roscoe 1998; Roscoe 1988, 1991, 1998) and others (Brown, L.B. 1997; Driskill 2016; Morgensen 2011).

²³⁰ For a discussion of the origins of ecofeminist thought, and possibilities for its renewal of relevance, see (Gaard 2011), and for key perspectives in this field see the work of Karen Warren (1996, 2000; Warren and Erkal 1997; Warren and Wells-Howe 1994) and Carolyn Merchant (1980, 1992, 1996, 2004, 2010). There are multiple views on what an ecofeminist environmental and social ethics might look like as combined with different traditions of thought and as applicable to different places (for a selection, see Alexandre 2013; Aristarkhova 2012; Brianson 2016; Chakraborty 2015; Code 2006; Cuomo 1998; Diamond and Orenstein 1990; Gibson *et al.* 2015; Grande 2003; Harcourt and Nelson 2015; Kheel 2008; Kings 2017; Mathews 1991, 2003, 2005, 2015; Mickey and Kimberly 2012; Moreton-Robinson 2000; Phillips 2016; Plumwood 1993, 2007, 2009; Stephens 2011; Trinlae 2015; Wei 2014).

reality, this is not how it goes. The moment I found this clue and grasped that logic required that I learn to love the mother what I learned earlier turns out to be useful to me. I do not have to make an effort to peel off ways of being and thinking infused by patriarchal culture, although I developed within it... the very antimaternal meaning of much philosophy has prevented me from learning it well... once I found that knowing how to love the mother was for me the principle of a logical order, I realized that criticizing per se does not lead anywhere... I affirm that knowing how to love the mother creates symbolic order (2018, pp. 17-18, 20).

An interrogation of this kind reveals some of the complexities of contrasting biological and gendered aspects of these teachings with canons of westernised thought. Resistance to the mother, especially for women, is heavily enculturated.

The Grandmothers, for example, link the wellbeing of the planet *directly* to the physicality of biological women, as microcosmic representations of the macrocosm that is Earth, but not exclusively. What is also evident is that, given generations of deep socialisation into westernised ways of thinking about 'women', westernised women are likely to struggle to articulate a relationship to Earth as Mother. Furthermore, some of those born as biological women or men, yet who gender identify differently, may have difficulty locating themselves in this story if they subscribe to westernised categories of distinction. Women and two-spirit people are specified in these teachings as needing to remember *who* and *what* they are and needing to learn how to use the power they hold correctly, and in accordance with particular principles. This is a different project to that of feminism, and it has very little to do with patriarchy, concepts of gender equality, or gendered social roles.

For these reasons, the notion of performing any reduction on the positive principle and expression of motherhood, or the embodiment of the maternal principle, does not make sense. Simultaneously, their perspective uplifts the masculine and feminine principles as assumed to be present in all people. Strict binarisations are too limited for this task. A better model to think with is a principle such as the Chinese yin yang 陰陽, which is more appropriate for conceiving a balance of opposites without the extremes. Interbeing expresses this principle also, as do the practices and philosophies of Kogi Mamas. Mercurieff gives an explanation of his understanding:

Break from the small things in language... Spirit does not have a gender, and it does, at the same time. It is very difficult for us to understand this. For example, masculine is active, it is moving outwards, feminine is receptive and has the container. We can't do without each other, and if I'm smashing the feminine inside of me, I'm smashing my ability to pray, because its moving out all right but there is nothing there to receive it, and vice versa. So this is why we don't have words for twin-spirit, or two-

spirit. They are considered spiritual leaders, and in the end, the Elders say to forget all these things you are attached to (2017).

Here is where the unlearning becomes very specific. It is a westernised worldview that is the exception here, so the message for those who are enmeshed in it is two-fold: firstly, forget all those things we are attached to; and, secondly, *remember* what it is we need to remember, as guided by these Elders who are yet to be properly heard.

As is evidenced by the Mamas frustrations, those things that are simple and understood clearly across indigenous and traditional peoples – that Earth *is* our Mother and *is* conscious and sentient; that everything is connected and everyone is related; that guidance is available and this guidance is reliable – have to be explained, defended, verified, supported, and clarified many times over when engaging with the westernised worldview. Mercurieff says that the Elders have given the message to start teaching, *now*, and that we need to change our consciousness, *now*, including within academia. He says that climate crises are only one of a series of symptoms, and that the institutions of higher learning need to prepare our young people to deal with these issues, incorporating these teachings regardless of their ‘specialised’ areas (2015).

Indeed, if there was a time to consider these teachings seriously, it would indeed be now.

4.5 Picking up the Heart

Mercurieff says that the questions humans have (such as, where to go from here?) require looking at the root *causes* of our challenges, rather than the symptoms. He writes that mind and morality meet *in the heart* (2017a). Of these root causes, he names the feeling of disconnection. He says that we must open our hearts in order to restore the Hoop: “The ‘heart’ I am talking about is the inexplicable aspect of us that is in connection with the divine and guides us impeccably. ‘Heart’ is the source of correct thinking and being... How do we get back to being heart-guided people?” (2017a).

Jo-Ann Archibald (Q’um Q’um Xiem), speaking as a scholar and from her Stó:lō and Xaxli’p perspective, relays that the Elders suggest we listen with both eyes and the heart, so as to live life right (2008, p. 12). As she writes, using the story of Coyote’s ‘mismatched eyes’ as metaphor and inspiration: “Losing the ‘eyes,’ or the understanding, of a worldview [that is] embedded in Aboriginal

oral traditions, particularly in the stories, is strongly linked to the legacy of forced colonization and assimilation...” (p. 14).²³¹

To lose the eyes has many layers of critique built into it: it is the loss of the ability to see two ways, or in two modes, and a symptom of forgetting, confusion, and arrogance, as compounded by the loss of awareness as to one’s responsibilities. It is the loss of knowledge of the meaning and nature of stories, or wisdom; and, in practical terms, it is not being able to see where you are going nor where you have been, not being able to learn, and so on. To repurpose Archibald’s words here, perhaps colonised peoples the world over could benefit from remembering what it is to *see again* after the ‘value of respect for a sacred kind of knowledge’ has been broken?²³² How might we remember how to write our stories on the heart? This is a wisdom Archibald relays from the late Okanagan Elder Harry Robinson (p. 140; see Robinson, H. and Wickwire 1989).

Heart knowledge, which is a foundational principle across Turtle Island, is to live centred in the awareness of profound kinship with Earth. Jeannette Armstrong, writing from her own Okanagan perspective, relays the idea as follows:

We say that we as people stay connected to each other, our land, and all things by our hearts. As Okanagans we teach that this is an essential element of being whole, human, and Okanagan. We never ask a person, ‘What do you think?’ Instead we ask, ‘What is your heart on this matter?’ The Okanagan teaches that emotion or feeling is the capacity whereby community and land intersect in our beings and become a part of us (1995, p. 321).

According to Mercurieff, *we are the ones we have been waiting for*. He says that “we need to take back our personal authority and figure out what’s really important. The mind deceives us all the time. The

²³¹ Whilst many folklorists have compiled the ‘folktales of X culture’ for westernised readers, the correct expression of the symbolic content of cultures would be in pedagogical orature, or as written/compiled appropriately by those who are internal to particular traditions. A version of the Coyote story appears in Archibald (2008) and I would point the interested reader to her work. Another good example of the appropriate presentation of indigenous story is in Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Amanda Strong, *The Gift Is in the Making: Anishinaabeg Stories* (2013)..

²³² As environmentalist and author, the late Peter Matthiessen, wrote: “there seems no doubt that traditional peoples the world over have much to teach a spiritually-crippled race which, as Lame Deer said, sees ‘only with one eye.’ This half-blindedness has been the curse of the white people as long as the Indians have known us, but we have not always been accursed; at one time, we knew the *mysterium tremendum*. And we must feel awe again if we are to return to a harmonious existence with our own habitat, and survive... When modern man has regained his respect for the earth, when science has become a tool in the service of nature rather than a weapon to dominate it, then the lost Paradise, the Golden Age in the race memories of all people on earth will come again, and all men will be ‘in Dios,’ People of God” (2009, p. 142).

heart works perfectly, but we can no longer tell the difference” (2015). He says that each direction has its gifts, and that recognising our presence *in/as* Earth (or *with/in* nature), as Mother and kin, is a precondition to discovering more of what these might be. Similarly, Dwayne Donald has asked (2010): how might we face each other across our historical divides?

In bringing these gifts together, Mercurieff insists that we listen to the Elders who know what it is to live well:

They understand that human laws and the study of morality are creations of those who live outside of the present, necessitating that these things be memorialized and made into laws and fields of study because they have forgotten how to be integrated into life as real human beings. In the time before time began, we never had prisons. Why? We never had to deal with human-caused things like warfare, felony, and climate change—the destruction of the life support systems of the planet. Why? We never invented the term ‘sustainability’ as a concept to guide how we interact with the earth. Why? Simply put, the Indigenous Elders say these society-wide struggles stem from a memory lapse: we have forgotten how to be ‘real human beings’ guided by divinely-inspired laws for living (2017a).

Kathleen Dean Moore frames our task as “reinventing what it means to be human in a finite, deeply interdependent, and generously beautiful world” (2014, p. 22).

Te Wharetatao King says she distinctly recalls the old people talking often about a spiritual ‘cloaking’ that would engulf the globe, as followed by a time when we would be able to look beyond our differences, our rules and regulations, to begin a new way of conducting ourselves (2010b). She recalls that shifting into the new way was going to involve finding the ‘broken bits’ of that have gone. In closing, she extends an invitation: “If you’re a grandchild in our *tīpuna* land, and what we walk with is attractive to you, haere mai!” (2010b).²³³

This is what we are collectively being encouraged to do: undo and remake ourselves in accordance with guided conceptions of *how to live well* – to live more responsibly, with each other and other species, on our shared planet – so that we *all* might share in a good life, together. What if we were to bring these gifts together, parts of the old with parts of the new, and ask of one another, *what is your heart on these matters?*

²³³ Here, she is saying welcome, or come over, which is a warm invitation, to the *tīpuna* land, or ancestor’s land.

4.6 How Do They Know?

The question that haunts so many historical accounts of ‘other peoples religions’, including those many sources that attempt to relay everything from ceremonial practices, prophecies, precognitive dreams, animal encounters and ancestor knowledge, to the basics of traditional and indigenous ecological knowledge and practice, is: *how do they know?* One can almost hear the confounded voices of explorers, anthropologists, and scientists echoing through time: *How can they possibly claim to know that? That can't be correct. There is no evidence for that. There must be some other explanation.*

There are explanations, and they appear in various forms and at a range of depths throughout the literature. The explanations rely on an understanding of indigenous and traditional metaphysics and the practices which extend from these, as concretely linked to the realisation that Earth and other beings are kin (meant literally), that relationships are not abstract but personal, and that consciousness is *not limited* to a single human mind. There is not one text or oral account that I have looked at in the processes of compiling this thesis that does not emphasise these ideas and situate them somewhat metaphysically. The problem does not lie with the explanations internal to traditional and indigenous ecological worldviews. The *issue* is with the clouded spectacles (or mismatched eyes) of scholars who are trained in a covertly theological (and thus discriminatory) cluster of disciplines.²³⁴ As Haunani-Kay Trask has written:

history goes on, written in long volumes by foreign people... a tale of writings by their own countrymen, individuals convinced of their ‘unique’ capacity for analysis, look at us with Western eyes, thinking about us within Western philosophical contexts, categorizing us by Western indices, judging us by Judeo-Christian morals, exhorting us to capitalist achievements, and finally, leaving us an authoritative-because-Western record of their complete misunderstanding (1999, p. 120).

I have come up against what Trask describes time and again in gathering these teachings. I will offer a brief anecdote. When I began reading the autobiography of Chief John Fire Lane Deer, published in 1972, I thought that it was offering a remarkably deep discussion of Lakota ways; but, I found it

²³⁴ I am not just suggesting the sciences and social sciences here, but include the full range of scholarship that purports to be radically inclusive, and yet runs counter to, or is a reaction against, the universalism espoused by Elders and scholars who are internal to these traditions. Feminist, black, indigenous, queer, dis/abled, theological, postcolonial, or other disciplinary locations do not necessarily result in the overcoming of discriminatory or binarised thinking, and may even exacerbate the tendency *toward* exclusionary, deliberately limited, and prejudicial scholarship. There are no places that are safe from the invisible legacies of colonial thinking.

strange that I had not discovered it earlier, nor seen it cited. Then it dawned on me that this book may as well have been written in an extinct dialect, given the extreme unlikelihood of scholarly engagement with it, whether in 1972 or 2017. If there were restricted teachings written there, they were most certainly safe.

His book (as with many others by indigenous authors) gives excellent explanations of how people know what they know. This issue is that these explanations are considered to be unacceptable, incredible, or unscientific when they are evaluated from a scholarly perspective.²³⁵ Paul Nadasdy describes the contradiction as follows:

What to the Athapaskan or Cree hunter is a perfectly explainable – if not quite everyday – event becomes for the biologist (or anthropologist) an anomaly. Faced with stories of this sort, those of us wedded to a Euro-American view of human-animal relations have one of two choices: we can choose to disbelieve the account, or we can shrug it off as a bizarre coincidence. Either way, we avoid any attempt at explanation (2007, p. 36).

It may be helpful to consider a familiar example from within the westernised medical paradigm: the adoption of acupuncture from China.²³⁶ The use of acupuncture within allopathic contexts occurs alongside the absolute denial of the existence of *qi* 氣 (air-breath, life-being, energy-force). It is upon *qi* that the entire practice is based. To suggest that *qi* exists is to ‘break’ with the cosmological consensus of the westernised worldview.

Even if it may only be tacit, the mandate is that rational thinking must prevail in westernised societies, and any claim to the contrary is a private, cultural, or religious belief, thus *a priori* illegitimate in any scientifically valid sense. Whilst any discernibly scientific elements of cultural

²³⁵ There are those who would respond to this with a certain conviction that, counter to this claim, scientists have been testing the assertions of indigenous and traditional peoples for almost a century. This is not entirely accurate. Whilst some of these explanations have been ‘tested’, this has occurred using particular methods, with the aforementioned biases intact. The result is that those outlier and anomalous results (of which there are many), or those kinds of inquiry deemed to be improper, have resulted in their advocates (and their research results) being evicted from the citadels of science. As two examples, consider the work of Fritjof Capra (1975, 1982, 1989, 1996; Capra and Luisi 2014; Capra *et al.* 1991) and Rupert Sheldrake (1981, 1989, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2012; Sheldrake *et al.* 1998). Both are excellent scientists, well aware of the issues I highlight, who have wagered their reputations on pointing out the flaws in the scientific method and practice, sometimes to their professional detriment. It is not that indigenous knowledges need ‘proving’, but rather, that many of our scientific credos and methods of inquiry need significant revision.

²³⁶ Whilst traditional practitioners of Chinese medicine could not ‘prove *qi*’, acupuncture was adopted due to pressure from neurophysiologists, anaesthesiologists, and dentists, on the basis that it was technically useful, despite having a limited medical status (for discussion, see Caspi and Baranovitch 2009; Ho 2006; Webster 1979; Wegmüller 2015; Wolfson 2003).

practices are extracted, those elements which are poorly understood routinely become rejected and disregarded. The argument that acupuncture works *without* requiring an understanding of *qi* is somewhat valid, but only if the definition of ‘works’ is very loosely configured. Traditional Chinese Medicine is an holistic system, and to extract a ‘part’ (as is also done with indigenous and traditional ecological knowledges) is not only appropriative, but it reduces the capacity of the practice. As such, it is not particularly mysterious when it no longer performs effectively, or in the manner that is claimed by the people with whom it belongs.

Another good illustration of this sort of worldview conflict is outlined by the Swiss-Canadian anthropologist, Jeremy Narby, in his written account of his work alongside Asháninca communities in the Peruvian Amazon. Narby was regularly confronted with the statement that the local ecological knowledge (knowledge of plants and plant use) which came from the *ayahuasqueros*, or shamans, was taught to them directly by the plants themselves. In his discussion of *ayahuasca* (which is the primary visionary botanical brew used by the *ayahuasqueros* in their role as healers), he notes that their knowledge of the combination of the elements required for the brew is beyond the ‘reasonable’ limits of trial and error:

So here are people without electron microscopes who choose, among some 80,000 Amazonian plant species, the leaves of a bush containing a hallucinogenic brain hormone, which they combine with a vine containing substances that inactivate an enzyme of the digestive tract, which would otherwise block the hallucinogenic effect. . . and when one asks them how they know these things, they say their knowledge comes directly from the hallucinogenic plants (1999, p. 11).

Although the botanical knowledge of indigenous Amazonians astonishes scientists, there has been no attempt to think beyond the assumption that the healers acquire their knowledge through trial and error. The claim that *ayahuasqueros* acquire communications directly from the plants, who have then gone on to instruct them in the uses of *other* plants and combinations in their extensive medicinal repertoire, is just beyond the explanatory faculties of scientists. The question of how the Asháninca *ayahuasqueros* knowledge is acquired (and how their medicine works) is generally put aside in favour of the greater objective; that is, appropriating ‘shaman pharmaceuticals’ for big corporations.²³⁷

²³⁷ It can be roughly estimated that approximately 25% of modern prescriptive medicines are synthesised from plants found in the Amazon rainforest. Only a very small percentage of the actual plants (perhaps as low as 5%) and their active properties are known by westernised sciences. The remainder of this knowledge is held by indigenous peoples throughout

Comprehending the mechanisms by which the healers *come to know* is a matter of understanding relationship, but not in the manner assumed by Narby's scientists. Haunani-Kay Trask explains that westernised peoples have lost their cultural understandings "of the bond between people and land, [therefore] it is not possible to know this connection through Western culture" (1999, p. 120). As argued in multiple threads, and at length, in this thesis, I agree with Trask: that the westernised worldview cannot supply all the elements to restore such connections *on its own*; augmentation is needed in order to overcome the progressive lean toward purity, objectification, and tidy classifications.

As I discussed in chapter two, one can learn about worldview, or talk about worldview, or perhaps even establish basic instructions from Elders relaying their teachings in a book, but engaging with the elements of worldview is a *practice*. Following this line of thought, Trask asks scholars to consider another mode of engagement:

If it is truly our history Western historians desire to know, they must put down their books and take up our practices... [they] must listen; they must hear the generational connections, the reservoir of sounds and meanings. They must come... to understand the land. Not in the Western way, but in the indigenous way (p. 120).

These 'ways of knowing' require protocols, ceremonies, asking Earth (or Earth beings) directly, checking or discussing with others, and then living by those answers – this is the foundation for knowing 'how it is', to borrow Viola Cordova's term for the manner by which knowing is executed (Cordova and Moore 2007). As Vine Deloria Jr. explained:

In most tribal traditions, no data are discarded as unimportant or irrelevant. Indians consider their own individual experiences, the accumulated wisdom of the community that has been gathered by previous generations, their dreams, visions, and prophecies, and any information received from birds, animals and plants as data that must be arranged, evaluated, and understood as a unified body of knowledge. This mixture of data from sources that the Western scientific world regards as highly unreliable and suspect produces a consistent perspective on the natural world (1999, pp. 66-67).²³⁸

the Amazonian region, all of whom remain under threat of violence, to their persons, their land bases, and their ways of life.

²³⁸ This account of knowledge does not mean to suggest that indigenous stories or literatures do not employ or recognise a category of 'fiction' but, rather, that it is not set aside in quite the same manner as within westernised categories or genres of writing and thought. In traditional Native American contexts, for example, a distinction between ceremonial and popular genres makes more sense, or the sacred as juxtaposed with the pedagogical or humorous, soothing or entertaining (see Allen 1986a).

An inquiry that is occurring inside of, and with full knowledge of, Earth – an Earth that is abundantly informative (as Gregory Bateson certainly knew) – wherein participants are not ‘clouded’ by the notion of separation and thus, are not suspicious of deception, is a relational experience, best endeavoured with a clear and open mind.²³⁹

Knowledge, such as prophecy, originates from a source *outside* the immediate separate self. This is variously captured across traditions as nature Herself, a long-ago ancestor, wisdom from the elements, from spirits, other animals, or from a dream – all of whom carry or hold the knowledge and memory of other people, places, and times. This only makes sense if it is understood from the unbounded and relational perspectives inherent in indigenous and traditional ecologically-oriented worldviews.

The *particular* referents, or sources of knowing, do not alter the overall metaphysics of an ecological kincentric view and the commonalities that are shared across communities. These referents are *culturally specific*, and therefore comprise a symbolic set that makes sense only to the knower, or a community of knowers, who share in the tradition. The specific ontological ‘set’ is determined by the cosmological specifications, or the charter corpus of stories and interpretative traditions which inform a cultural whole, and the resulting cultural practices (such as ritual, ceremony, and other interactions with the conceptual universe) will differ.

What is consistent across these communities (*the difference that makes the difference*) is a relational and conscious concept of Earth beings, self, and an Earth minded community held in common. This is set holistically (and somewhat holographically) in time, as a *part* of place, and a participant in the relations that obtain between these elements. There is no empty ‘space’ to speak of, which means the ‘space’ that westernised geographers have long referred to is not a part of the ontological set when humans and others are considered with/in an Earth-conscious context – space *does not exist*. Everything and everyone are relationally and dynamically informed by the shifting contents of air, wind, and breath that are full of conscious interactions.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ As noted by British geographer, Paul Routledge, we ought to be aiming for “relational ethics... for dignity, self-determination, and empowerment that is non-dominating, and environmentally sustainable...[tempering] the academic responsibilities to publish and further our careers, with those of finding common ground and common cause with resisting others” (2009, p. 88).

²⁴⁰ This one idea sets geographers a significant challenge, given that the discipline has traditionally oriented toward the concepts of space and place. Here, *now*, and there, *then*, also shift when the locus of ‘self’ is constituted in-relation, rather than as object. There are also differences in the positioning of self-as-centre within an egocentric, ethnocentric frame, as

What is possible, or *ontologically permitted*, across what might appear to be wildly different cultures, is so similar (in my view) because of one critical factor: these communities have resisted deference toward those very specific *limits* that were placed on what we call consciousness, on Earth-as-subject, or God, and on the nature of human, animal, and natural life-forms, by the replacement processes of westernisation. Wherever there has been even a modicum of resistance to colonisation (the world over), similar ideas persist, albeit sometimes only in fragments. The models cohere with one another, and so much so that Four Arrows has argued of only two basic worldviews: the westernised kind, and what he considers to be the ‘real’ or original one (2016c).

None of these ways of being are magical, nor are they superstition. This is not mythology, or ‘just’ culture, or indigenous religion. It is an age-old way of knowing and being with/in Earth, practiced by the vast majority of the world’s peoples and for a very long time. The only notable exception is the westernised exception. This is not primitive curiosity, nor primitive science, nor an expression of ‘backwardness’, nor evidence of some lack of intellect or capacity. Conversely, the ongoing dismissals of indigenous and traditional knowledges within scholarship demonstrate a paucity of westernised methods and capacity, as fuelled by an arrogance beyond measure – one that may well lead to a great personal discomfort for many people if the established westernised systems of governance and world-ordering ultimately fail. *Taking seriously* therefore demands a mode of thinking that is free from theological bias, one that can track relationships and communication, rather than individuals (currently the discrete unit of interest), in what we might think of as empty space, and as connected across and beyond westernised conceptions of time.

The possibility that such knowledges can be held in common requires an extended idea of the human (among other living things), that includes intuition and instinct, and of consciousness, *ki*,

compared with self-as-centre when the reference point is cosmogeographical or mythically conceived, as suggested in the early work of Tuan (1974, pp. 30-44). I would extend this observation further and suggest that the idea of an alienated or atomised individual ‘suspended in space’ (which is mythically empty) has become remarkably plausible in the context of an ever-purifying westernised worldview. Notably, this began (as did so much of this worldview) somewhere near ancient Greece. Geographer and philosopher, Jeff Malpas, traces a brief history: “Greek thought seems to have taken place (*topos* or *chora*) as the more basic notion, and only in later thinking did a *sui generis* concept of space emerge, partly through the explication of spatial elements within the concept of place, and partly through the influence of the separate concept of void (*kenon*). Moreover, as the concept of space does indeed take on a clearer and more defined character in Renaissance and Modern thought, so too does place tend to become a more obscure and less significant notion... The ‘rise’ of space is thus accompanied, one might say, by the ‘decline’ of place” (2014). He further comments on the relationship between space, distance, and void, as compared with the limit or bounded nature of place-as-matrix, which is inherently relational.

aluna, ella, qi (and similar ideas), that is planetary in scope.²⁴¹ The Okanagan word for Earth, as taught by Jeannette Armstrong, uses the same root syllable as the word Okanagan peoples use for the spirit-self, and the word for referring to all life forces as one spirit (1995, p. 324). As a lead in to the next chapter, in which I discuss relational and intuitive ways of being and knowing, I will quote the remainder of her teaching:

Spirit is not something that is invisible, in the mind, or subjective. It exists. We are part of that existence in a microscopic way. The Okanagan teaches that we are tiny and unknowledgeable in our individual selves; *it is the whole-Earth part of us that contains immense knowledge*. Over the generations of human life, we have come to discern small parts of that knowledge, and humans house this internally. The way we act in our human capacity has significant effects on the Earth because it is said that we are the hands of the spirit, in that we can fashion Earth pieces with that knowledge and therefore transform the Earth. It is our most powerful potential, and so we are told that we are responsible for the Earth. *We are keepers of the Earth because we are Earth. We are old Earth* (p. 324).

²⁴¹ Howard Adams wrote that an authentic Aboriginal consciousness “is an intrinsic or inner essence that lies somewhere between instinct and intuition, and it evolves from the humanness and spirituality of our collective, Aboriginal community. Without an indigenous consciousness, Indians, Metis, and Inuit people only claim to Aboriginality is race and heritage. That is not enough to achieve true liberation” (1995, p. 45).

Chapter Five: The Laws of the Mother

Some old-timers, men who became famous for their powers and skills, had been great dreamers. Hunters and dreamers. They did not hunt as most people do now. They did not seek uncertainly for the trails of animals whose movements we can only guess at. No, they located their prey in dreams, found their trails, and made dream-kills. Then, the next day, or a few days later, whenever it seemed auspicious to do so, they could go out, find the trail, re-encounter the animal, and collect the kill.

—Hugh Brody, 1981²⁴²

Prophecy, and numerous related phenomenon that break with conventional westernised notions of time, space, and personal identity, rely on very different ideas of *what* a human being is, *how* a human comes to know, and where, who, and what knowledge might come *from*. Indigenous and traditional concepts of human identity, human nature, and knowledge appear in stark contrast to those westernised definitions that have been constructed from ever-more purified cosmological precepts. In the words of the late environmental author, Peter Matthiessen: by seeking to dominate nature, “the white men set themselves in opposition to a vital, healing force of which they were a part and thereby mislaid a whole dimension of existence” (2009, p. 129).

As debated in westernised scientific, religious, and philosophical dens for thousands of years, the unstable signifier of ‘the human’ has generated a confusing patchwork of *a priori*s, convictions, and uncertainties regarding what we are. As lyrically phrased by historian, Geoffrey Lloyd, many answers to the question of what defines us as humans have been focused upon “the triadic relationship between humans, gods, and beasts” (2011, p. 829). As Lloyd argues, human beings have been historically and intellectually set apart from other animals in a number of ways: as divine creations, as clever toolmakers, as blessed with spoken language, as the source of all symbolism and culture, and as bearers of rationality and reason. Lloyd introduces a Chinese conception of human uniqueness to complicate conventional westernised philosophical assumptions, drawing upon an idea he likens to a *Scala Naturae*, in the third century BCE writer, Xunzi:

Water and fire, [Xunzi] says, have *qi*, 氣 (which spans breath and energy), alone; grasses and trees also have life (*sheng*, 生), to which birds and beasts add knowledge (*zhi*, 知). But humans have *qi*, life, knowledge, but also an extra faculty, which makes us the noblest of them all. This turns out to be – not the reasoning faculty as in Aristotle – but righteousness, *yi* 義: that is, a *moral* capacity (p. 833).

²⁴² The opening quote is from the work of Hugh Brody, an English anthropologist who has worked primarily with peoples in the Arctic Circle and in various Nations on the African continent (1981, p. 44).

Righteousness, or goodness and virtue, is linked with the moral qualities of being able to distinguish between right and wrong action, whilst living by values and codes of conduct. It could be argued that most, if not all, of our global socioecological and political issues derive from different interpretations of these precepts. Equally, at the heart of all living religious and philosophical traditions there is a strand of Earth wisdom that might be invited to help counter disharmony and cultivate greater balance.²⁴³

Worldview shift, by way of cosmological interrogation, does not necessarily involve discarding all the symbolic architecture that is meaningful to people. It is a matter of discerning what the core principles of particular worldviews really look like when the layers of historical revision are excavated and evaluated. Excellent questions would be: is this a good thing to know or believe? Is it useful? What is its function when I examine it in light of my relationships, my ethic towards others, and my ways of being in the world?

In many indigenous and traditional ecological conceptions, the universe is *moral* and the Laws for human conduct are set by whatever forces of nature are alluded to within a particularly situated cosmology. These Laws prescribe how to live correctly with/in Earth and, in some instances, these are set *by* Earth, or by other cosmic beings with whom Earth is in relation.²⁴⁴ According to Australian geophilosopher, Jeff Malpas, understanding the human means understanding “as determined in its being-human through its relation to place and by means of the relatedness that is articulated in place”

²⁴³ Contrary to the idea that mainstream religions are anti-ecological, there are invitations to explore ecological strands of thought across all three Abrahamic traditions. Some of these openings might be usefully pointed to within educational contexts. Introductory ideas can be found in the work of Roger S. Gottlieb (Barnhill and Gottlieb 2001; Gottlieb 1990, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2010). In Islam, see in particular the writings of Fazlun M. Khalid (Khalid 2010; Khalid and O'Brien 1992) and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1996, 1999, 2007, 2011, 2015), among other authors (Abdul-Matin 2010; Ahmad *et al.* 1997; Maarif 2014; Omer 2012; Setia 2007). For Judaic thinking, see Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (2001, 2002, 2005; Tirosh-Samuelson and Hughes 2015) and others (Hammer 2006; Schwartz 1995). Christian contexts are well covered by Thomas Berry (Berry and Tucker 2006, 2009) and Matthew Fox (1983, 1991), with others (Conradie *et al.* 2014; Joranson *et al.* 1984). There are a number of other thinkers who offer more general religious openings to ecological discussion in interfaith contexts (Barbour 1972; Barlow 1997; Bateson, G. and Donaldson 1991; Doogue and Dowd 2008; Hallman 1994; Maguire 2000; Moseley 2008).

²⁴⁴ As argued by Eleanor Hayman, “it is important to reveal customary law and the practice of other ontologies that do not conform to . . . philosophical assumptions, biological categories, and taxonomies currently considered to be baselines in earth thought” (2018, p. 39). In this vein, her indigenous and more-than-human geography draws up Rights of Nature global discourse, Earth Jurisprudence, and Gaia literature “that attempts to counter (map) and challenge current thinking, human supremacism/exceptionalism, and assemblages of the more-than-human world” (pp. 39-40).

(2014). As he writes, coming very close here to an Earth minded view, place is the dynamic opening for:

making possible the determination of that which appears within and in relation to it – including the determination of the human... entities and events are not to be understood in terms of some already internal structure, but are rather essentially relational in character – that is, entities and events are determined as what they are by the way they relate to other entities and events (2014).²⁴⁵

Laws of conduct regarding these relations are not up for negotiation as they are a contract between humankind, Earth, and all other beings. The late Chief Irving Powless Jr., speaking from the Beaver Clan of the Onondaga Nation, writes of his own place that:

these laws were explained to the Dutch people in the early 1600s. Coming into our territory, you can live here as long as you live by the natural laws. You will not pollute the water... there will be animals for the next generation. There will be plants and medicines for the next generation, and that is the way we continue today (2016, p. 54).

Animals and other beings have their own compatible Laws, which humans are to respect and take some responsibility for understanding. This cosmic order is vastly different from that of modernist westernised cosmologies, as humans are defined *primarily* by their responsibilities to Earth, for which they receive the gifts of ongoing guidance, good health, plentiful resources, and a good life. As Glenn Parry writes:

Modernity has seized upon one particular type of thinking and equated it with essential humanness. It is our capacity for rational thought, we have determined, that defines us – both separating us from, and elevating us above, other animals and all other creatures. But what if... this belief is simply wrong? ...Rational thinking could be fool's gold – the glitter of something we mistake for more than it is. We may mistake the nature of thought entirely. Our thought may not be thoughts at all, but a filter of Great Spirit's thought, an inlet to a greater knowing that extends far beyond the reach of rational comprehension... Our thoughts and abilities are not greater than the rest of creation, but because of it: whatever intelligence we have is because creation itself is intelligent, and it is arrogant to assume otherwise (2015b, p. 62).

²⁴⁵ Malpas is worth extending with a later passage from his essay: “The grounding of the human in place that is envisaged here is thus not a matter of any mere ‘emotional attachment’ of individuals to place – or indeed of human collectivities to places. It is much more basic and more pervading. Instead, the very content and meaning of human life is inextricably bound to the concrete entities and events that constitute the localised environment contexts in which human lives are lived” (2014).

Parry suggests that our westernised conception of the human is the result of a strong identification with our current bodies of knowledge and ways of thinking, leaving us profoundly ignorant of our potential. Furthermore, that breaking down the definition of the human being into ‘parts’ to be evaluated, as is the tendency in separatist thinking, is outdated. To evolve, he says, “we have to change the way we think – and the way we think about thinking” (p. 63).

In this chapter, I relay, as best as I can, the particularities of what Chief Lama John Fire Deer calls ‘being of Earth’, and ‘reading nature as white men read a book’ (1972, p. 170). One should find the visions there, *in nature*, he said (p. 163). I argue that different understandings of human nature and human potential are essential to a good life. This involves cultivating kincentric relationships between humans, with other beings, and with Earth, as these are the key to the flourishing of humankind and overall planetary futurity.

Becoming aware of our intuitive connection to Earth and other beings, alongside the practices of conscious emplacement, is also central for reindigenising humans to the planet. I outline how westernised humans might identify better operating instructions (otherwise known as Laws) for interacting with Earth and others, by way of indigenous and traditional models for *how to live well*. I appreciate that this may require some unlearning for Younger Brother, however there is a clear need for paying mind to what the Elders have said regarding Earth and our present socioecological situation.

5.1 The Ways of the Real Human Being

The processes of *coming-to-knowing* within indigenous and traditional Earth minded communities, a phrase I borrow from F. David Peat, differ greatly from those processes of knowledge acquisition that are familiar within westernised societies.²⁴⁶ As he explains:

in the English language... *knowledge* has its origins in a verb of activity... it meant to own the knowledge of something and perceive something as true. In turn, the origins of this verb lay in yet another process – the verb, *to know* – which is a term of extremely ancient [origins] that has to do with perception, recognition, and the ability to distinguish... in time, [our] view of knowledge was transformed into a noun, something that could be categorized, conceptualized, collected and stored within the filing cabinets of the mind (1994, p. 56).

²⁴⁶ Coming-to-knowing has also been used in westernised philosophical discourse to mean the ‘act of knowing’ or knowing for the first time, resulting in knowledge possessed (for discussion, see Dicker 1973).

Conversely, coming-to-knowing relies on the understanding that, firstly, knowledge is not a dead collection of facts, secondly, it *dwells*, or is specific to, particular places and, thirdly, it involves entering into, and maintaining, conscious and respectful relationships with all other life (p. 65). Coming-to-knowing refers to coming more deeply into self knowledge and relationships over time, resulting in the useful and respected basket of Elder wisdom that is embodied by the end of one's lifetime. Coming-to-knowing means being ever open to new learning, and the possibilities for learning from everything and everyone; thus, it is a perpetual, relational, and circular model of knowledge gathering.²⁴⁷

Rudolph C. Rýser, a scholar of Oneida and Cree heritage and a Cowlitz tribe spokesperson, also uses this turn of phrase:

Through the cultural practices of each distinct people, individual human beings come to know their personal identities and learn to know truth through distinct modes of thought. The diversity of human experience serves as a vast library for ways of comprehending... many modes of thought are entwined into one braid (1998, p. 27).

Rýser's words prompt me to divert briefly and restate some of the stakes that are inherent in how we, as scholars, can attend to, and come-to-know *differently*, all that is contained in this 'vast library'.

These 'library' holdings boast an extraordinary amount of cross-cultural evidence for clear breaches of entrenched westernised notions of bounded individuality, minds, consciousness, communication, species, time, and space. This evidence has been repeatedly offered up by traditional and indigenous Earth minded peoples the world over, and has been gathered for over a hundred years by ethnographers and other interested scholars.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ This idea also appears in the work of Betty Bastien, a *Niitsitapiaki*, *Sikapinaki* (Blackeyes Woman), who shares the symbolic architecture of Blackfoot understandings. Referring to the web of kinship alliances that make up the universe, Bastien notes that people need to understand how to approach these relationships in order to come to know the patterns of relationships in the cosmic order. As she writes: "My own process of connecting to the alliances of *Kipaitapiiyssinnooni* [our way of life] started by connecting with *Niitsi'powahsinni* [the words that carry the breath of the ancestors] and by coming to know the ancestors through ceremony, offerings, sacrifice, and mediation. Meditation and prayer are the roots of the process of coming to know. Knowing is communicating with the natural and cosmic world of *Siksikaitsitapi* and integrating the knowledge that transpires from these relationships into one's own being. This knowledge is alive" (2004, p. 5).

²⁴⁸ Edith Turner observed that the scholarly opportunity to comprehend, understand, and, perhaps, *experience* kinship or recognition with what have been designated 'spiritual' aspects of other ways of being in the world remains largely untapped (2006c, p. 115).

In allowing for the radical non-locality of communicative abilities across all boundaries of being, such evidence suggests that there is much more to Earth than is conventionally allowed for. The fact that much of this evidence remains catalogued as belief, culture, and religion, within an era of supposedly earnest efforts to ‘take seriously’, amounts to nothing less than structural racism. Would ‘we’, as scholars and (by legal definition) as the critic and conscience of society, prefer to continue to pretend to take seriously, or to *actually* take seriously?²⁴⁹ There is much we could learn.

As Matthiessen outlines, with brutal candour:

We can no longer pretend – as we did for so long – that Indians are a primitive people; no, they are a traditional people, that is, a ‘first’ or ‘original’ people... it isn’t just that we admire the teachings that are implicit in their vision but that we *need* them, if we are to live our lives in a complete way as whole beings... The Indian concept of earth and spirit has been patronizingly dismissed as simple-hearted ‘naturalism,’ or ‘animism,’ when in fact it derives from a holistic vision known to all mystics and great teachers, the most ancient and venerable [vision] in the world... it is not a matter of ‘worshipping nature,’ as anthropologists suggest... the word ‘religion’ itself makes an unnecessary separation (2009, pp. 130, 136).

Taking seriously requires reviewing our scholarly understandings of what counts as knowledge and extending the implications of this into our practices, both social and scientific. These are two complex and interrelated moves.

The first move involves interrogating worldview assumptions and combating the outdated and reductionist methods, languages, and modes of thought that scholars often faithfully accept and reproduce.²⁵⁰ The second requires us to extend the implications of this interrogation and review into our lived practices, and this requires educating others to also think differently about what are currently received wisdoms on the limits of human consciousness and experience. Beyond the revision of human experience, is the revision of how we think about other forms of life. This pedagogical transmission becomes logically implied as a *moral* obligation when, and if, we decide to take indigenous and traditional perspectives seriously. As educator and ally, Celia Haig-Brown, has

²⁴⁹ In Aotearoa this phrase is enshrined within the *Education Act 1989* (s 162) as an aspect of the role of academics and universities (for discussion and contemporary context, see Grace 2010; Jones, D.G. *et al.* 2000).

²⁵⁰ The latest version of the DSM-5 classifies all such ‘spiritual’ phenomena under *Psychotic Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association 2013, pp. 87-122). In reading the possible variations for diagnosing delusion and hallucination, it is clear there are a number of conventional medical perspectives which could be (and have been) weaponised against indigenous and traditional peoples (and their allies) for defending or promoting just these sorts of ideas.

noted: “When we really begin to take Indigenous thought seriously in our theory and in our practice, we move to inhabit border worlds” (2008, p. 14). The aim here, ten years later, is to recover the *centre* for traditional and indigenous Earth minded wisdom and refuse to linger indefinitely at the borders.

Earthlife does not willingly yield to objectification via academic tools that eschew relationship. Furthermore, definitions of what counts as knowledge within westernised contexts are slippery enough to appear open, yet are constructed to conform to particular criteria.²⁵¹ If we are to build a reliable epistemological basis, by which future generations (of all species) can find their way to that soft green path that is promised by prophecies, then the process begins with those of us here with/in Earth, now. Perhaps it is time to *think differently* about our collective capacities as a species, whilst attending, with great care, to the emotions of those humans for whom these ideas will be especially difficult to consider.²⁵² As Zen teacher, Susan Murphy, has stated:

[It is] possible to live straight on to our reality instead of hiding out from it in ten thousand different ways... [if] first we... see through the way our sense of the world has been framed by stories that form the bedrock of our civilisation (2013, p. 121).

²⁵¹ For example, consider the question of objectivity. In one sense, westernised knowledge ‘preferences’ call for objective bounded collections of facts or truths that stand alone and can be ‘captured’ in some sense. In applied scientific inquiry, this amounts to replication of findings for the purposes of verification, within a disciplinary or commercial knowledge community (Hume’s consensus of reputable men), which is required to establish the ‘fact’. Further facts are then based upon these verified findings. Equally, objective claims made in a different knowledge community can be consensually disrupted by reference to the subjective positionality of the researcher: in other words, by exposing the *a priori* assumptions inherent to that community as illegitimate or misconceived. This device obscures the fact that subjective positionality and *a priori* assumptions are native to any knowledge community, if this is indeed the criteria by which facts are established. In light of this, are there any objective facts that can be identified as universally applicable by the use of these methods? As, according to this criteria, objective and subjective are the only two possible positions that can be used to assess the quality of a fact. I would suggest that the method of discernment here is flawed, and it would be far more instructive to conduct scientific inquiry by inductive, iterative, and cosmologically fluid means, concluding thereafter by recourse to abductive reasoning as to whether there are facts to be discovered as a result of said inquiry. The visibility of certain kinds of data might also be usefully addressed by clearing the aforementioned theological biases through cosmological interrogation, potentially creating room for new kinds of scientific inquiry.

²⁵² As argued in the emotional geographies of Joyce Davidson and Christine Milligan: “our emotions *matter*. They have tangible effects on our surroundings and can shape the very nature and experience of our being-in-the-world... Our sense of who and what we are is continually (re)shaped by how we *feel*. Similarly, the imagined or projected substance of our future experience will alter in relation to our current emotional state... Emotions, then, might be seen as a form of connective tissue that links experiential geographies of the human psyche and physique with(in) broader social geographies of place” (2004, p. 524). This insight becomes critically important for any attempt to midwife positive planetary change through our interactions with one another.

Seeing through these stories becomes central to engaging with what Murphy calls ‘the new reality breaking upon our heads’. If we, as a species, are to collectively overcome our shared concerns about socioecological crises, then we have to be braver. In the words of the late Onondaga Tadodaho of the Haudenosaunee, or Six Nations, Leon Shenandoah: “Nobody knows what specific suffering someone will have to go through that will bring them back to the remembering” (2001, p. 39). He says that we have to change people’s minds so the seventh generation will have somewhere to live. We have to recover an understanding of what the human really is and how Earth really operates: an understanding that we *are* the ‘environment’, or ‘nature’, or however we have become accustomed to thinking about it. However, many of us have *no idea* what that means.²⁵³

Ilarion Merculieff offers a definition of the ‘real human being’:

You can recognize real human beings by how they inhabit their bodies. Real human qualities include patience, gentleness, soft-spokenness, observation, consideration for people and wildlife, cooperation, non-aggression, the ability to be present in the moment, and a deep reverence and respect for all living things. In Western-dominated cultures, these qualities are often associated with the feminine and dismissed as somehow of lesser or even negative worth in the fight for survival. In the Aleut worldview, however, they are the mark of a true person and a complete human being. The way of the real human being is a proven pathway to living in long-term sustainable ways on our shared land. It can—and should—help us all deal more successfully with the daunting issues facing humankind (Merculieff and Roderick 2013, p. 12).²⁵⁴

Merculieff conceives of the real human being as instinctual and intuitive. The real human being is supposed to operate according to our Original Instructions regarding what we are and how to live, as guided by an inherent Earth intelligence. As he writes:

Aleut people know that human intelligence exists and operates not simply in the mind but in the body and spirit as well. We learn with all of our senses: hearing, feeling, smelling, intuition, gut responses, thinking, emotions, “heart sense,” and body signals. Intelligence is a system, synthesizing information from both sensory and non-sensory inputs. Underneath is a knowing which is

²⁵³ Chief Irving Powless Jr. writes about meeting with environmental people, who asked him “how do we relate to the environment”. He answered: “Well, we don’t relate to the environment; we *are* the environment. We are one. We are the wind; we are the rain; we are the thunder” (2016, p. 176).

²⁵⁴ The way of the real human being is also a topic for ally and educator, Calvin Martin (1999), and for the late Tadodaho Chief Leon Shenandoah (2001).

profoundly connected to All That Is. Ultimately, this is the basis for our spirituality. The way of a real human being is to understand and feel this connection (Mercurieff and Roderick 2013, p. 10).²⁵⁵

Inherent Earth intelligence is the birthright of the human being. It is not a religion (although interpretation of it has been attempted *through* religion), but a way of living with/in Earth, in place, with all our senses and intuitive understandings operative.

Coming-to-knowing ‘what the human is’ implies reconsidering the status of all other living beings. For example, westernised sciences classify animal life in a manner that derives the terms of identity from a level of observable characteristics, or morphology: cold-blooded versus warm-blooded, and microbial life as distinct from (rather than *part of*) the human, the insect, and the plant (see Bordenstein and Theis 2015; Forterre 2015; Gilbert *et al.* 2012; Hug *et al.* 2016; Stolz 2017). In transforming subjects into objects and dismembering in order to ‘study’ or ‘classify’ (a habit which manifested when Bacon’s *Natura Vexata* met the mechanism of Descartes), we miss the integral relations between the parts that are *not* ‘parts’ at all.²⁵⁶ Philosophical exceptionalism and religious ideas also have their part to play in fostering interspecies indifference.

According to the astute Thom Hartmann:

There’s more bacteria, viral, fungal, and parasitic DNA in your body than there is DNA from your own cells. We evolved on this planet along with every other living thing, and we are designed to be a seamless part of the whole, a thread in the delicate web of life. When we remove ourselves from that web of life, we do so at our own peril (2009, p. 71).

Viewing other living beings as persons, with whom we can make relationship, requires the overcoming of thinking in particular modes, expressed in all statements that split humans from

²⁵⁵ In Mercurieff’s discussions of this, he often refers to the idea that the many names indigenous and traditional peoples call themselves mean ‘the people’. Examples of some that fit this criteria are Unangan (the people), Abenaki (dawn people) Anishinaabe (original people), Dene Dháa (ordinary people), Hopi (peaceful people), Innu (the people), Lenape (the people), Lakota (the allies), Olekwo’l (persons), Yup’ik (from yuk, meaning person), Māori (ordinary people), Wixáritari (the people), Asháninca (kin-folk), Kogi (jaguar people), Gamo (lion people), Zulu (sky). Sometimes affiliations in print are actually to a larger body or tribal collective (Māori, for example, does not refer to a tribe per se), or to a language group (such as Nahuatl, or Athabaskan). In addition, many existing tribal names were changed directly or indirectly by colonising powers, or ascribed by neighbours or enemies, for instance the Apache (enemy) were originally called Ndee (the people), Cheyenne is a Sioux word, and Sioux is an Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) word.

²⁵⁶ As lamented by Gregory Bateson: “I remember the boredom of analyzing sentences and the boredom, later, at Cambridge, of learning comparative anatomy... We could have been told something about the pattern which connects...” (1979, p. 16).

animals and nature, humanity from the ‘environment’, or render Earth as ‘it’. As Kimmerer pointed out, we would not talk this way of our Grandmother, so why must we do it to Earth? (2017a, p. 131).

Anthropologist, Nurit Bird-David, who has studied alongside the Nayaka peoples of South India, describes their concept of kin, or relatives as, ‘anyone we share with’ (1999, 2006). ‘Sharing with’ makes kin into persons. In her work, she describes the Nayaka explanation of talking with other persons (in her example, trees) as something akin to attentiveness to the variances and invariances of behaviour and responses of those with whom the Nayaka are in relation. Seeing, hearing, talking, knowing, and other distinctions common in westernised thinking, are not delineated so discretely in Nayaka ways of being.

In a Native American view, personhood also includes all those who are ‘shared with’ (see Guedon 1984).²⁵⁷ Rýser defines persons as they are thought of in the Pacific Northwest of Turtle Island: “All beings are thought of as people in different forms. . . Each ‘people’ has a name and an age, and virtually all ‘people’ are older and more experienced than human beings” (1998, pp. 28, fn.21). Contrary to westernised ideas of other living beings as lesser, the enhancement of all other Earth beings does not *diminish* human personhood, but exists *in relation* with it – on kin terms. This does not mean, lest it be assumed, that we should all become vegans or vegetarians (in fact, quite to the contrary), although we may wish to review our respectful relations with those animals who become our food.²⁵⁸

Jon Young relays a story that the San Bushmen tell their children: *A very long, long, time ago, the lions ate a lot of us*. That is the whole story. The children are immediately wide-eyed and terrified.

²⁵⁷ For a recent attempt to explain personhood in Andean contexts, see the work of anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena (2015). In Alf Hornborg’s review of her work, having earlier raised the question of how her findings will land politically for anthropology, he asks: “Should anthropologists be prepared to adopt any conviction they encounter, or is skepticism or even denial at times appropriate? Does the Christian God (and associated artifacts) have political agency? Is the exclusion of earth-beings from legal discourse more deplorable than secularization in general?” (2017, p. 20). Good answers to these sorts of questions can emerge from comprehensive worldview analysis within westernised contexts, as unstable claims or charlatans without community consensus become readily identifiable. One might also expect to encounter difficulty with transforming fundamentalist ideas.

²⁵⁸ A proper discussion of this is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, appropriate food management strategies already exist. Among these are indigenous hunting and farming practices, permaculture, sustainable smallholdings, organic cooperatives, community food gardens and transition projects. Ideally, sustainable food management ought to be led by a collaboration between leaders in these areas and indigenous communities. For discussions on hunting, see Paul Nadasdy (2007, 2011), Richard Nelson (1983, 2009) and Robert Brightman (1993); for westernised constructions of conservation see Nadasdy (2005), Norwegian anthropologist, Arne Kalland (2009), and Nurit Bird-David (2008).

What it refers to, aside from making children extremely perceptive and very good listeners, is that the San have treaties (or contracts) with the lions. The lions eat the cattle, not the Bushmen, and that is a *conscious agreement* that they have come to (Young, J. 2015). Such agreements are not just a matter of loving nature or protecting the environment, but actually invoking those relationships which maintain kinship with Earth, and being responsible for maintaining these relations. This is good manners, or what Young calls ‘jungle etiquette’.²⁵⁹

The Kogi Mamas also make ‘payments’ in order to keep the balance with nature, otherwise conceived of as ‘trades’, based on reciprocity. As is taught by the Kogi Mamas, here, instructing a child:

In the time of the ancestors they made offerings to the Mother here, so now give your offerings to her, concentrate, think that this is food for her in *aluna*, this is her meat, her vegetables, firewood. Concentrate hard and give your offering. Think too of the Mothers of the trees, of the birds, of the waters, and offer them your tribute. First do your offering on the left side, then do your offering on the right side, concentrate there on the houses of the Mothers of birds, trees, the waters, farms and cane fields. Think of nothing else, concentrate hard, making your offering – not to one alone, but to all the Mothers (in Ereira 1992, p. 203).

The maintenance of right and respectful relationships is a foundational principle within ecologically-minded communities and is considered a basis for living in balance, without which humans cannot live well. Living well means living by particular Laws, making treaties, and abiding by established, tested, and codified practices.

5.2 Ropes, Strings, and Relations

The Lakota concept of *Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ*, which means ‘we are all related’ (in Cajete 2015); Dennis Martinez’ concept of *kincentricity* (2008); and, Thich Nhat Hahn’s notion of *interbeing* (in Wahl 2016), all point to the centrality of relationships for participation with/in the living consciousness of Earth. *Ella* and *aluna* are names which refer to the ground of being or Earth/cosmos with/in which these relationships occur.

²⁵⁹ The terms of relationship in the San Bushmen universe are expressed as ropes (or strings, cords, chains, lines, and ropes of light). In addition, the San talk of arrows and nails, which are condensations of ‘the Big God’s power’ (Keeney and Hill 2003, p. 33).

As should be well evident within this chapter, when indigenous and traditional peoples insist that relationship is central to every aspect of their lives, this is not a belief.²⁶⁰ Accounts of a traditional or indigenous ecologically-centred way of being reference relationships as the central organising principle; however, non-indigenous scholars rarely link this to an explanation of what this means, or how intra-action occurs. Indigenous scholars who *do* offer explanation are often misinterpreted and misunderstood. Viola Cordova, bemusing over non-indigenous descriptions of indigenous ideas, writes:

Where does the human being fit into the sacred universe, and how? We are all familiar with the statement credited to Native Americans, that we believe that ‘all things are related.’ We seldom hear about what that ‘relatedness’ entails (Cordova and Moore 2007, p. 230)

Perhaps a good introduction to relatedness can be made by way of the San Bushmen, who provide a language and process for making relationship. As Jon Young recounts:

If one day I see a small bird and recognize it, a thin thread will form between me and that bird. If I just see it but don’t really *recognize* it, there is no thin thread. If I go out tomorrow and see and really recognize that same individual small bird again, the thread will thicken and strengthen just a little. Every time I see and recognize that bird, the thread strengthens. Eventually it will grow into a string, then a cord, and finally a rope. This is what it means to be a Bushman. We make ropes with all aspects of the creation in this way (Young, J. and Gardoqui 2012, pp. 180-181).²⁶¹

Making ropes and relationships are useful ways to language the processes of weaving strong connections between all those who are kin to a place. Furthermore, for the San Bushmen, as with many other communities, making these ropes (*especially* with birds) will keep you alive.

Birds see everything and, in Young’s words, ‘talk about everything’: “The prey species listen to the birds. The predator species also listen to the birds” (p. 107). Indigenous use of bird communication is far beyond what Young calls ‘modern western scientists’ could possibly

²⁶⁰ As Thurman Lee Hester Jr. observes: “Acceptance, faith – *belief* is at the core of the Christian religion and, not surprisingly, at the core of Euro-American philosophy. Just think about how you would characterize different philosophical schools, or different figures in the Euro-American philosophical tradition. This school believed this. . . , the central tenets of that school were. . . , this famed philosopher thought that. . . Beliefs, beliefs, beliefs” (2004b, p. 264).

²⁶¹ To this quote, Jon Young adds: “Eons ago, *Homo sapiens* were just as alert and aware as all other creatures, and for the same reason. They needed to be. Now we don’t need to be—or *do we, but just don’t understand this anymore?* Our sensory equipment and brains are still designed for this awareness. These instincts are still in each of us, just buried. . .” (Young, J. and Gardoqui 2012, pp. 180-181)

comprehend. San-like recognition of the birds and other animals is the result of a lifetime spent in absolute emplaced awareness of the totality of relationships, attuned by a community based in thousands of years of cultural inheritance. Young is not overstating the case here. He thinks that, after decades of studying indigenous and traditional models, the San have perfected the art of living in place as applicable to every conceivable sphere of social life and life stage (2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2016a; 2016b ; 2016c, 2017). If born into a traditional community, San Bushmen come-to-know deep nature-connection: profoundly, in relationship, from birth.

Ojiwbe Anishinaabe, Keweenaw Bay scholar, Adam Arola (2011), conveys a philosophical position on coming-to-know in this way. He writes that the only way to know what a bird is comes from understanding the web of relations within which it participates – in a particular place, at a particular time, and it plays a part in a structure of relations that is larger than the bird itself. ‘Knowing’ the bird is therefore dependent upon knowing its relation to the whole, whilst realising that the relationship is fluid and, thus, ever changing. Knowing the bird is not abstract, nor purely observational, nor endeavoured for purely utilitarian purposes, but is good manners. A bird is kin, with whom a particular place is shared, at a particular time, and with whom an individual is participating in an exchange relationship.

To define them precisely: relationships are reverent, respectful, reciprocal, undertaken responsibly, and in accordance with the principle of redistribution, or sharing. As Chief Oren Lyons has expressed, sharing across the communities of Turtle Island has always been a fundamental part of responsibility for all life. Everybody shared, according to the Law of love for all life (Lyons Jr. and Mann 2016).

As explained by scholar Thomas Norton-Smith (Owl Listening), of the Shawnee Turkey Clan:

The use of familial kinship terms in conceiving of human relationships with nonhuman animals and plants reinforces the notion that human beings have similar sorts of responsibilities to them... to honor and respect the Great Spirit and Mother Earth, and especially their children, as they honor and respect their human family members (2010, p. 91).

In Australian Aboriginal contexts, kinship rules designate these responsibilities for certain peoples, places, and animals. Speaking from his Ngarrindjeri perspective (but extending this to all kin groups), Major Sumner describes the ‘safe zones’ for different species that are prescribed by special affiliations between people and animals. He says that these Laws keep certain people from eating those animals with whom they have these relations. Major Sumner explains as follows:

Some of our people, that animal is theirs... as long as they don't hunt it, that animal is safe in that part of the Country, and that animal finds out and they go back there and they live there. They know they are being looked after. Certain things have to be looked after so we know they survive. That includes plants, that includes water, that includes whatever is in this Country because the Country is a part of us, everything in this Country is a part of us. Everything in this world is a part of us and we're a part of it. And that's the beliefs of indigenous peoples all around the world. The Mother, the Earth, that's our Mother. We go back to that, we come from that and we go back there" (in Global Oneness Project 2009a).²⁶²

In her delineation of an Aboriginal worldview, Kombumerri and Wakka Wakka Elder and philosopher, Mary Graham, relays the findings of many thousands of years of Aboriginal philosophical thought, spanning humans and Law:

Over vast periods of time, Aboriginal people invested most of their creative energy in trying to understand what makes it possible for people to act purposefully, or to put it another way, what is it exactly that makes us human? What Aboriginal people have done is to map the great repertoire of human feeling to such an extent that its continuities with the psychic life of the wider world become apparent; Aboriginal Law is grounded in the perception of a psychic level of natural behaviour, the behaviour of natural entities. Aboriginal people maintain that humans are not alone. They are connected and made by way of relationships with a wide range of beings, and it is thus of prime importance to maintain and strengthen these relationships (1999, p. 111).

Law, which is a way of expressing the idea of *right ways* of being, doing, and engaging with Country (the word for land), is the basis for the organisation of all human practices in traditional Aboriginal contexts. As Graham writes: "Aboriginal Law could be said to be both an action guide to living and a guide to understanding reality itself" (p. 116).

Relationships, as organised by Law, are also expressed on the physical land of the continent itself. Relationships are marked on Country with *strings*, which are also referred to as Songs, Songlines, Dreaming Tracks, and grids, depending on the community.²⁶³ These strings connect

²⁶² Each part of Country is organised into kin groups (variously called language, clan, or skin groups), and these are multivalent, or encompass different kinds of relations. Affinities with land and animal kin are not held singularly, or by relating only to one skin group, but mark connections (and the accompanying responsibilities) in several directions at once.

²⁶³ Many communities prefer to call 'Dreaming' *Creation Time*, such as in Bawaka Country, and some prefer to use *Strings*, instead of Storylines, or Dreaming Tracks (Norris and Harney 2014). I have adopted terms as they appear in sources.

peoples, specific places, time periods, animals, aspects of the landscape (such as rivers and mountains), ancestors, and the Dreaming, or Creation Time. In Bawaka Country, the people say: “Our songlines are like a map, they show where everything goes” (2013, para. 10.2). Mary Graham explains the meaning of *the Land is the Law*:

The land is a sacred entity, not property or real estate; it is the great mother of all humanity. The Dreaming is a combination of meaning (about life and all reality), and an action guide to living. The two most important kinds of relationship in life are, firstly, those between land and people and, secondly, those amongst people themselves, the second being always contingent upon the first... all meaning comes from land (1999, p. 106).²⁶⁴

In such a description, the word *land* is not equivalent with *place* (which does not go far enough), but expresses an ecology of relationships in which everything is very particularly located.²⁶⁵ There are no accidents in the location of everything and, until colonialism, everything remained where it was supposed to be. Songlines ‘show where everything goes’, because they are a story that can be learned, or *read*, on multiple levels; however, Country is harder to read right in the wake of the white people.²⁶⁶

The Law of the universe that is expressly formulated for Earth sets the protocols (or conduct rules) that guide human tracks. It is coded (literally) into the Milky Way, and governs all relationships since the time that humans committed to ‘be Law people’ (Mowaljarlai and Malnic 1993, p. 151).

²⁶⁴ The late anthropologist, W.E.H. Stanner, in his 1968 Boyer Lecture, *After the Dreaming*, stated: “No English words are good enough to give a sense of the links between an Aboriginal group and its homeland... our word ‘land’ is too spare and meagre... A different tradition leaves us tongueless and earless towards this other world of meaning and significance” (1968, pp. 47-49).

²⁶⁵ Chris Daniels, a scholar of religion whose work intellectually parallels the aims of this thesis, has argued that scholars tend to put too much emphasis on place specificity, which is not the ‘whole story’. Place specificity is critical to indigenous and traditional relationships with land, however he says that land is not just ‘place’ but all of it: how you connect to the land, the complete ecology of relations that includes ancestors, and origin stories, and language, and personal relationships with specific beings who are also emplaced in that land. He suggests that the difference in the understanding of ‘person’ is critical as persons are created through relating, and are persons *because* of this relating. Daniels argues that an ecologically oriented civilisation will have to come from this core connection with land, based on guidance as to how to respectfully do this on the land we are with *now* (Daniels, C. and Daniels 2016).

²⁶⁶ Aboriginal Australians have been engaged in battles to protect sacred sites, most notably in the North-West, for many years; however, significant numbers of sacred sites have already been disrespected or entirely destroyed. Like in Turtle Island, there are also many people who have lost their connection with the Old Ways through the legacies of colonialism and its ongoing effects.

Therefore, the song cycles that follow the strings are terrestrial and celestial maps, mnemonically encoded into Country itself (see Norris and Harney 2014).²⁶⁷

Country is the nexus of the spiritual, ecological and language zones that coalesce into multiple focal points for the sentient expression of a maternal Earth. Country is specific to self, kin, and community, but Country(s) interlock, in that the strings are gridded over all of Australia. For Aboriginal people, as articulated by scholar Vicki Grieves, “each of the lines represents the law or knowledge that prescribes these connections and provides the blueprint for ensuring that they continue” (2009, p. 200). These relations are further woven together by birth, ritual incorporation into the community within which the new person will find their social identity, the ongoing maintenance of relationships, marriage, and a cycle of ceremonies by which the lines of connection are reinforced and worked upon.

It is by way of these relations that a person is defined as more than themselves. The second precept that Mary Graham considers foundational to an Aboriginal worldview is: *you are not alone in the world* (1999, p. 105). This is a relational expression of a kinship system that extends into, and yet *beyond*, what westernised peoples might see as the physical limits of Country. Graham calls this sacred web of connections a ‘psychic level’ of behaviour that is common among all natural entities, as grounded by a connection in common with the land (p. 111).

Humans are not alone, because they are made by way of relations with a range of beings. In Aboriginal communities, as Graham explains, there are no discrete individuals: “a person finds their individuality within the group. To behave as if you are a discrete entity or a conscious isolate is to limit yourself to being an observer in an observed world” (p. 106).²⁶⁸ Notice that, in Australia (as also expressed across Turtle Island, through Indonesia, and in multiple African nations), it is the *relation*

²⁶⁷ In subcontinental India, there is a similar idea of an energy grid covering the body of the Mother (India), which is connected by human pilgrimages from one *tirtha* (crossing point, or special site) to another, as a part of ritual practice. As such, the entire body of India is overlaid with invisible maps which co-opt mythology, divinity and reinforcement via pilgrimage to create a living geography of sacred proportions (see Eck 1981, 1982). Tamil local histories refer to a time when South India and Australia were connected by less water, and the peoples went back and forth. Aboriginal Australian histories also refer to a time ‘before the Ice Age came’ when the land was bigger (Mowaljarlai and Malnic 1993).

²⁶⁸ As Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, a Ngangikurungkurr-Catholic Elder of Nauiyu Country, Northern Territory, puts it: “all persons matter” (1988, p. 9). She is responsible for offering the concept and practice of *dadirri* (deep listening), akin to a notion of contemplation and quietness, for peaceful healing engagements with the peoples of Australia (see Atkinson 2002; Roussos 2017).

that makes the person, and not the other way around. Commenting on the difference between Aboriginal and westernised worldviews, Graham writes:

[The sacred] resides in the relationship between the human spirit and the natural life force. When there is a breach between the two, or rather, when the link between the two is weakened, then a human being becomes a totally individuated self. . . loneliness and alienation envelop the individual. . . the discrete individual then has to arm itself not just literally against other discrete individuals, but against its environment (pp. 105-110).

It is the relationship, then, or perhaps the ever-present *possibility* for a relationship with all other things *as conscious and in-relation*, that is critical to understanding. Country is saturated with life, some of whom are people, and all of whom are in relationship.

Aboriginal Law denotes the rules for the total system of relations, based on traditions established by living and spiritual ancestors – within Country, and all life Country holds. Law, Country, and Dreaming (the ground and origin of being, or the Creation Time that is also happening now), convey a worldview that has, at its heart, an ethic of *how to be in the world*.²⁶⁹ All aspects of it form a living system of conscious interactions between interrelated parts of a whole.

In the Sierra Nevada, or the Heart of the World, as the Mamas have said:

Long ago the Law was revealed to us. It came to us with a *cabo*, a sentinel, and a wall around it, so we would not leave it. . . We must hold on to the Law and be loyal to it. We do not set one man against another, we do not struggle against each other, we share one bench, and that is why we remain undefeated. The community is the foundation, and we build on that. If we forget, then yes, the world will fall (in Ereira 1992, p. 199).

Law, as expressed by *aluna*, guides all aspects of Kogi life and prescribes not only conduct for human lives, but direct guidance as to how to interact with the living world. Understanding that what happens in one aspect of *aluna* (or a specific place) has an effect somewhere else – precisely because it

²⁶⁹ Dreaming is an English word that tries to encapsulate the Aboriginal ground and essence of Creation Time, and yet is much more than this. Dreaming is the origin and reference for cultural practice. Humans interact with it by way of extending an individual ‘mind’ outwards *into* the land; that is, into the maternal Earth who is an ongoing expression of Creation Time and all the ancestral beings who also extend into Country from that everywhen. Wade Davis writes: “To walk the Songlines is to become part of the ongoing creation of the world. . . everything on Earth is held together by the Songlines, everything is subordinate to the Dreaming. . . Every landmark is wedded to a memory of its origins and yet always being born. Every animal and object resonates with the pulse of an ancient event, while still being dreamed into being” (2001, p. 164).

is all connected). They argue that this is the key to healing the world. Humans keep the balance because humans are the custodians of Earth. As in Australian contexts, the Mamas place great emphasis on special places that are sacred to maintaining life, animals and plants in particular. The Mamas say that all living things have their ‘root’ that must be protected (in Ereira 2012).

The Mamas also trace a grid of lines and they call this Shikaka (the Black Line, or Thread) who connects all key places, or *esuamas*, in the Sierra, linking coast to glaciated mountaintops. As the Mamas put it:

We, the Mamas, know that there are special sites and they are threaded together. We’re explaining this to our brothers across the sea so we can work with them and show the connection between places. . . Shikaka is the Black Thread. Shi means thread. It connects everything. Important sites along the Line on the coast are connected to *esuamas* in the mountain. We collect materials here on the shore to make payments in the mountains and we bring materials from the mountain to make payments down here. . . [Ereira speaks] *Esuama* means place of authority, the Kogi believe that’s how Nature operates. *Esuamas* in the mountains have direct linkage to places on the shore (in Ereira 2012).

An *esuama* is a place the Mamas can connect, concentrate, and thus, establish how and where to make payments to ‘keep the balance’ of nature. The *payments* they make, as they trace the line, are an expression of reciprocal relations and maintaining responsibilities, and represent a set of obligations or negotiations:

In the days of our ancestors, we made payments at the special sites here. But now they are destroying these sites. This lagoon was larger. It is drying out bit by bit. It must not be damaged further. We have walked for a long time. We stop here. Now what do we do? We make a payment. They might not believe us. That is why we are walking along the line making payments at all the sites connecting with the mountain in *aluna*. They must see us do this (in Ereira 2012).

Providence is assured by the maintenance of protocols, by adhering to Law, by making payments to keep the balance.²⁷⁰ Such obligations (as with the San) can also appear as ‘treaties’ or covenants. As

²⁷⁰ As expressed by Skagit Elder, Tagweseblu Vi Hilbert: “So many people are unaware of the importance of the experience of spirit. Knowledge comes to us in many forms, not only in my culture. . . Spirit is so abstract that when people can’t see it, feel it, or touch it, they cannot believe it. You cannot overcome that kind of doubt. . . Sadness comes to me when, because of greed, the spirit is left outside the door. Giving is a joy. The greedy world doesn’t know that this joy exists. . . They don’t know that the spirit is the receiver when you give anything to anyone. You are not giving to that person or that thing; you

David Mowaljarlai wrote in a story of how *Wunnan*, or marriage Law, came to be: “Very sorry, but we got law now. We had to get this thing, a covenant to put agreement on, to make Wunnan a law” (1993, p. 151).²⁷¹

Consider an example from traditional medicine that is based on these prescriptions. When a human is afflicted with an illness, the first principle of traditional medicine is to interrogate the relationships for disharmony, with guidance from Earth allies (such as non-physical elements, ancestors, spirits, beings, other animals, plants, places, and various other expressions of conscious Earth) where required. The second principle is to then medicate by way of invoking appropriate plant and spirit relationships, with payments or exchanges made where appropriate.²⁷² The healer is essentially an *ecological* intermediary, not a ‘supernatural’ or ‘mystical’ figure, although this distinction relies on the comprehension of a fully relational, sentient Earth.

Choctaw scholar, Laurie Anne Whitt, combines examples from Mae Tso, Diné Elder and healer from Mosquito Springs, Arizona, and Chief Tekaronianeken Jake Swamp, to highlight the reciprocal nature of proper medical practice. The plants are specific to an individual, not general medicine, and cannot be used for anything else. Citing Swamp, Whitt writes: “You don’t just go out there and pluck it out by its roots and walk away” (in Whitt 2004, p. 196). The healer takes no more and no less than what is needed and engages with the spirit of energy of the plant in the form of exchange. As Whitt highlights:

A traditional healer will typically offer tobacco to the plants being collected. The plant will be addressed and thanked for being there, for allowing itself to be used in healing. Only certain plants

are giving to spirit and you are rewarded in that. You learn to be aware that this life is a reward from spirit. The door opens, and you open into something that you have earned. This is the gift. It is so simple” (in Simms 2009, pp. 298-299).

²⁷¹ A few other examples, initiated by westernised people, come to mind here. Michael Roads, who lives in Australia, details how he learned to protect his crops from wallabies by making a treaty with them (1987), and Derrick Jensen writes of a bargain he made with coyotes in exchange for chickens (2004a). Similar accounts have come from the Findhorn Community in Scotland, and at the Auroville Community in India, and I have had success with trading birds (formerly hunted by two of our four cats), for flies and moths, requiring a separate treaty with the insects to make up for it. Watching a neighbour wipe out green looper caterpillars on his five tomato plants (which barely fruited), whilst we happily shared our single abundant plant (from the same batch of seedlings) with the caterpillars, was also a lesson in how we might rethink the concept of ‘pests’.

²⁷² As argued by Apache scholar, Doreen Martinez, the consequence of compartmentalised western medicine is that an inseparable philosophy of medicine is labelled primitive: “A community’s level of development, ‘ways of knowing’ and ‘versions of reality’ were a colonizer’s primary tool in determining treatment, usefulness, and even death, and the rationalization of these actions” (2003, p. 24).

will be culled, at certain stages in their life cycles, at certain times of the year and of the day (2004, p. 196).

Chief Irving Powless Jr. also relays some context for this, detailing how he was given the name of Tsa'degaih Wade² of the Wolf Clan in ceremony:

whenever I go into the words, all the trees know who I am, all the plants know who I am, and all the animals know who I am, because I was introduced at this ceremony to the world. So if I get sick and I need a medicine, they go to the medicine. And they say to the medicine, 'You are now going to fulfill your duties as a medicine and you're going to Tsa'degaih Wade² to help him to get better.' The plant knows exactly where it's going and to whom because of the ceremony I had when I was given my name. And because of this, I have noticed that when I leave to go somewhere... the crows tell everybody that I am outside of the house and I am going somewhere..." (2016, p. 84).

The human body, when envisaged as a site of relationships, is as creative a space as any other. Illness or disharmony is not thought of as a purely physical condition; rather, it is conceived of as possessing energetic, emotional, and relational dimensions.²⁷³ Illnesses, and medicines, are *personal*.

The physical condition, however pronounced, is the symptom of disharmonious relationships both inside, and outside, of the physical body, and bringing these back into balance is the overarching goal of all traditional medical practice.²⁷⁴ This is the *ecological* foundation for traditional Chinese medicines based on *qi*, and for the knowledge of the *auahuasqueros*, *wi'ca'sa wakan*, healers, shamans, *curanderismos*, and others who co-opt Earth, spirit, and plant medicines.

²⁷³ For an attempt to overcome the persistent academic biases against accepting the work of *ngangkari* (traditional healers) of Australia, see the work of Australian anthropologist, Kim McCaul (2008).

²⁷⁴ Note: this does not entail 'blaming' humans for creating their own illnesses: such an idea only makes sense in a westernised framework (and is generally met with a rejoinder similar to 'so, why do *children* get cancer then?') Finding the sources of disharmony involves navigating treaties between humans and Earth, as well as accepting responsibility (personal and familial) for adding to, or being ignorant of, disharmonious conditions. Such models also involve a different conception of death, and practitioners accept the inevitability of death in certain circumstances. Having said this, there is no guesswork in traditional medicine – the system works. For some further discussion of these medical principles across various traditions see the work of David Tacey (2013), Brian Broom (1997, 2007; Broom and Joyce 2013), Ted Kaptchuk (2000), Joanne Mulcahy (2001), Kim Anderson and D. Memee Lavell-Harvard (2014), Robbie Davis-Floyd (Davis-Floyd and Arvidson 1997; Davis-Floyd and Sargent 1997), Edith Turner (1996, 2006b, 2006c), and Stephen Harrod Buhner (2002, 2004, 2006), among others (Achterberg 1985, 1990, 2002; Ausubel and Harpignies 2004a, 2004b; Buzzell and Chalquist 2009; Clinebell 1996; Desjarlais 1992; Echeverri 2005; Gordon 1988; Harris and Robb 2012; Katz, R. 1982; Katz, R. *et al.* 1997; Millard 2013; Nelson, M.K. 2008b; Stone and Barlow 2005; Yu 2009).

Traditional ideas of leadership are also based on a balance between relationship and felt responsibilities.²⁷⁵ A ‘chief’ (as settlers naïvely labelled tribal leaders in the Americas) is not a person who leads ‘from above’, but one who takes responsibility for the wellbeing of the whole community. With greater power comes greater responsibility, and the same is true of interactions with Earth. Leading from behind, or below, in a supportive role, is an expression of maternal or paternal love and responsibility, which demonstrates the centrality of kinship principles in the characterisation of traditional leadership (Lyons Jr. and Mann 2016). This, too, involves treaties, exchanges, and actions that will maintain balance.

In addition, the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm, self and Earth, and payment or debt, extends to all relationships. For example, to draw upon Jon Young’s work, the ropes made with *one* member of a species alters your relationships with the rest of the species (2016c). As the Mamas express in many different ways, what happens *here* affects what happens *over there*. It is a whole system, and there is no limit on how deep that insight goes: what happens with *this* lion has an effect on relations with all *those* lions, or bees, or fish, and so forth. Payments not made *here* created a debt *over there*. Law is the organising principle for the rules pertaining to all such relationships.

Between human communities oriented by Law, disagreements are dissolved through some kind of payment or exchange, through marriage to make kin, through treaties, trades, and gifts. Major Sumner, speaking in an Aboriginal context, says that different groups got along for the reason that people recognised they *needed* one another. As he says: “We didn’t go into another person’s land and walk into that and take over, we had respect for each other” (Global Oneness Project 2009a). In arrangements between humans and animals, as evidenced by the San, the solution is not so different: a cow in exchange for a human keeps the human alive, and the lion fed.

In essence (and this appears in every account of traditional hunting lore that I have ever read), relationships of respect entail gratitude and reciprocity, that is, something is offered in return for what is given, often prayer or gratitude or another offering of some particular kind (see Brightman 1993; Nadasdy 2007; Nelson, R.K. 1983). These processes conform to Law.²⁷⁶ The San ask respectfully for an animal to offer themselves for food, and wait for one to oblige them – they eat well. Traditional

²⁷⁵ For a summary of the role of Elder leadership in education as a living curriculum, see the graduate work of Opaskwayak Cree Nation woman, Alannah Earl Young (1990).

²⁷⁶ The bases for *halāl* حلال and *haram* حرام in Islam, and *kashrut* כַּשְׁרוּת (kosher) in Judiac practices are not particularly dissimilar.

whale hunters in the Arctic region make a similar and sacred exchange, as they did in old Japan before whaling was commercialised and Japan became modern.²⁷⁷ This reverent form of request and exchange (often with customary protocols, ceremony, or ritual), and the gratitude that accompanies it, is the origin for saying grace before a meal or giving thanks for a good harvest.

In outlining what he calls the procedural conception of truth, Thomas Norton-Smith writes that the principle overarching goal in Turtle Island thought is walking the right road, without exception, *respectfully*: “where all of our actions and performances in achieving the goal are mindful of our proper place in a web of normative relationships with human and nonhuman persons” (2010, p. 64). To do otherwise, would be to live with what Faith Spotted Eagle called the ‘settler mind’ – to be like westernised people (in Eyers 2015).

As Norton-Smith then suggests, a *moral universe* is, in fact, a normative one. This universe then commands a perspective that “does not look at the world as an inert resource and ask, ‘How can I predict, manage, or defeat this?’ [but instead] sees a living community in which human beings participate and asks, ‘How should I behave?’” (2010, p. 49). He borrows his framing of a moral universe from Vine Deloria Jr., who argued that nothing in this universe has incidental meaning: there *is* a proper way to live, and there are no coincidences. As Deloria wrote:

The wise person will realize his or her own limitations and act with some degree of humility until he or she has sufficient knowledge to act with confidence. Every bit of information must be related to the general framework of moral interpretation as it is personal to them and their community. No body of knowledge exists for its own sake outside the moral framework of understanding. We are, in the truest sense possible, creators or co-creators with the higher powers, and what we do has immediate importance for the rest of the universe (Deloria Jr. *et al.* 1999, p. 46).

Norton-Smith states that there are no inconsequential or morally neutral actions in an Indian universe. The utility of knowledge and action is judged by whether something is good to know, or an action is directed toward a proper path to travel (2010, p. 61). To elaborate on this theme further,

²⁷⁷ On whaling, I draw on research and teaching experience. The deep cultural affinities Japanese peoples have with whales and their hard-won wishes to continue whaling, despite the fact that very few modern Japanese consume whale, has a basis that is very similar to Arctic cultural practices. Traditional whaling in the Arctic has a sacred reference point, whale are kin, who sometimes sacrifice themselves for the people. Until this commonality with older whaling cultures is reckoned with and understood, it is likely that conversations about Japanese whaling, on both sides, will continue in parallel and without resolution.

consider the Olekwo'l (Yurok) perspective, as framed with useful cosmological context and penned by the late anthropologist, Thomas Buckley:

The Universe, *wesonah*, is energy. It moves against itself and creates waves and these waves go through everything. . . . The Universe incorporates, manifests, is one with, the Law, *tle*, and everything occurring in the world is subject to this Law while expressing it. To guide human beings there are many, many laws – also *tle* – that interpret the (finally unspeakable) Law and it apply it to specific form of rules for conduct. Thus, there is a correct way to behave in every situation, a correct answer to every question; there is truth. . . . the interface between individual and society is specified by culturally defined truth expressed in a legal idiom. The direct study of the Law itself is advanced study. . . . One who has acquired knowledge of many laws and of the Law is *tenohwok*, a ‘well educated one’ . . . (2009, pp. 149-150).

As Cherokee Wolf Clan scholar, Brian Yazzie Burkhart, has also expressed, the cultivation of continual right relations is essential to a good life:

what is right is true and what is true is right: the universe is moral. It is in this way that stories, ceremonies, and prayers speak the truth. All aspects of human expression have something to tell us about the best way for us to live. In this way, they are all philosophy. . . . If it is ‘We’ that is first and not ‘I’, then what counts as the data of experience is quite different. . . . American Indian philosophy teaches us that to step out of [the] circle is to make a step on the wrong road for human beings to walk. It is to forget our relations, to forget what our elders have told us, to forget the stories of our ancestors. It is, ultimately, to forget who we are (2004, pp. 23, 26).

Chief Oren Lyons Jr. summarises this in very clear and direct terms when he says that Nature has *no mercy*, only Law: “There’s no *habeas corpus* in natural law. You either do, or you don’t. If you don’t, you pay. . . . The first peace comes with your mother, Mother Earth” (2013a, pp. 9-11). Human obligations to Earth, and consequences for improper action (as understood by a great number of indigenous and traditional Earthkeepers) are set accordingly.

To borrow the framing of F. David Peat, here: “when a person comes into relationship with certain knowledge he or she is not only transformed by it but must also assume responsibility for it” (1994, p. 65). *Coming-to-knowing* is a journey from innocence (or ignorance) to ever-greater

responsibilities, which balances the power inherent in knowledge and governs the potential for its misuse. Elders, well-versed in Laws, express the wisdom of a whole lifetime of coming-to-knowing.²⁷⁸

The Gamo People in the highlands of Ethiopia also know this. Their customary laws, called *wagas*, dictate the correct management of all human-Earth relations: to maintain everything in balance, which in their communities includes an extensive agricultural base and a very large population. As all *wagas* are interconnected and dependent, a lack of balance puts the entire system at risk (Global Oneness Project 2009b). Payments are made in order to secure balance for necessities, such as harvest protection or yields, enacted through various kinds of exchange, and are made according to the relationships between people and animals. Gamo Elder, Kapo Kansa, expresses the rule in this way:

It is not permitted among Gamoans to take out whatever one likes from the ground. There is a limit. You are taking grasses which you need. You don't destroy others. You are taking trees for your consumption. Not to destroy others. You want to pass a resource on for the coming generation (Global Oneness Project 2009b).

The philosophy that Gamo peoples attach to land resembles the Kogi metaphysic, but by way of an entirely different history, geography, and symbolic architecture. Nonetheless, the extensive agricultural systems that the Gamo employ correlate with the approach Kogi have taken to sustainable land management. Settlement in the Gamo territories is at least several thousand years old, as with the Kogi. Both are sustainable and productive, both have supported large populations, and both use Earth protocols based on Law and balance, albeit rendered in different forms.

To return to a common refrain expressed in the Ereira documentaries: *perhaps there is something we might learn from these peoples?*

5.3 Languages with/in Land

Making kin, ropes, or relationships, as a foundation for knowing, only make sense if the means for *coming-to-know* are not limited to isolated human-to-human communications. Land, as *the*

²⁷⁸ In oral traditions, the spoken language and the knowledge of Elders hold the wisdom of the community. As Norton-Smith has noted, writing of the impacts of colonialism on ways of being: “the harshest rigors of removal fell the elders – the repositories of tribal knowledge and culture – many of whom did not survive. It would be as if we all forgot how to read and write, or [had our eyeglasses shattered]” (2010, p. 13). Critical intervention to prevent the extinction of indigenous and traditional languages is a fundamental aspect of securing indigenous futurity. The necessity of language for traditional knowledge of place, as acquired over generations of residence in a particular landscape, cannot be underestimated.

foundation for relationships, is mapped with lines of connection and multivalent languages, only some of which are verbal.

Tom Soloway Pinkson, an ally and educator speaking of Wixáritari (Huichol) traditional understandings of land, captures the multivalent nature of emplaced language exceptionally well:

The original language of the people indigenous to a specific area on Mother Earth's body grows directly out of the land itself. The vibratory essence of the natural forces in a given area grow upward from the... land and surrounding elements to form the plant life and vegetation... indigenous people live, eat, and breathe these natural elements. They die back into them and new generations birth back out again in the passage of generations. The land literally teaches them how to live in harmony with it... They take it into their bodies. It 'speaks' to them. Then it comes out of their mouths as language. They speak the vibrations of that land. Their language and creation myths are embodied vehicles for the wisdom of that place. [I] now understand why maintaining the original language of indigenous people is important not just to their survival but to all of humanity. Original languages contain within their vibratory structure the operating rules for how to live in their home territory in a harmonious manner. The indigenous language is a *nierica* [gateway] by which to access the intelligence of place. Lose the language and you lose its vital instructions about right relationship (1997, p. 127).

The first level of language, or the spoken language of a people of a place, is expressed in the different dialects of emplaced language groups. As discussed in chapter three, indigenous and traditional languages are structured very differently to English, with root words signifying concepts on multiple reference levels.²⁷⁹ Consider this description of James Bay Cree root words and meaning by the anthropologist, Colin Scott:

In Cree, there is no word corresponding to our term 'nature.' There is a word *pimaatisiwin* (life), which includes human as well as animal 'persons.' The word for 'person,' *iyyiyuu*, can be glossed as 'he lives.' Humans, animals, spirits, and several geophysical agents are perceived to have qualities of personhood (1996, pp. 72-73).

²⁷⁹ Particularities of relation can be a component of the actual *structure* of language, as explained by Thomas Norton-Smith of his own language: "in the Shawnee world the composition of a group or community – and how one stands with respect to the group – is critically important enough to be... reinforced by two first-person plural pronouns" (2010, p. 8). This confuses translation when attempts are made to render, in the English language, complexities that English does not allow for. For an excellent discussion of this, see the essay by Seminole philosopher, Anne Waters, in her volume on Native American philosophy (2004b).

English always needs more words to explain these ideas, if indeed they can be articulated in English at all.

Pimaatisiwin, in Scott's ethnography, was translated by one Cree man as 'continuous birth,' with consciousness (*umituunaaichikanich*) at its threshold, but glossed as mind, heart, thought, and feeling, when in English translation (p. 73). Conveying beautifully the dimensions of Okanagan words, Jeannette Armstrong relays the concept of the human *body* in her language: "Okanagans teach that the body is the Earth itself. . . Our word for body literally means 'the land-dreaming capacity'" (1995, p. 321).

Furthermore, the activity of language is stressed over the objectivity of things, so there is verb (rather than noun) action at the centre. Writing of Diné ontology, Vincent Crapanzano (also an anthropologist) describes the relation between language and time, followed by the expression of this concept in the very construction of the language:

[time is not] a pathway along which one moves but a context in which things come to pass. The flowering of a plant, the birth of a horse, the maturation of a tree, the building of a home, all have their own time surrounding them and are not measured off against each other on a single scale. . . Where English stresses the verb 'to be', the Navajo stress the verb 'to go' – *naaghaii*. . . which refers to continually going about and returning. The prefix *naa-* of this verb form stresses repetition, continuation, and revolution. . . The active verbs report events. . . movement, or movings. . . These are [related] to mode and aspect – in terms of completion or incompleteness of movement, of its continuous or discontinuous nature (2004, pp. 33-36).

This means that instead of a noun (Crapanzano uses the example of a screwdriver), an object has multiple names related to its various *uses*. Relationally, what we would call a screwdriver is known and named as a contextualised item, as processually oriented, and in accordance with its location. In other words, the object is understood *relationally*. A screwdriver cannot exist as a named individual item, but rather, it has a fluid identity as based on its use in a particular time and place, by a particular person. It is a part of the context in which things come to pass. As Norton-Smith has argued: "different words make different worlds" (2010, p. 9).

The second level of language is something akin to what Jon Young is describing when, as a naturalist, he talks about bird language. This is the deep observational and informative aspect of language that conforms to Adam Arola's description of coming-to-know a bird, or Viola Cordova's descriptions of the practical aspects of emplaced observation. Deborah Bird Rose notes a number of 'tells' in her work with Northern Territory peoples in Australia. These 'tells' all depend upon paying

attention to that which is visually or habitually cued, such as the march flies telling that the crocodiles are laying their eggs, or the cicada song telling that the figs are ripe and the turtles are fat (2013, p. 103). Rose writes that, in her view:

creature-languages draw the full sensorium into the communicative matrix of country. . . Humans enhance their intelligences not by stepping out of the system and trying to control it, but by enmeshing themselves ever more knowledgeably into the creature-languages of country (2013, p. 104).

Ecophilosopher, David Abram, articulating his perspective on the limits that are often arbitrarily ascribed to human senses, suggests that the deep sensorial participation in nature that is the foundation for even deeper, intuitive, communication is part of our species-being:

For the largest part of our species' existence, humans have negotiated relationships with every aspect of the sensuous surroundings, exchanging possibilities with every flapping form, with each textured surface and shivering entity that we happened to focus upon. All could speak, articulating in gesture and whistle and sigh a shifting web of meanings. . . And from all these relationships our collective sensibilities were nourished (1996, p. ix).

Abram calls this our 'human biospheric sentience', as created from the 'age-old reciprocity' that humans have with a many-voiced landscape.

The dimensions of Yup'ik interactions with *ella* are similarly thought, in that the language of interaction with *ella* and the wisdom drawn from *ella* is intensely practical. Like the San interactions with birds and other animals, knowledge of the Arctic keeps you alive. *Qanruyutet*, or wise words, are the result of paying close attention to every aspect of the living world, with all senses attuned to *ella* (in Fienup-Riordan and Rearden 2012, pp. 28-31). The Yolŋu way of being in the world conforms to the same principles, and this may well be true right across Aboriginal lands. Traditional and indigenous ecological understandings are based upon paying close attention.

The third level of emplaced language is the kind that happens when Earth *speaks*. Dialogue, by intuitive means, can occur directly, with other living beings, of weather, mountains, spirits, non-human beings and ancestors, depending on the cosmology that sets the cast for the conversation. That language is something shared with all beings (not solely amongst humans) and is a near universal assertion across communities (historical and contemporary) who recognise Earth sentience and live with/in more-than-human worlds.

In proposing Earth language as a possibility, I have reached the limit point of westernised cosmologies: this is usually where ascriptions of ‘religion’ and ‘culture’ take over in scholarly analyses. As David Abram writes, when referring to the dominance of particular ideas: “Language is a human property, suitable for communication with other persons. We talk to people; we do not talk to the ground underfoot” (2010, p. 174). The idea of receiving communication directly, from outside the self, and as a by-product of a relationship that does not rely on physical linguistic interactions with other humans, is not an everyday ontological possibility in the westernised worldview, and is generally *discarded* as a source of knowledge.

Reading Abram, it is clear that he is referring (somewhat tongue-in-cheek) to the conservative social norm which upholds the division between sentience and non-sentience, however the norm has a powerful hold on scholarship. This is precisely how ethnographies of indigenous and traditional peoples become seen as ‘stories’ and ‘accounts’ that are not assessed as ‘true’ or ‘false’, but truth claims that are begrudgingly theorised as ‘true for them’ or ‘true enough’.²⁸⁰

Conversely, following Deloria Jr., an indigenous method for coming to know leaves nothing out. All sources of knowing (and all persons that can be known) are potentially able to communicate useful information. As Arola writes on how knowledge will appear:

[An indigenous comportment] must perpetually attend to the fact that the manner in which it shows itself will be multifarious and unpredictable. Any attempt to fully conceptualize how things will appear to us prior to our experience of them will place undue limits on the presencing of things (2011, p. 557).

In plain terms, you cannot learn from anyone or anything if you are not open to the possibility that it has the ability to teach you. In a worldview that is shared in concept (if not strictly in detail), across indigenous worldviews, humans are not the only ones who are acting on/in the world, nor the only one’s ‘telling’.

²⁸⁰ The British psychologist, Keith Hearne, captures the tone of sentiments which reveal this bias: “Educated people know that premonitions are impossible. Now that science has satisfactorily answered so many questions concerning nature and the universe, and indeed has got us to the moon, why should we bother with these irritating accounts of people claiming to know what will happen in the future? . . . we musn’t encourage these misguided people. All right, my aunt Jane said she knew that uncle Joe was going to die in that freak accident, but that must have been a coincidence. Naturally, I don’t discuss premonitions with colleagues, they’d think I was insane. I would consider anyone mad who talked to me on the subject in a less than critical fashion” (1989, p. 128).

Luc Ferry (our commentator on the weevil case in chapter three), suggested that the ‘slogan of the century’ would be characterised by either ecology, or barbarism (1995). To recall the definition given by Nicholson (1999), a barbarian, according to the ancient Egyptians, Chinese, and Greeks, is a term of reference for *those who did not know the language*. Although I am sure the combination of ideas here in no way resembles those places that Ferry or Nicholson would expect to find their words, they do set the scene beautifully for contrasting westernised biases with indigenous ways of language and being. If we are to take Ferry’s words as prophetic, then in order to choose *ecology* we will need to *learn the languages*.

5.4 Being Told On Your Mind

Ilarion Mercurieff, in one of his oft-repeated stories, tells of his quest (as a young man) to recover the lost arts of mask making for his peoples. He approached an Elder for directions and was instructed to ‘drop his mind’ by the ocean and search (or rather, wait) for the information he sought (2012). Two hundred masks later, this knowledge is once again available to his community. When you drop the mind, as Mercurieff phrases it, knowledge can be directly received, or spoken ‘in your head’.²⁸¹ He describes this way of being in the world as one of the oldest of earth practices. The original language of Earth has been described in traditional lore as telepathic and inclusive of all other living beings, as indicated by environmental educator, Richard Heinberg: “The Hopi, for example, say that the First People ‘felt as one and understood one another without talking’” (1989, p. 65).

Chief Irving Powless Jr., recalls a conversation with a longhouse Elder in which he asked where they got their songs. The Elder replied: “The animals gave them to us. A long time ago we used to speak with the animals” (2016, p. 75). Although he can recall a story of his father conversing with a

²⁸¹ Mercurieff had decided at six years old that he wanted to be like a bird: “I was allowed to walk the six miles from the village out to the bird cliffs, even as a very young child. There, I could be in the midst of the tens of thousands of migratory seabirds that came to the island to breed. . . I noticed how thousands of birds darted diagonally, up and down, left to right and right to left, flying at different speeds and in different directions simultaneously without ever even clipping another’s wing. In my six-year-old mind, I decided that the only difference between those birds and myself was that they drew upon a vast field of awareness rather than an intellectual thought process (although I did not use such words at the time). I wanted to be like a bird, so, after months of effort, I developed the capacity to maintain this state of ‘awareness without thinking’ for several hours at a time. That was when the magic happened: I could sense many things I’d never experienced before, and my world expanded enormously. From then on, I understood how Unangan people received their spiritual instructions for living, principles that had helped them sustain their communities for thousands of years. . . Such spiritual principles for living did not come from logic or thought but from a much deeper source of wisdom, which our Unangan culture referred to as the ‘heart’ . . . Centering oneself there results in humble, wise, connected ways of being and acting in the world. . . To access it, you must drop out of the relentless thinking that typically occupies the Western mind” (2017b).

racoon, he laments that the art has been lost. Mercurieff's suggestion is that, whilst we do, indeed, speak different languages, the art of direct perception and more specific intuitive communication with Earth (and each other) *can* be learned in the here and now.²⁸²

The phenomenon of coming-to-know through direct intuitive experience is certainly not verbal, although knowledge becomes symbolised by the mind as it is made sense of. I am not sure that English offers any better way of rendering it. F. David Peat writes that Native views of knowledge regard knowledge as “a living thing that has existence independent of human beings” (1994, p. 67). This knowledge is grounded in Earth and is *a part of Earth*. Whilst knowledge is thought to be potentiated in particular places, it does not necessarily conform to linear time, nor bounded identities.

In an interview with Skagit Elder, Tagweseblu Vi Hilbert, she quipped that her brain ‘holds a lot that she doesn’t know is there’. She says:

You have to realize that I have something in my brain that will come forward if you know enough to ask for it. If someone is skillful in asking, they can get answers out of my head. They and I wait for that to happen. I need someone to press my buttons for me to remember what is implanted in my brain (in Simms 2009, pp. 295-296).

As the Elders know, important knowledge is never really ‘lost’, as it retains an existence outside of the individual self. Its actual location is not exclusively within human beings. Tagweseblu Vi Hilbert has said:

In our culture, a thread of the story will always remain alive, and each person has the capacity to take that thread and reweave that story because it contains all the information and the truth of what had been important. The memory of that existence remains alive because there are threads in each of us, and we can weave them together through story. Goodness and wisdom live because people seven generations back took the time to do what you are doing with me: to call on things that come from the past. I never do anything that is original. These things are part of what has been taught to me. So now bits and pieces are in this interview, and centuries of brave things that people have lived by and shared will be remembered (in Simms 2009, p. 303).

²⁸² Tagweseblu Vi Hilbert said that ‘having spiritual eyes’ to see the spiritual world she talks about is not a gift she personally has, but allows that others do, and that everyone has the capacity to have spiritual eyes (in Simms 2009, p. 301). My understanding, according to the Elders and teachers I have encountered in this research, is that humans, being different, have different strengths. Hearing voices, seeing visions, and other skills are sometimes referred to as ‘special’ gifts, however this is distinguished from everyday human intuitive capacities and the ability to hear Earth and other living beings ‘on your mind’. The idea is that all humans can request and receive guidance, as birthright, which differs from having ‘special gifts’.

Elders suggest that cultural memory is stored in Earth, and is only 'lost' when knowledge holders do not transmit, or are prevented from transmitting, the 'keys' for how to unlock it. Subsequently, a people can forget how to access it. For indigenous and traditional peoples around the world such losses are another legacy of colonialism. In this vein, the Yup'ik Elders have expressed great interest in having their wisdom recorded for those who are becoming progressively estranged from Yup'ik lands and traditions.²⁸³ The severe amnesia of westernised people represents a cautionary tale.²⁸⁴

Peat tells the story of the late Dan Moonhawk Alford, a linguist, anthropologist, and Algonquin-speaking Elder:

[Dan Moonhawk Alford loved] to relate the story of the man who went to a ceremony but could not get a particular song out of his head. In the end it bothered him so much that he told one of the Elders. 'Then why don't you sing it?' the old man said. The song was sung and the old man replied, 'That was Joe's song. He died in 1910. I guess it got kind of lonely waiting around with no-one to sing it.' (1994, p. 68).

These examples illustrate that whilst personhood is individual, there is no strictly defined boundary that determines knowledge as 'private' in the way westernised thought conceives of this. Exclusivist and individualised ideas do not make sense in a sentient universe within which a law of redistribution (or sharing) and reciprocity apply. Not only does this view of knowledge locate cultural memory stores outside of human minds, it also allows for an extension of the senses into other places, other times, and other minds.

In Australia, one of anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose's Aboriginal teachers, Old Jimmy Mangaiyarri, explains how he knows which way to go. He says Earth 'tells' him. When she asks, "How does it tell you?" He answers:

on your mind. Earth got to tell you all thing. Might be say: 'Ah, you leave me. What for you go away? You go over there you get hurt.' You got to go only what this earth tell you to. Where you going to go, you going to go right way. That's the way you got to follow this earth. Tell you everything right way... That's nobody been tell you and me to do that? This earth tell you! In your memory. Well that's the

²⁸³ Ann Fienup-Riordan's ethnographic and linguistic work of (primarily with Alice Rearden) has been engaged by Yup'ik Elders to meet these purposes (1990, 1994, 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2012, 2016; Fienup-Riordan *et al.* 2007; Fienup-Riordan and Kaplan 2007; Fienup-Riordan and Rearden 2012; Fienup-Riordan *et al.* 2005).

²⁸⁴ As Deloria Jr. notes, with concern: "Many Indian people are leaving their culture and traditions in ways they do not suspect. They are developing a schizophrenia. They look at their grandfather, who goes out and talks with birds and coyotes, and they think he is superstitious" (1999, p. 228).

way. You and me can't miss. Do it properly, looking after ourselves. Do the right thing. This earth understand EVERYthing. Think on your memory now! You got that word from this earth (in Rose 2013, p. 105).

Rose is left frustrated by this description, asking: "How do we learn the attention that would enable us to admit earth 'words' into our lives?" The answer I want to give her is that it makes sense when we reconsider *what we are* underneath the veils of westernisation. Dominant notions of consciousness have to be *reversed* in order to understand how this works. To think with this in Yu'pik terms, the upside-down or reverse people (Younger Brother) have to turn things around the right way and see things from a different perspective. To recall what Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) wrote, we need to learn to see with the heart and both eyes. Matthiessen, drawing upon an unnamed Pueblo Elder, relays his words on the matter:

You must learn to look at the world twice. . . First you must bring your eyes together in front so you can see the smoke rising from an ant hill in the sunshine. Nothing should escape your notice. But you must learn to look again, with your eyes at the very edge of what is visible. Now you must see dimly if you wish to see things that are dim – visions, mist, and cloud people. . . animals which hurry past you in the dark. You must learn to look at the world twice if you wish to see all that there is to see (in Matthiessen 2009, p. 139).²⁸⁵

Tagweseblu Vi Hilbert, like Old Jimmy Manngaiyarri, suggests we employ a different kind of *listening*, beyond just 'hearing' words:

When you are hearing, you are not listening with that inner knowing. Your ears hear the sounds, but you are not concentrating with that inner mind. Things can't stay there. . . As a child, nothing is explained to you. The culture did not and does not allow questions. . . You have to be able to listen to the information and know that some day through maturity and realization you will understand it. You have to work on that understanding yourself. . . You have to listen and think about something long enough to gain insight as to why it was important for you to hear it (in Simms 2009, p. 296).²⁸⁶

The idea here is to pay attention to all coexisting levels of sensory perception and language, so as to be always open to the 'tell', and to leave open the possibility for whoever is communicating the message.

²⁸⁵ The source Matthiessen gives for this, which I was unable to find, is James Highwater (1977) *Ritual of the Wind*, New York: Viking, with no pagination given.

²⁸⁶ Tagweseblu Vi Hilbert insists it this is something you learn to do, through practice, with direct instruction: "Nobody can read a book for this knowledge, no matter what insight they have" (in Simms 2009, p. 303).

Wanta Jampijinpa, a Warlpiri Elder and scholar (writing with anthropologist Miles Holmes), describes how the concepts of an Aboriginal worldview are woven together into knowing:

See that tree. It is shedding its bark. No, we didn't tell it to do that. That is just its purpose, the *kuruwarri* [law] for that thing... If a plant is edible that is its *kuruwarri*. But it might also be there to teach *yapa* [aboriginal people] something. Like the seasons; they tell you what to do (2013).

Note that he says 'we were told', and this expression recurs numerous times in indigenous and traditional accounts of how knowing happens when it is not limited by assumptions regarding the nature of the universe. Consider this description of Law by Chief Oren Lyons Jr.:

The spiritual side of the natural world is absolute. Our instructions – and I'm talking about for all human beings – our instructions are to get along. Understand what these laws are. Get along with laws, and support them and work with them. We were told a long time ago that is you do that, life is endless. It just continues on and on in great cycles of regeneration (2013a, p. 9).

Being 'told' how to live by an emissary (human, or otherwise) who details the tenets of Law and conduct (which can be general, or specific to land), is part of the accepted context of many traditional or indigenous knowledge transmission systems. As expressed by Chief John Fire Lame Deer: "You have to listen to all these creatures", he said. "*Listen with your mind*. They have secrets to tell" (1972, pp. 134, emphasis mine). So, how does one explain this layer of language that also happens on the mind, and yet is something more?

As with the San, whom Jon Young (2015) describes as having extraordinary polyphonic hearing and a capacity to pay attention to everything simultaneously, the key to active participation with Earth involves all the senses. Matthiessen compares us with the birds:

A bird establishing its territory memorizes its landscape; it knows where to find food, shelter, water, and how to travel in the dark or in a hurry, and it sees everything that comes and goes; total awareness is the secret of holding the territory... In cultures that are still close to the earth, survival may depend on noticing what is menacing or edible, and the people... [have] awareness of even the most minute change in their surroundings (2009, p. 141).

'All the senses' *includes* intuition. To reiterate Mercurieff's conception of it: "We learn with all of our senses: hearing, feeling, smelling, intuition, gut responses, thinking, emotions, "heart sense," and body signals" (Mercurieff and Roderick 2013, p. 10). Chief Yeye Luisah Teish expresses this in another way:

Intuition is the human extension of the mammalian survival instinct. Animals can smell better than us, see further than us, hear clearer than us, make other sounds that we can't hear, run faster than us, have fur and teeth and nails and stuff that we don't have that helps them survive. It is our intuition that informs our every sense... that enables us to survive. It is that 'other thing' that we have been given (2012a).

Attuning the senses, in practical or survival terms, is coordinated and enhanced by the extra perceptive quality of instinctual or intuitive capacities. These senses, this inherent Earth intelligence, is our direct link to Earth sentience, which we then interpret with the symbolic architecture derived from our cosmologies, and manifest in those practices we have come to refer to as culture or religion.

Canadian environmental scholar and ally, Joe Sheridan, defines intuition well. He says that modern peoples have 'domesticated intelligence' in a manner that relegates intuition, another kind of intelligence, to wild places, but equally, it flourishes there. Sheridan writes that intuition is "implicit in an ecology of the sensorium... mind and place are co-evolutionary – one is the source of the other" (1997, p. 61). Sheridan, in formulating his ideas as to how we might all re-cultivate a sense of Earth mindedness, suggests that experiential proof of intuition is amply available to every one of us, if we could dissolve our intellectual conceits. Further, that Earth depends upon us doing so:

Restoring original thinking about nature and life-force... means keeping a faith both in the wild heart of nature and the wild heart of our own nervous systems... Re-inhabiting cultural integrity needs familial guidance by restoration of nature's sentient powers and, once rejoined, models a reciprocating aesthetic... If we don't place ourselves back into those nature preserves the right way, we risk ruination of that habitat by once again destroying the Island of the Turtle that as settlers we have never fully believed in... story and ecology are twin expressions of spirit. Understanding them as spirit reveals them as kindred (2001, pp. 196-197).

Sheridan's sentiments align with those of Jon Young, who proposes that humans are neurobiologically *hard-wired* for deep connection with Earth. The issue is that this only becomes evident when people are prepared to drop western programming and begin to deliberately cultivate it in an emplaced way (2014a, 2014b).²⁸⁷ Young says that we need nature-connection like we need water, that it is not 'optional', but *essential* for human flourishing:

²⁸⁷ Young argues that our brains are not being properly wired in childhood and, as a result, humans have become progressively dysfunctional. He has also tested, at length, the capacity of cultural mentoring models in establishing deep nature connection, and has said that this problem can be reversed, as has been proved by the many healed adolescents who are sent to him as 'a last resort'.

The body is thirsty for it... When you use cultural tools it opens up pipelines in the body which have been blocked... The Roman soldiers are gone, we don't have to fear them anymore, so let's look at *why* we resist and why we *don't* want to rebuild our society, and reconnect ourselves to nature (2014a).

The combination of intuitive capacity, and connected emplacement with/in Earth, opens up the lines of communication with the mind of nature, as expressed through relationships with other living beings.²⁸⁸

The deep and patterned web of relations that we immersed within are expressed by the grids, songlines, or strings, that criss-cross Australia, the lines and *esuama's* of the Kogi Mamas, and in the richly multilayered living cosmologies of the world's traditional and indigenous peoples. In Peat's recollections, he states he has heard Turtle Island people call it a 'map in the head'. Moreover, as he writes: "it transcends any mere geographical representation, for in it are enfolded the songs, ceremonies, and histories of a people... it was part of your coming-to-knowing and is now part of your very being" (1994, p. 86).

Conscious interactions with other living beings, with all senses activated, embodied, and emplaced, orient to Laws and lines of connection that are learned in the land and become that nature Chief John Lame Fire Deer said could be 'read'. It is impossible to convey how language feels and sounds when it is emergent from land and people; when it is gridded and coded into cultural expressions, appearing to an outsider as ceremony or ritual, or named as belief. Chief Lame Deer explains how westernised people have gone wrong:

[Wakan Tanka] only sketches out the path of life roughly for all the creatures on earth, shows them where to go, where to arrive at, but leaves them to find their own way to get there. He wants them to act independently according to their nature, to the urges in each of them... All creatures exist for a purpose. Even an ant knows what that purpose is... Only human beings have come to a point where they no longer know why they exist. They don't use their brains and they have forgotten the secret knowledge of their bodies, their senses, or their dreams. They don't use the knowledge the spirit has put into every one of them; they are not even aware of this, and so they stumble along blindly on the road to nowhere – a paved highway which they themselves bulldoze and make smooth so that they can get faster to the big, empty hole which they'll find at the end... It's a quick comfortable superhighway, but I know where it leads to. I have seen it (1972, p. 157).

²⁸⁸ Colin Scott puts this well: "All persons engage in a reciprocally communicative reality... in a network of reciprocating persons" (1996, p. 73).

Tadodaho Chief Leon Shenandoah tells us how it might go right:

Our ceremonies come from the Original Instructions that were given to us and we've kept them going since the beginning. You were given Instructions too, but your leaders hid them so they could control you... We still have our ceremonies to honor the Creator. You once had yours, too. I tell everybody who asks as much as I know. I say they can find their ceremony if they use the good mind. The Creator still speaks to every people on Mother Earth. He'll speak to you. You've got to listen. You can't hear from just reading or watching television. You have to return to your circle. That will be hard because your ancestors covered your circle with confusion. Clear that away and there will be your ceremony (2001, pp. 27-29).

Perhaps it is time for a review?²⁸⁹ These concepts are not so difficult to grasp if we can conceive of ourselves as connected to a sentient Earth, *inside of* consciousness or a minded Earth, rather than as separate owners of brains that house conscious minds. The manner in which we can become emplaced, and reindigenised to Earth, involves awakening this relationship through our instinctual human capacities and intuition. Mary Graham shares the vision of other Earth Elders, suggesting some answers to how we “might (together) manage the development of a collective spiritual identity, *one which is based in land – especially in the sacredness of the land*” (1999, p. 108).

It is also more-than-possible to do this in sites set aside for education. These are some of the only multigenerational places that remain for westernised peoples, comprising of Elders, teachers, mentors, peers, and juniors one might be mentor to. They come close to appearing as communities, and might appear more so if we were to adapt them a little by emphasising their strengths and the possibilities inherent within them. So, to recover a question posed at the very start of this thesis: what is the academic project—*now*?

Thomas Buckley, once again writing from the Olekwo'l (Yurok) perspective, shares what might be another useful starting point for reconceiving our ideas as to the purpose and nature of Earth minded education:

²⁸⁹ Graham advocates for five strategies: fostering care for land and relationships with land in children; teaching philosophy in schools (specifically, how to think), so that children might become more reflexive and consider the needs of fellow beings; intervening in addictive responses to technologies and consumerism; delinking satisfaction from money; and, instigating rites of passage (or initiation) for young people, so that they might find more of a sense of identity (pp. 108-109). This focus on maternal care for the next generations is absolutely consistent with traditional and indigenous principles found all over the world, as guided by Laws.

before one can learn to think, to define the facts inherent in situations, one must learn to perceive, to ‘see,’ *serneryerh, nework*. . . Children grow when they grow, as they learn to see, learn to learn, according to their spirits. . . Thoughts, as well as spiritual things, are facts that can be seen. . . What is thought by a person and what is experienced by him as true are two different things and, in Yurok view, the difference is immediately obvious to the skilled observer, the teacher who has himself experienced the truth at hand. . . ‘Belief,’ obviously, has no part in the system; an individual either knows the facts, or he is ignorant of them. . . all discourse must start and end with the individual who wishes to learn. It is the student who defines, through ‘doing his thinking,’ what is worth knowing. . . When the questions stop, so does education” (2009, pp. 149-158).

As Tagweseblu Vi Hilbert said, “The knowledge is there for each of us to be aware of: the knowledge that there is a spirit to guide us. . . The spirit has no name or form. It is there forever for everyone to experience” (in Simms 2009, p. 298). Mercurieff writes that this path of following inherent guidance is one of courage and trust:

when you access this heart center, you must have great courage to follow what it is telling you. Sometimes that feels like jumping from a cliff. But when you do, you will never regret it. Once you have accessed the heart, you enter into the vast field of awareness in the company of birds and connect in a deep and profound way with all living things (2017b).

Younger Brother has much unlearning to do, but this has all been patiently thought through. The Elders have attended to the relationship with great diligence, perseverance, patience, and respect, despite Younger Brothers historical lack of reciprocity in these matters. There is so much we could be doing differently, even in the spirit of tentative beginnings. I have *taught* on these subjects, I know it is possible to transform worldview effectively and respectfully, creating cosmological openings, using the very theoretical model that I have elaborated in this thesis: I felt this happen in the hearts of my fellow humans. If we have fear, as Four Arrows reminds us, then we have the opportunity to practice a virtue. The invitation is clear, as are the initial instructions.

Drop the westernised worldview, learn the land, learn the Laws of the Mother, make relationships, drop the mind, follow the heart and walk the right road of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, redistribution, and reverence, *together*. We have many Earth Elders who might teach us how.

As Robin Kimmerer says: “in this time of the sixth extinction, we could use some teachers. It’s a *good* thing we don’t have to figure everything out for ourselves” (2015b).

Chapter Six: Conclusions

Thus in our small way we do our part to create the great civilization that trembles on the brink of becoming. We are the primitives of an unknown civilization
—Kim Stanley Robinson, 1996²⁹⁰

Since 1948, when Hopi leaders selected Thomas Banyacya and three other Hopi men to speak out about coming Earth changes, many Elders have been expressing similar warnings about the ‘state of the earth’ and the way in which westernised people live. The Council of Grandmothers, the Kogi Mamas, the San Bushmen, the Aboriginal Elders, and a host of wisdomkeepers from Turtle Island, all point to the same key ideas regarding what is wrong with modern civilisation and how to fix it.

Despite this, and despite the fact that traditional and indigenous communities have been living enclaved for tens of thousands of years longer than the long-ago colonised, their suggestions for how we could all live better have not only been routinely ignored, but mocked, degraded, and written off as ‘primitive’ by those who would know better. As I have argued in this thesis, the claim that ‘nobody knows what to do’ is not only patently incorrect, but is set in the same worldview that has compelled a small group of humans to determine what will stand as ‘true’ and ‘false’ whilst we (on behalf of the species) name the least glorious of the geological ages – the Anthropocene – after ourselves.

One would think that, knowing better and nearly half a century after the first Earth Day, there would have been some improvement in our collective circumstance. So many modes of address for these crises have been suggested, tried, and have, for the most part, failed, while our socioecological problems have incrementally worsened, year by year. Clearly, Younger Brother, as insisted upon by the Kogi Mamas, is still not listening. Indigenous and traditional Earth minded communities, like the Mamas, have been living respectfully with/in Earth for millennia, whilst so many westernised people, when viewed through indigenous eyes, seem to have mislaid an entire dimension of existence (Matthiessen 2009). Although Thomas Berry suggested that it was all *a question of story*, and that we are in trouble because we do not have a good story, he also said we were yet to learn the new story that would sustain us (1988, p. 123). More recently, as Joanna Macy pointed out, we now have a choice as to which story we will choose to go forwards with (2012). We have the great fortune, or

²⁹⁰ Kim Stanley Robinson is an American science fiction writer known for his astute social and political commentary. The opening quote (which I have been carrying around in my head for years, unattributed, as a stray thought) comes from his book *Blue Mars* (1996, para. 28.38).

blessing, of being born in an epochal time of great change, as predicted by prophecy, and as I have argued in this thesis, this time of learning – an opportunity for *choosing* our path – has now arrived.

The arguments I have made in the foregoing pages derive, in some significant sense, from a very famous thought experiment put forward by Gregory Bateson: *What pattern connects the crab to the lobster and the orchid to the primrose and all the four of them to me? And me to you?* (1979, p. 7). This way of thinking was foundational for his methods; for seeking *relationships* across different fields of knowledge. Bateson was adept at finding these patterns and harmonising the various instruments that made up the great orchestral synthesis of Earth.

In turn, I have asked: what is the pattern that connects this socioecological moment, to history and colonisation, to past and future generations, of all species, as viewed across all sociocultural territories and times, to Elders, to scholars, to you, and to me? I wondered: what kind of synthesis would be required to argue, in this scholarly sort of forum, for a set of ideas, for an analysis of *patterns* that I knew intuitively may be of help in these times?

These questions provoked a scholarly journey which inevitably spiralled into an ever-more transdisciplinary focus, and yet it was also fundamentally geographical in its examination of human-Earth relationships. In addition, I felt it pulling on the guy-ropes which test the limits of a discipline and propel it forwards. I contemplated the degree to which I was jumping in and out of academic modes of thought as I attempted to translate between cosmologies, disciplines, modes of being, all arrayed across vast geographical and temporal distances. I finally settled on a satisfying question: what are geographers *for*, if not to contemplate the relations between people and place, examining the degrees of connection and disconnection between them, whether with instruments, words, actions, or minds? If I was to be claimed by geography, then I would aspire to be a geographer in the same way that Bateson was an anthropologist: transdisciplinary, though a master of his academic terrain, and willing to revise everything that might put limits on thinking.

In undertaking this research, I discovered a number of contradictions: between what ‘we’ westernised scholars say we do, and what we *actually* do; between what ‘we’ say traditional and indigenous ecologically-oriented peoples think, want, and believe, and what they *actually* say; and between what ‘we’ *say* we want the future to be like, and the kinds of emphasis we put in place when innovating plans that are supposed to get us there. The irony is that most of the required effort needs to happen, firstly, ‘on our minds’ and in our hearts, supported by a willingness to experience just a little discomfort and uncertainty regarding what we think we know. Action is certainly somewhere

down the line from worldview change, but the former is likely to be ineffective without the groundwork to ensure we have our ethic right.

What I also found is that there *is* a way to live together, well, with/in Earth, as our ancestors did and as some do still. Further, I have argued that planetary futurity may depend on ‘getting over it’ and ‘getting on with it’ when it comes to accepting Earth sentience, and I refer here to the not-so-subtle weight of scholarly bias that is leveraged in service to either outdated theological baggage, or to a presumed secularity that never was. Taking seriously the wisdom offered by traditional and indigenous Earth minded peoples, as I do here, means realising in the first instance that it is not ‘us’, but them, who have (and have *always* had) the upper hand, especially when it comes to knowing what we are, how to live with/in Earth, and how best to operate the human being with respect to all our relations with Earth others.

As I have argued, at some length, there is good evidence that we have *all* been colonised, to different degrees, into ways of thinking and being that are not only unsuitable for the thriving of our planet and our species, but also often devastating to others. I have also suggested (and here is the ‘grace point’) that these processes of colonisation have been largely forgotten; covered over by a history that has been rewritten in service to the maintenance of what I have called the westernised worldview. Further, as I have proposed, there *is* a way out – one that requires humility, in the first instance, and courage, in the second. The Elders invite us all, westernised, indigenous, colonised, and others, to apprentice to Earth minded traditions in service to our collective futures: *for the seventh generations*, as they say on Turtle Island. If we do this, as the Mámás remind us, it is not yet too late. Earth can be nourished toward proper balance and fertility if Younger Brother starts paying attention to what the Elders say.

Planetary futurity, as I have outlined herein, relies *absolutely* on indigenous futurity. Indigenous futurity – as it stands in 2018 – relies on the decolonising actions, thoughts, strategies, reparations, and responsiveness of Younger Brother. The suggestion that we need to decolonise *everything* is not overstated, but is proposed as a necessary corrective to the long-standing effects of colonisation, as evident in the destructive aspects and consequences of the westernised worldview. With deference to indigenous thinkers and academics, I have partnered decolonisation with rematriation, as a necessary parallel to the reindigenisation of humans to the planet. Rematriation, or re-enlivening the maternal Earth and the wisdom of her indigenous guardians, is a matter of humble recalibration with Earth sentience, challenging perceptions, kindling relationships, learning Laws, forging new treaties, and *remembering to remember* those necessary things that ensure we are all

treading a fertile path. As I have explained, the proposal that westernised peoples accept direction from traditional, indigenous, and established forms of Elder wisdom is likely to secure futures, *in general*.

In scholarly contexts, I have suggested that such change begins with the decision to take indigenous and traditional worldviews seriously, and show up to the implications of doing so. I have proposed that, as a means to exit these difficult times, it is possible and necessary to begin to transform worldview in pedagogical contexts. In practice, this entails individual scholars reckoning with the multiple biases that afflict their own scholarship as a first step toward the cultivation of learning environments that are hospitable to worldview interrogation and transformation, affording special attention to impoverished definitions of what Earth is and what human beings really are. The first type of worldview analysis begins with the westernised worldview, but this is not the whole story. The precepts upon which westernised thinking is based *also* subvert the legitimacy of indigenous and traditional knowledge, reclassifying this content as nature, culture, and religion. As I have discussed, indigenous and traditional Elders have good answers to difficult questions; however, our dominant worldview generally excludes these from serious scholarly consideration.

Furthermore, because our academic distinctions between indigenous and westernised worldviews are so entrenched as to be largely unthought, indigenous academics have to argue hard for basic acknowledgment for ways of being that are infinitely richer than those to which they are constantly asked to adapt. In the wake of repeated blows from colonial violences, the legacies of which are ongoing, indigenous academics and the communities they represent deserve legitimacy beyond tokenistic indulgence. As Haunani-Kay Trask has written of what it means to have kinship with Earth in these times:

As indigenous peoples, we must fight for Papahānamoku, even as she—and we— are dying. But where do people in the industrial countries draw their battle lines? On the side of mother earth? On the side of consumption? On the side of First World nationalism? If human beings, Native and non-Native alike, are to create an alternative to the planned New World Order, then those who live in the First World must change their culture, not only their leaders. Who, then, bears primary responsibility? Who carries the burden of obligation? Who will protect mother earth? (1999, p. 62).

These are her obligations to old Earth, to being a real human being, and to staying with the trouble even in the darkest of moments.

In my family, we have a common pronouncement that we issue to one another whenever there is something emotionally or intellectually challenging ‘in our way’: *do the work*. Taking

responsibility for being in relationship means doing the work, regardless of whether it is with Earth, with other humans, with other living beings, or with our own histories and peculiarities of worldview. This pronouncement applies here also. How shall we call others to be attentive, to see that there is much we could do, so many opportunities to remember, recover, and repurpose the great and small accomplishments of humanity in service to planetary futurity, for all our relations? It would be good to co-create a world in which Earth is honoured, in which our interdependence is recognised as founded upon the core values which serve our species and all others the best; which are, relationship, respect, responsibility, reciprocity, redistribution, and *reverence*. All revolutions begin *with the people*, and as the Elders tell us, we had best begin. It will take at least two hundred years, they say, if we start learning these processes now.

In summation, it occurs to me that most of the conclusions we come to in life (or in scholarship) happen ‘on our minds’. Perhaps a reader of this thesis might come to realisations that are, I would hope, stimulated by the questions I have posed in these pages. Moreover, I hope that the experience of reading these wise voices, woven together and positioned within a broader argument about scholarship and bias, might initiate its own kind of transformation. Perhaps this work might also provide an educational opportunity, or an opening for further exploration and reading, pitched, as it is, to scholars with their own peculiarities of interest. This being said, there is only so much that can be learnt by reading, as Tagwseblu Vi Hilbert explained so eloquently (in Simms 2009).

On this point, I wish to offer a brief autoethnographic insight: I have come to think that a part of the reason for the poor comprehension of relatedness by scholars, as lamented by Viola Cordova, is that making relationship is difficult to understand unless it is *experienced*. I have had to learn to ‘make relationship’ in order to write this thesis. It was not possible to understand what I am writing about without learning how to interact *directly* with Earth and all living beings, which can only be achieved, for the most part, by paying close attention with all senses at once.

This coming-to-knowing, as Ilarion Mercurieff teaches, requires dropping out of the head, and into the heart; then, listening to what is happening ‘on your mind’ (2017b). Inspired by the principles of connection-modelling by Jon Young, immersed in the teachings of Elders from global traditions and already somewhat well-acquainted with my intuition, I had to figure out the *how* of making relationship. In apprenticing to this task, there was much I did not understand; however, the processes of connecting to our inherent Earth intelligence eventually consumed me, compelling my apprenticeship to the methods I have described herein,

This happened in a number of ways. I *met* the mosquitoes, from whom I had always recoiled, and made a new relationship. They taught me why it is the biting insects make a feast of the foreigner in the wilderness, whilst leaving the Real Human Beings alone. They instructed me in the terms of our treaty, so I might interact differently. I learned what the possums like to eat and how they raise their young. I discovered how bees, *be*, together-as-one, and that drones have their own agendas and purposes, more independent than their kin. I learned that the birds see everything, and comment upon it in ways we can understand. I discovered that the words *pest* and *weed* have no meaning. I learned how other animals experience life, and death, with a delight that can only come from being convinced of their continuance with/in the consciousness of Earth. I finally came to understand how to respect those beings, both plants and animals, upon whom the continuance of my *own* life depended. There is no life, nor food for *anyone*, without the death of someone else, which I inherently knew, but had failed to properly grasp. In a very real sense, this was my fieldwork.

In an unexpected and related turn, the purposes of those traditional activities scholars so often fail to grasp, such as traditional greeting protocols, ceremony, crafting, songs and music, grieving rituals, making treaties or agreements, gifting protocols (among the many other things barely touched upon in this work), started to make far more sense from within an embodied, emplaced, worldview. It was as if I could suddenly appreciate the meaning behind the actions at a much deeper level, as if there was a code-breaker embedded in the relationship with Earth Herself. This glimpse of understanding also revealed how little I knew, and how much there was to learn.

It gives me great hope that this could happen in a relatively busy city, simply through learning, diligence, receptivity, and invitation. As Melissa Nelson (2011) reminds us, urban centres are *not new*, and it is important to create our own models in the places we already inhabit. Borrowing from Winona La Duke, Nelson asks us to recover a worldview not based on conquest but rooted in enduring values, common themes, and Original Instructions. It is neither necessary, nor sensible, to invade the precious few wild places left on the planet in order to ‘get’ our connection, when, according to Nelson, all that is required is to “re-examine the waters that we came from and reclaim our eco-cultural identity” (2011). My own experiences have given me sufficient evidence that the innate guidance system that is available to our species is not especially mysterious unless viewed with a westernised lens. To be sure, this thesis could not have been written without such guidance.

My experiences, far more numerous than can be collated here, along with my practices of teaching worldview analysis inside and outside of the classroom, fuel my dual insistences in this thesis: that interrogating a westernised worldview and shifting the dogma via direct transmission

works, and that learning how to make relationship is not only possible for all peoples, but it is a *good* and *satisfying* path. Also, that it is best initiated by direct transmission, *beginning* in a pedagogical setting designed to extract and review unthought aspects of westernised thinking, and then *beginning again*, outside, emplaced, with/in Earth. Transformation happens from one person to the next, along lines of felt kinship, in the everyday, in the everywhere, in those small acts of recognising connection.

I, like many others, was not taught how to exist in relation with Bateson's 'pattern that connects', albeit with the world around me, with other humans, or with other species. I have learned, however, that the Elders speak the truth of our being: we can all experience coming-to-know by becoming aware of our deep connections with Earth and all living others.

To those who have suffered the violences of colonialism, and who have been working tirelessly on behalf of us all, I am with you. To those long-ago colonised who are not sure of the way forward, perhaps this work will offer you some guidance, reassurance, and some initial instructions. And, to those Elders, with whose words I have tried to speak to Younger Brother and help us all to understand, I can only hope that you will come upon these words in their humble translation and say: *yes, it is something like that*.

In the spirit of these sentiments, these final words are those of Nochaydelklinne, a Coyotero Holy One. This is his vision of *the new story*, an account from the Salt River prophecies of the Quero Apache that is dated to the late nineteenth century, and is retold by Maria Yracébûrû:

I saw multitudes worshipping on the bosom of nature, their faces turned eastward and awaiting the inundation of Grandfather Sun's rays in the morning of truth. I saw the cities ruined, nothing remaining to tell of the ignorance that once prevailed. The Light of Truth shone brightly for all to see. I saw Elders seated under the shade of cottonwood trees, surrounded by the young, who were listening to tales of healing and renewal... I saw friendship strengthened between two-leggeds and All Our Relations. I saw the winged flying toward the brook. I saw the creepy crawly confident and secure. I saw no poverty. I saw no excess. I saw genuine love and equality prevailing among the Children of the Four Directions. I saw not one healer, for everyone had the power to heal themselves. I saw no priest, for conscience had become the foundation of reverence. I saw that the two-leggeds remembered they were part of Creation, and that they had raised themselves above the bitterness and separation, and had cast off the veil of confusion from the eyes of their collective soul. This soul once again could read what the clouds wrote on the face of the Infinite Void, and what the breeze drew on the surface of the water; this soul now understood the meaning of the flower's breath and songs of the night birds. From this image of the future I saw Spirit and Beauty join in union with Life as their

sacred ceremony. Spirit has shown me the promise of the Fifth World of Peace and Illumination. And I feel blessed (in Yracébûrû 2002, p. 156).

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