Difficult Coalitions: Place-Based Solidarity in Canadian Literary Studies

Maria Emmanouela Lewis

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Department of English
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

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Abstract

"Difficult Coalitions" examines the growing engagement with the concept of *solidarity* as it figures in Indigenous, Canadian, and diasporic texts from the early 1990s to the contemporary period. This thesis argues that since the 1990 standoff at Kanehsatake, literary representations and practices of solidarity are expressed in place-based, land-based, and water-based terms to address the material and ethical difficulties of coalition-building in settler colonial culture. "Difficult Coalitions" advances a literary and conceptual analysis of solidarity as a difficult relation in terms of understandings of place and temporality—conceptual and ontological categories that have been used to aid and resist settler colonial culture.

My critical consideration of solidarity underscores difficulty as a central condition for analyzing solidarity as a decolonial aesthetic, imaginary, and critical practice. I argue that the ethical difficulty of place-based solidarity is a response to temporal dislocations of colonial history and the pervasive structure of colonial expropriation. I engage difficulty as a critical approach by considering various conceptual difficulties surrounding solidarity: difficulties due to fraught histories of coexistence; material difficulties of colonial harm and extraction; interpretative and critical difficulties in terms of how texts imagine political solidarity; and (neo)liberal difficulties where solidarity is divested of its ethical and political meanings, thus becoming a transactive and ahistorical expression.

I begin my consideration of place-based solidarity with Lee Maracle's novel *Sundogs* (1992), a text that reflects a crisis of solidarity between Indigenous and settler communities during the 1990 standoff at Kanehsatake. My reading of *Sundogs* establishes how Maracle's engagement with solidarity reorients it toward land as a site of redress and accountability in contrast to an emergent politics of reconciliation that is linked to the Oka crisis. I then turn to water-based alliances in Rita Wong and Fred Wah's *beholden: a poem as long as the river* (2018) as an example of poetic coalition. I argue that the collaborative poetics of *beholden* bolsters "environmental community" and I consider poetry as a material response to environmental harm (Chen 275). The third and fourth chapters consider solidarity as a temporal relation and discuss colonial notions of temporality as another difficulty for solidarity. I examine Gord Hill's comics, *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* (2010) and *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book* (2021) as an evolving project. I discuss solidarity as an anticolonial continuity against settler colonial frameworks of time to recontextualize the problem of ephemeral solidarity. I end my analysis with a cultural reading of the Idle No More movement along with Shane Rhodes's found poetry in *X: Poems and Anti-Poems* (2014), which comments on Idle No More and other Indigenous protest movements by rethinking the idea of duration as a marker of sustained solidarities through time.

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Introduction
Literary Solidarity and Place in Canadian Literary Studies

I wonder about language with its raw frayed fringes
delicately trying to express spirit
as each word drips from lips to rest in blank spaces
between us

- Lee Maracle, "Talking to the Diaspora"

In her poem "Talking to the Diaspora," the late Stó:lō author Lee Maracle offers the following contextualization: "On Turtle Island, everyone who is not Indigenous is part of some diaspora" (*Talking*). The poem's title calls settlers into conversation through a wider definition of diaspora as a cultural formation that has allowed for settlement on Indigenous lands and, as the poem suggests, histories of failed encounters under colonialism.[1] If talking *to,* as an enactment of direct address, of apostrophe, conditions the possibility of talking *with* settlers, the fact that words rest in "blank spaces" challenges this imagined dialogue. In Maracle's poem, language carries hope for genuine exchange, but it also presents the risk of rupture. At the same time, it is exactly the conditional, affiliative potential of language that amplifies a coalitional message that rests in these "blank spaces." Language allows us to imagine relationships, to evoke responses, and to anticipate ethical conversations. Language, however, also communicates the difficulties of

[1] In her introduction to *Critical Collaborations: Indigeneity, Diaspora, and Ecology in Canadian Literary Studies*, Smaro Kamboureli discusses Maracle's understanding of diaspora as producing an "epistemic break" from typical discussions of diaspora. Kamboureli notes that Maracle's understanding of diaspora includes "the subsequent diasporas [settler culture] has accommodated and instrumentalized in its process of becoming a nation-state" (2). Kamboureli draws from Maracle's essay "Oratory on Oratory" to argue how this epistemic widening of diaspora is important for Canada as a settler nation and Canadian literary studies. The poem "Talking to the Diaspora" appears in Maracle's collection with the same name, *Talking to the Diaspora* (ARP Books, 2015).

relations. For me, the "blank spaces" dramatize the political and affective distance between Indigenous and settler subjects. The emphasis on "blank spaces" also points to a wider problem: reading these "blank spaces" as figurative sites of the fraughtness of these conversations calls into question the "literal (and stolen) ground on which people stand and come together upon" (Snelgrove et al 27).

Place as Indigenous land is the material and imaginative context for the conversation that does not happen in Maracle's poem yet remains tangible as a product of the imagination. I read this poem as having figurative implications for how solidarity can also collapse in "blank spaces" as a signifier where the signified is multifarious and difficult to identify, especially in cultural conversations about decolonizing solidarity and relations in occupied Indigenous lands. In public discourse, solidarity is an ambivalent term because it invites suspicion about its political relevance. In *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism after Identity Politics*, Jodi Dean frames this ambiguity in the following question: "When we appeal to solidarity, to what exactly, are we appealing? Are we appealing to a set of feelings; to our shared values or histories; to our mutual vulnerability to isolation, denigration, and neglect and our common need for recognition?" (16). Different approaches will offer different answers to these questions, affirming that "solidarity has many forms and is manifest in many different ways" (Scholz 16). That is to say, we can speak of different anatomies, practices, and *interpretations* of solidarity: "conventional" solidarities of sameness, "affectional" solidarities that are reflected in strong feelings of empathy, sympathy, or support (Dean 18). We can also speak of "social" or "civic" solidarities, and "political" visions of solidarity that respond to injustice and oppression and necessarily translate affect into agency and shared agency (Scholz 16).

I emphasize the idea of interpreting different forms of solidarity because this dissertation performs a literary reading of solidarity as a product of literary imagination, especially as it figures in intersectional conversations between Indigenous and Canadian literary studies. "Difficult Coalitions" argues that since the 1990 standoff at Kanehsatake, solidarity in literary imaginations of relations between Indigenous nations and settler communities is represented as a place and land-based relation that interrogates colonial tensions evident in ideas of place and temporality. Literary and critical engagement with the concept of solidarity in Canadian and Indigenous studies is not a new development. In the context of Canadian literary studies, a discernible interest in solidarity and coalitional thought can be traced in intersectional dialogues between Indigenous and diasporic texts, especially through the representational contexts of Asian diasporic writing in Canada. In more recent scholarship, Smaro Kamboureli writes about "literary solidarities" and engages this term as always aware of the realities of settler colonial culture and the settler nation state ("Introduction I" 2). This dissertation responds to the growing tendency to mobilize solidarity as a literary concern and as an extra-diegetic call for action in place-based terms. My consideration of place-based solidarity underscores how texts theorize solidarity as a grounded relation that necessitates more rigorous engagement with the tensions of reading and practicing solidarity on Indigenous lands. As I explain at length later in this Introduction, I take place to entail the geographies of action, coexistance, and imagination of coalitions. At the same time, I also consider place as a conceptual framework that opens up questions of how temporality and history on colonized lands condition solidarity. While previous criticism focuses on the complexities of identity, intersectionality, and the way diverse communities inhabit these lived experiences, this analysis shifts these complexities to more direct engagement with place and time as correlated conceptual frameworks that problematize

solidarity on occupied lands. Calls to ground solidarity to place have been multiple over the last decades, especially after the Idle No More movement, which invigorated the need to ground solidarity in local territorial struggles and land-based practices.

This thesis responds to existing scholarship and activism that emphasize place-based solidarity, while also foregrounding temporality as another important yet unexplored framework. Involving temporal frameworks in literary readings of solidarity presents another question about the difficulty of coalitions: that is, *in whose* time do we, as readers from different communities, locate solidarity in the reading encounter? My discussion of place-based solidarity as a temporal relation addresses the discrepancies between progressivist temporal frameworks and the temporal disruptions of Indigenous movements. These theoretical contexts are applied in textual and "literary solidarity" by prompting readers to consider not only where and how solidarity takes place, but also *when* and *how* solidarity happens in time (Kamboureli "Introduction I" 2). I examine these analytical anchors for solidarity by attending to different forms of difficulty as a central condition to which solidarity responds. I discuss difficulty in varied ways, but by difficulty I largely mean that solidarity's complexities extend beyond identity-related or intersectional tensions. Literary texts, through their specific formal, communicative, and interpretative affordances, mine conceptual difficulties of solidarity that move beyond interpersonal complexities, disagreements, or moral claims. While literary texts are aware of these complexities through their affective register, they shift these questions into larger, deep-seated, and conceptual problems that arise from the material and symbolic violence of the colonial act, especially in the ways place and temporality have been used to solidify settler colonial culture through the pervasive myth of the *terra nullius* and void historical time. The authors I examine demonstrate that solidarity is not a utopian moral claim but a dynamic relation

that is deeply entangled with notions of place and time. The texts I bring together in this dissertation, from their distinct cultural contexts and positionings, frame solidarity not just as a response to oppression, but as a reflective practice that interacts with historical and ontological considerations that generate these oppressive conditions.

By recognizing that solidarity is not merely a straightforward or unproblematic association, but rather a complex and fraught relation, the texts I examine reveal that temporal dislocations and colonial claims of land inform and challenge the very notion of collective meaning. It is through decolonizing notions of place and temporal attitudes that texts imagine solidarity as an anticipatory, prefigurative, and alternative form of relation that opposes liberal notions of participation, inclusion, and multicultural visions of belonging. Solidarity remains conditioned by the hegemonic assumptions created and sustained by settler colonial culture; therefore, any expressive or analytical possibilities that texts offer must critically engage with these assumptions. This also means that solidarity is difficult to sustain as a practice because in the settler colonial present moment of late liberalism, solidarity is divested of its "collective associations," that is, the fact that solidarity is a community-oriented and relational concept, and not a transactive value (DuFord 10). In a neoliberal schema, solidarity becomes transactive, presentist, and ultimately groundless because neoliberal discourse obscures land from its imagination of sociality, coexistence, and any possibility for renewed collective narratives, while settler nationalisms exalt land through the fatalistic narrative of arrival. These discourses, which also manifest in reconciliation as a form that emphasizes the moral progress of the nation, are extensions of an earlier colonial politics of developmentalism that aspires toward a progress-oriented shared time based on settler sovereignty. These discourses, which figure differently in

the texts I study, reflect a wider extractive ethos that discounts solidarity from the central fabric of coexistence between Indigenous and settler communities, which is Indigenous occupied land.

At this point, I want to acknowledge that this dissertation's focus on solidarity is my personal attempt to engage with a form of critical solidarity as a reader, a researcher trained in Canadian literary studies, and a settler scholar who immigrated to Canada. Institutionally, this thesis was made possible by the University of Ottawa, which is located on unceded Algonquin territory. I have also written, thought, and engaged in research on other Indigenous lands, such as Tiohtià:ke or Montreal, which is the traditional land of the Mohawk people. Thinking about solidarity, place, and difficulty, I advance the argument that literary texts disrupt the positive teleology of solidarity through their engagement with problems of relation, the failure of genuine recognition, and other gestures that prioritize discomfort. The claims this thesis makes therefore are linked with my own trajectory as a Southern European student of CanLit and as someone interested in opening spaces for critical solidarity and accountability. In the spirit of engaging with the difficulty of solidarity, therefore, it seems appropriate to revisit a moment of personal failure, and specifically the failure to be fully present. In the late fall of 2012, when the Idle No More movement erupted in many Canadian cities and in cyber spaces, I was completing my first semester as an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto. Looking back to these events now, I find myself surprised that I do not remember the Idle No More movement. While I was writing this dissertation, I wondered *why*, as a newcomer, I had not noticed a grassroots mobilization like Idle No More. I realize that I had to access this movement not as a witness but as a reader. Thinking critically about identity, self-location, and reading, I think that my personal failure of remembering was also a failure at being fully present, something that can be conceptualized as a form of diasporic innocence that nevertheless risks recolonizing Indigenous

place. By engaging with difficulty, therefore, this thesis argues that solidarity can emerge from what seems like an oxymoron: the idea of generative failure. This is especially relevant because it is often the case that the *lack* of solidarity conditions the texts I examine in this thesis. In this sense, texts are not cultural products that invite neutral readings; they invite difficulty as a reading methodology, precisely because difficulty is a key material and symbolic condition for the existence of these texts.

I begin my consideration of place-based solidarity with Lee Maracle's novel *Sundogs* (1992), a novel that shows how colonial expropriation made visible an ongoing crisis of solidarity between Indigenous and settler communities during the 1990 standoff at Kanehsatake. I then turn to Rita Wong and Fred Wah's poem *beholden: a poem as long as the river* (2018) as the product of a poetic coalition that critiques the Columbia River Treaty as an enactment of colonial extraction (Wong and Wah 141). In my reading of *beholden*, I analyze the poem as an act that responds to what Wah and Wong consider to be the material difficulties of extraction. My third and fourth chapters consider solidarity as an anticolonial continuity that challenges the idea of solidarities being inherently "time-situated" and crisis-oriented (Snelgrove et al 24). Specifically, I argue that place-based visions of solidarity question how temporality has been used to advance colonial dispossession based on allochronic constructions of difference and the mythologies of "new land" without history (Burkhart, "Philosophical Colonizing" 22). In the third chapter, I read Gord Hill's Indigenous graphic artwork in his comics *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* (2010) and its updated and expanded version, *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book* (2021), as an evolving project. Hill's work models a non-linear approach to understanding solidarity, demonstrating its continuity not through temporal endurance that is linear, but through moments of confluence and "simultaneity" that challenge

settler colonial temporal understandings of history on empty lands (Lo 42). The fourth chapter offers a cultural reading of the Idle No More movement and Shane Rhodes's found poetry collection, *X: Poems and Anti-Poems* (2014), which comments on Idle No More and other Indigenous protest movements by rethinking terms such as *duration*, a term significant for solidarity, but also a term that reissues colonial notions of what Mark Rifkin calls "settler time" (7).

I situate this dissertation in the critical decade of the 1990s, a period when Indigenous mobilizations profoundly reshaped literary culture and debates about coalition building. Significant cultural developments, such as the appropriation of voice controversy, discussions about the role of writers of colour within Canadian literature, and the growing institutional recognition of Indigenous literary studies were amplified by the Oka crisis. The standoff at Kanehsatake or Oka crisis was a pivotal moment of Indigenous resistance that sparked widespread dissent. In her consideration of important events for Canadian literary culture in the 1980s and 1990s, such as the Telling It conference and the Writing Thru Race Conference, Larissa Lai identifies the Oka crisis as a moment of protest simultaneous with these coalitional gatherings ("Conclusion" 213). Lai recognizes that "the Oka protest was different from other anti-racist actions of that moment in the sense that the First Nations struggle is a struggle for sovereignty" ("Conclusion" 213); however, the standoff at Kanehsatake was an event that amplified the question of solidarity politics in the field, especially through the institutionalization of Indigenous literary studies.

For Métis scholar Warren Cariou, "Indigenous literature began to become institutionalized as a discipline and a marketing category soon after Oka" (581). While it would be erroneous to say that Indigenous literature did not exist before the 1990s, as writers such as

Maria Campbell, Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, Basil Johnson, Ruby Slipperjack, Lee Maracle, Jeannette Armstrong, and other important writers produced their work before the 1990s, the standoff between the Mohawk people and Canada amplified self-determination. After Oka, as Cariou notes, there was a "wave of post-Oka Indigenous literary creativity" (581). In fact, for Cariou, the appropriation of voice cultural debate within the context of Canadian literary studies was closely related to the wider climate of Indigenous protest in the early 1990s. He writes that "After Oka, Indigenous writers took up Lee Maracle's challenge to step into the discursive arena and provide the world with their own representations of Indigenous cultures" (580). I consider the standoff at Kanehsatake to be an important turning point for authors to frame solidarity in place-based terms. This is because, in contrast with the Canadian state's policies of recognition and reconciliation that dismiss the issue of land, literary work confronts this obscuring of land as a colonial form of erasure. This erasure is also enacted through liberal democratic aspirations to move on. Maracle, Hill, Wong, Wah, and Rhodes redefine the concept of solidarity by focusing on its place-based and temporal aspects that disrupt these developmentalist discourses.

Returning to the 1990 Oka crisis as a moment that marked a discernible shift regarding solidarity and place recontextualizes the significance of temporal analyses of solidarity. Place-based solidarity in coalitional texts is temporalized not only in the sense of retrieving place-based calls for solidarity in post-Oka literary work; it is a temporal relation because anticipatory and prefigurative meanings are attached to solidarity as a social and philosophical context. My argument about place-based solidarity and temporality addresses the criticism about ephemeral or time-situated solidarities by recontextualizing ideas of time as impacted by colonial thinking. For example, Corey Snelgrove, Rita Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel in a joint discussion about settler colonial studies, accountability, and solidarity, call attention to "the underlying

conceptualization of solidarity as temporal event" (19). I argue that the temporal concerns of solidarity do not merely question an inherent temporal restriction due to physical or natural time; rather, critical attention to place and solidarity highlights the complex ways temporality has been used to justify colonialism in specific constructions of Indigenous histories as out of time, outside a linear developmental trajectory. Against this form of temporal othering, Indigenous scholars have pointed out the nuances of Indigenous notions of temporality, including the ways colonization has created temporal frames that restrict and attempt to contain Indigenous presence on the land through settler notions of history, progress, development, and other additive contexts that treat time on the land as linear from the moment of European arrival. The absolute categorization of time in linear frames works to facilitate colonial desires for land and the elimination of Indigenous histories as emplaced markers of Indigenous presence on the land. The Doctrine of Discovery activates this desire for historical erasure by entrenching fantasies of vacant lands and vanishing Indigenous nations. This is, in fact, a founding mythology for settler colonial nation-building, as it works according to the agonistic frame of modernity: the assumed Indigenous struggle to keep up with developmental time. As Cherokee scholar Brian Yazzie Burkhart explains in *Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land*, "time becomes an agent of coloniality" in its abstraction of Indigenous lands as historically void, thus sustaining the ideological formation of colonial dominance wherein "time becomes delocalized and featureless" (22). Burkhart underscores that time starts from a "zero point" on 'new' lands" (22). The pervasive colonialist desire for "zero point" temporality sustains settler narratives that temporalize solidarity according to these frameworks.

In this spirit, non-Indigenous scholars have also turned to studies of temporality to make sense of the colonial conditions that restrict Indigeneity in the ongoing colonial present. Kevin

Bruyneel, for instance, in *The Third Space of Sovereignty*, uses the term "colonial time," inspired by Johannes Fabian's anthropological analysis of "typological time" (2). Typological time qualifies groups and temporal histories in categorical moral, social, and anthropological terms, such as regressive and progressive, developed and undeveloped (2). Building on this background, Bruyneel argues that colonial time "impresses" on Indigeneity spatially and temporally (172). The "temporal impression" of Indigeneity depoliticizes it as "out of time" (172). Along with the "temporal impression," Bruyneel argues that "the spatial impression is that indigenous tribes can express sovereignty, if at all, only as narrowly conceived internal self-governance, severely bounded as to geographical and demographic reach" (172). Rifkin's analysis in *Beyond Settler Time* extends this temporal problem by considering the development of settler liberal societies. Rifkin writes that liberal recognition of Indigenous nationhood is a form of "translation" of Indigeneity in the present moment, the "unified 'now"' of settler liberal democracies (1). Instead of affirming "settler time," Rifkin's analysis illustrates "a pluralization of time that facilitates Indigenous peoples' expressions of self-determination" through what he calls "discrepant temporalities," that is, temporal experiences and practices that do not align themselves with a totalizing and "singular" vision of temporality (4).

My dissertation discursively frames readings and theorizations of place-based solidarity by beginning its analysis with the standoff at Kanehsatake as a temporal location that marks a shift in coalitional thought and literary practices. The thesis concludes with another critical Indigenous mobilization: the Idle No More movement, which was rooted in Indigenous resurgence but also shifted the ground in terms of conversations regarding coalitions in place-based terms. The standoff at Kanehsatake and the Idle No More movement, although very different in terms of their tactics and goals, frame solidarity as a place-based continuity, a

concept reflected in Hill's reference to Idle No More as an ongoing movement in the updated version of his comic book (127). Cultural criticism on the Idle No More movement links its cultural significance to other Indigenous mobilizations, engaging in a reckoning with their legacies through a relational understanding of temporality that challenges settler historicity and developmental time. For example, the impact of the Oka crisis in cultural work on Idle No More, such as in *The Winter We Danced* anthology, frames past movements as "reverberating" into present and future ones (Kino-nda-niimi Collective 21). "Difficult Coalitions" argues for a temporally complex reading of place-based solidarity in settler and Indigenous texts to push beyond the tensions between colonial time and Indigenous temporalities of duration and resistance. Before I engage more with how this thesis advances its arguments about solidarity, place, and temporality, I want to trace and connect the continental history of solidarity, as it is theorized in the Western sociological canon, to equally complex problems found in the literary solidarity I examine in this dissertation.

Solidarity's Conceptual Difficulties: From Enlightenment Thinking to Literary Solidarities

Conceptual and intellectual difficulty has always been a major feature of solidarity, as solidarity's intellectual history conveys different usages of the term and diverse and often contradictory understandings of its social and moral role in society. As Steinar Stjernø writes, "[h]istorically speaking, the phenomenon of solidarity existed before the idea was formulated" (25). A historicization of the term solidarity, however, does not remedy this sense of difficulty. As David Roediger argues, for example, "[t]he origins of the term *solidarity*, and even usage into the nineteenth century, are surprisingly entwined with impulses that, if not conservative, are seemingly at odds with the left uses of the word so common today" (229). That is, one of the

most common criticisms of solidarity is its focus on sameness rather than difference. The emphasis on sameness originates from the philosophical and social standing of solidarity as it entered intellectual discourse in the nineteenth century as a "normative" social value and not as political action (Pensky 3). Understanding solidarity's characterization as "a European value" is significant in critically engaging with the problems of normativity and sameness, especially in a study of decolonial literary practices that connect solidarity to place and time (Scholz 9). The etymological origins of solidarity point to Roman Civil Law, specifically the concept of *obligatio in solidum*, which refers to "joint liability for a financial debt" (Pensky 6). Paraphrasing Andreas Wildt's interpretation of how this legal terminology acquired a moral character, Max Pensky in *The Ends of Solidarity* explains that "to be in solidarity means that a man is good for his debts and stands up to his obligations to others" (6). Solidarity first appears in intellectual discussions in the nineteenth century when it became a social value, particularly through early sociological work on positivism in the writings of August Comte and Emile Durkheim. Pensky in fact writes that Comte "introduces the concept of solidarity into academic discourse" (7). Solidarity, for Comte, is seen as a social "integrative mechanism" along with continuity as a marker of "cooperation between generations" (30). Comte was interested in social cohesion because of the social and economic changes during this time, especially because of the development of capitalism and the changes it produced in terms of urbanization (30).

Another prominent nineteenth-century theory of solidarity was articulated by Durkheim. Durkheim develops the social integrative aspects of solidarity in industrial and urbanized societies by turning to the division of labour as a central factor that underpins his understandings of two different types of solidarity: *mechanical solidarity* which characterizes "homogeneous" and traditional societies where "people are linked together by their sameness in living conditions,

life-styles, common culture and beliefs and by religion and rituals" and *organic solidarity,* which develops to replace mechanical solidarity in modern societies with an intensified division of labour as well as "great differences in living conditions, culture and ideology" (33). *Organic solidarity* describes the "factual interdependence in modern society where occupational differences create a complex interdependence between the activities of different producers" (33).

Today, solidarity's positivist inheritance often translates into "a taken-for-granted idealization," sometimes without critical thought (Gaztambide-Fernández 46). The normative origins of solidarity, for example, persist in another relevant critique of solidarity: the fact that solidarity often appears to be an "appeal" to ideas of justice and action rather than an "expression of" practices and acts that constitute coalitional agency and shared agency (Dean 15). The risk of performativity is particularly precarious when involving solidarity in decolonization and coalitional possibilities across lines of difference and social privilege as Ruben Gaztambide-Fernández argues. Gaztambide-Fernández argues that connecting solidarity to decolonization is particularly difficult because of solidarity's framing as an "idealized referent" (46). Gaztambide-Fernández suggests that solidarity's acceptance as "positive moral obligation" does not account for its continental "genealogies" (46). Such genealogies are not only limited to Western sociology, but to theological understandings of solidarity. Building on the work of Kurt Bayertz and other scholars, Gaztambide-Fernández observes that solidarity also has roots in Catholic tradition and social teachings where it often functions as a synonym to charity. Solidarity in this context is also related to Catholicism's connection to the morality of colonialism, saviourism, and ultimately the dehumanization of non-European people (46). Gaztambide-Fernández explains that "the concept of solidarity in relationship to a sense of both mutual and moral responsibility has theological roots that can be mapped onto most world religions" (47).

However, in the Catholic context specifically solidarity is "implicated in notions of solidarity as part of the justification for religious conversion as a central strategy for colonization" (47).

Literary treatments of solidarity, especially in texts interested in decolonial possibilities, reflect these conceptual problems of solidarity in their different cultural perspectives. Canadian and Indigenous literary studies have been interested in the place of solidarity in cultural production. While these fields have maintained the conceptual problems solidarity provokes, they have also presented many intersectional conversations that attend to coalition-building as a representational concern and as a critical practice. We can locate, for instance, an interest in coalitional thought and epistemic alliance-building in conversations about the intersections between diaspora and Indigeneity as cultural formations with relational links.[2] These critical conversations appear in the works of Daniel Coleman, Sophie McCall, Christine Kim, David Chariandy, Smaro Kamboureli, Christl Verduyn, and others. Scholars like Rita Wong, Larissa Lai, and Malissa Phung, for instance, have developed specific terms to engage with Asian North American and Indigenous relations. Wong, in her 2008 essay "Decolonizasian," considers literary concerns with solidarity as "affective" explorations of fraught histories in which there is a lack of reciprocity between diasporic and Indigenous subjects (339). She turns to moments of textual erasure in significant texts like SKY Lee's *Disappearing Moon Café* and Lee Maracle's "Yin Chin" to examine the difficulties of fostering relations between Indigenous and Chinese diasporic communities. Phung, who also reads Lee's well-known novel, frames her discussion in

[2] In the context of literary alliances, an important albeit wider cultural framework scholars have examined is the intersectional connection between Indigenous and diasporic experiences, noting the mutual constitution of these formations despite their different histories with relation to land. As McCall and Kim argue in *Cultural Grammars of Nation, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in Canada,* "diaspora and nation are interdependent and mutually constituting, just as indigeneity and nation are reciprocally contingent and responsive" (2). Coleman also accepts the "commerce" between these experiential formations (63), noting "their shared challenge to the settler state's claims to liberal equity and justice" while also accounting for "their different histories of displacement by colonialism and by the racial nation-state" (62). As Coleman further explains, "in the encounter with each other, Indigeneity and diaspora clarify the limits of each other's claims" (63).

terms of "indebtedness" and diasporic "gratitude" while acknowledging historical traumas and mutual injustices (61; 64). Lai, who re-reads some of the same texts, turns to the notion of respect in her theory of "epistemologies of respect" (126), offering a theory of respect that is close to Wong's discussion of "affective solidarity."

These important coalitional frameworks, which I discuss in more detail later in this Introduction, have pushed for thinking about solidarity through intersectional friction and instances of historical (un)accountability, difficulties brought by place-based perspectives, including diasporic positionality. These critical frameworks to approach difficult literary solidarities affectively explore the tensions of solidarity that Gaztambide-Fernández observed in terms of solidarity's "idealization" (46). Moreover, through the imaginative exploration of place-based histories and conflicts, these coalitional terms are earlier calls for a wider practice of accountability, in literary solidarity and in the world of praxis. Accountability thus emerges as a central aspect of these conversations. It also emerges as a difficult critical practice in the appraisal of texts that present moments of erasure and rupture instead of the easy idealization of solidarity as a moral claim. For instance, in considering what "critical accountability" entails in Canadian literary studies, Tania Aguila-Way challenges scholars and readers of Canadian literature to question, "To what extent are we 'entrapped' by critical habits" that affirm idealized notions of Canadian multicultural belonging and other entrenched ideas (23-24). Engaging literary solidarity as a place-based orientation in criticism is significant if we, as different communities of scholars, are invested in renewed, "interpretative, ethical, [and] relational possibilities," especially in texts that challenge normative readings of Canada (24). As Aguila-Way suggests, "practising literary solidarity demands not only a commitment to recognize and honour difference, but also a sense of epistemological humility, a willingness to re-evaluate

critical habits that are so ingrained that they often come as second nature to us" (27). If literary solidarity encourages critical accountability, as Aguila-Way suggests, it also incentivizes interpretation as an ongoing process of critical reckoning and not a teleological or prescriptive theorization of what constitutes accountable solidarity. Along similar lines of thought, Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel present solidarity as inherently difficult. Corntassel, who is a Cherokee scholar, notes the following about solidarity:

> [F]or me 'solidarity gets away from the direct accountability, the trust elements that are embedded in any relationship that you have. So that trust and accountability are ongoing feedback loops, if you will, that you have to constantly negotiate or reinterpret in order to act in solidarity, or act in concert, or act in camaraderie. But I think these terms mask the messiness of that overall process. (19)

The "masking" of concrete accountability, as Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel note, speaks to the need for new interpretative frameworks that depart from a pejorative easiness that gets attached to solidarity, especially in public discourse. Their critique of solidarity as eclipsing the difficulty and "messiness" of these ideas, as they suggest, is a central problem in theories of accountable solidarities.

Dean affirms the same problem in her discussion of how "appeals" to solidarity often obscure engagement in acts of solidarity (15). To confront this problem, Dean proposes a theory of "reflective solidarity," which entails the central place of "dissent," disagreement and struggle in understandings of solidarity (31). Dean in fact locates solidarity groups as heterogeneous and argues that the formation of a strong coalitional "we" carries this heterogeneity and emphasis on difference as a "communicative" and expressive act (17). In a different context, Rochelle DuFord, in *Solidarity in Conflict*, examines a loosening of the collective character of solidarity

because of the prevalence of neoliberal economic values that erode collective responsibility, and by extension historically accountable relations. In their analysis, DuFord also prioritizes struggle as a fundamental condition of political solidarity. DuFord argues that "neoliberalism evacuates the normativity from social life by, above all, abolishing the idea of society altogether" (26). Liberal ideas of collective organizing share this lack of coalitional sociality, a sociality based on disagreement and struggle as central aspects of political life. Ultimately, for DuFord, if solidarity is to remain politically relevant, "an account of solidarity for the here and now must account for and highlight conflict and disagreement" (29).

Building on these theories of struggle, heterogeneity, and the political sustainability of solidarity, I suggest that a literary solidarity takes up solidarity as a reflective practice that brings about renewed interpretative frameworks and "critical habits" (Aguila-Way 24). A literary solidarity would pose difficult questions about how the literary medium, in its affective and creative methodologies—its *poetics*—could imagine a more complex vision of solidarity, a solidarity of renewed ethical instruction that is didactic and fluid, rather than prescriptive. If language also constitutes a sense of "we" in concert, as Dean suggests, then the expressive and creative methodologies of texts extend these theories (31). The considerations that link solidarity, accountability, and difficulty reflect an ongoing critical attempt at fostering a coalitional ethics of reading. Coleman's work on the dialogues between Indigenous and diasporic texts, for example, is inspired by Cree philosopher Willie Ermine who talks about finding an "ethical space of engagement" that is "produced by contrasting perspectives of the world" (202). Searching for an ethics of reading that considers relations in accountable ways is reflected in earlier critical responses that emphasize the critical process as a form of difficult relation. In Helen Hoy's influential study *How Should I Read These: Native Women Writers in Canada,* we see an

approach focused on "epistemological humility," for instance (51). Hoy locates a difficult task of practicing "caution" and "recogniz[ing] presumed limitations" in approaching Indigenous texts from "outsider" cultural locations (51). A translation of this difficulty also appears in Renate Eigenbrod's theory of immigrant self-location in the examination of Indigenous literature in *Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada*. Eigenbrod is also interested in an "ethics" between the reader-outsider and the text as a practice that takes interpretative struggle to be generative. In her reading of Indigenous literary texts, she argues for a "dialectic" between the "outsider" and "insider" positions Hoy references (41). More recent work continues an ethics of reading that affirms relational links while acknowledging the difficulties in approaching Indigenous texts from non-Indigenous identity positions. Notable examples include works of scholarly collaboration, such as *Critical Collaborations: Indigeneity, Diaspora, and Ecology*, edited by Smaro Kamboureli and Christl Verduyn; *The Land We Are*, edited by Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill and Sophie McCall; *Read, Listen, Tell: Indigenous Stories from Turtle Island,* edited by Deanna Reder, Sophie McCall, David Gaertner, and Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill; and *Learn, Teach, Challenge: Approaching Indigenous Literatures,* edited by Deanna Reder and Linda Morra.

Literary responses that focus on alliances enhance discussions about accountability by shifting concerns about subjectivity to more specific practices of critical self-location. A survey of the field, from its romantic nationalist beginnings to the present, confirms that place, and specifically place as Indigenous land, is both a site of violence and relation. As Margery Fee suggests in *Literary Land Claims*, "literature claim[s] land" and these symbolic claim-making processes extend beyond the aspirations of early nationalists who viewed the presence of a national literature as a form of settler-indigenization, an inscription of the history of settler

presence on the land (1). In the present moment, the need for placing Canadian literary production that is animated in Frye's well-known question "Where is here?" appears in different iterations of the same questioning with different critical idioms available. In a post-TRC Canada, the discourse of reconciliation has amplified the colonial disavowal of place as land that is occupied and settled upon. In response to this broader disavowal, Canadian literature takes up the issue of land as the material, relational, and creative site where literary expression takes place. L'Hirondelle Hill and McCall, for example, note how land is typically ignored in discourses of reconciliation, which emphasizes "resolution" and "absolution" (7). L'Hirondelle Hill and McCall echo Indigenous thinkers, such as Glen Coulthard and Taiaiake Alfred, who have argued that Canadian reconciliation policy, despite its central focus on Residential Schools, does not address the broader colonial project of land theft (7). In response to this, the writers and artists who contribute to this collaborative collection advance an "insistence on the importance of land to any discussion of the relations between Indigenous people, settlers, and the state" (6).

If discussions of solidarities and coalitions shift their difficulties insofar as they recognize place as Indigenous land, how do the representational, aesthetic, and extra-textual concerns of literary works take up these calls? In other words, what exactly is place-based solidarity in the literary imagination? Place-based solidarity stems from Indigenous decolonial thought. Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel delve into the concept of solidarity within the framework of settler studies. Corntassel highlights how this discipline mobilizes the term "settler" while exploring its relationships with Indigenous resurgences and solidarities (2). Building on this foundation, Corntassel articulates a vision of place-based solidarity, emphasizing that it represents a relationality that is conscious of the local and amplifies Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence. He argues that "anything approaching spatial solidarity would entail the regeneration

of Indigenous languages, ceremonial life, living histories, and nationhood" (24). Furthermore, Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel position these place-based practices of solidarity within the context of anticolonial accountability. They assert that being accountable to one another amidst the realities of settler colonialism "demands place-based solidarities" (27). They further clarify this idea as referring to "relationships and practices – that center both Indigenous resurgences and more relational approaches to settler colonial power" (27).

For Dene political thinker Glen Coulthard and Mississauga Nishnaabeg scholar and artist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, the literal and material connections land produces are the context for decolonizing solidarity. In their article, "Grounded Normativity/ Place-Based Solidarity,"[3] Coulthard and Simpson stress the ethical possibilities of "grounded normativity" and view it as the main structure in which solidarity can develop. They contend that "[g]rounded normativity teaches [Indigenous peoples] how to be in respectful diplomatic relationships with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous nations with whom [Indigenous peoples] might share territorial responsibilities or common political or economic interests" (255). In *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, Coulthard coins the term "grounded normativity" to describe "the modalities of land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure [Indigenous] ethical engagements with the world and [Indigenous] relationships with human and nonhuman others over time" (13). For Coulthard, this epistemological character of place provides the context for Indigenous solidarities and resistances. This thinking extends in their discussion of solidarity as a relational, ethical, and political act based on grounded normativity. Simpson and Coulthard write that "[Indigenous]

[3] In this joint article, Coulthard and Simpson consider David Roediger's American Studies Association presidential address during the 2015 annual conference meeting held in Toronto, on Mississauga Nishnaabeg land (249). In light of Roediger's calls to unsettle solidarity and make it "uneasy," Coulthard and Simpson address concerns of essentialism that are sometimes attached to Indigenous decolonial thought and understandings of land.

relationship to the land itself generates the processes, practices, and knowledges that inform our political systems, and through which we practice solidarity" (255).

The calls to ground solidarity in necessary discussions about land, as Snelgrove, Dhamoon, Corntassel, Simpson, and Coulthard discuss, are also taken up in Canadian and Indigenous literary criticism. In a similar line of thinking, Smaro Kamboureli, Joanne Leow, and Karina Vernon have considered literary expressions of solidarity in terms of prioritizing decolonial interpretations of place in intersectional encounters. Leow, in her contribution to a special issue on "Literary Solidarities / Critical Accountability: A Mikinaakominis / TransCanadas," reads Wayde Compton's short story "The Lost Island" as an example of place-based solidarity. Compton's story is a speculative narrative that revolves around the emergence of a new island near Vancouver that appears to be the result of volcanic eruption. In the story, the emergence of new land is immediately met with settler colonial occupation for expropriation, as well as anticolonial formations of solidarity that claim the island as unceded Indigenous land. Leow reads the relational link between Compton's text, Maracle's "Goodbye Snauq," and Pauline Johnson's "The Lost Island" as "a gesture towards a form of literary solidarity between Indigenous and minoritized subjects" (148). In her introduction to the same issue, Kamboureli takes her cue from a textual moment in Compton's story to explore what she terms "literary solidarities" ("Introduction I" 2). Kamboureli specifically considers how the emergence of the island in Compton's narrative makes visible the relational connections Leow describes, but also intersectional tensions. Jean, a Black woman, thinks about her participation in the activist actions in the story, posing a question to her partner Fletcher, a Salish activist: "I'm not Native, Jean says, planting her non-sequitur in the air. I don't know if I should be here, she says. I mean, I figure I should say that right now. Should I be here? Fletcher rolled his eyes" (Compton 35).

Reading this moment as literary solidarity and, specifically, as place-based or decolonial solidarity, Kamboureli clarifies that literary solidarity is not "a positivist concept" ("Introduction I" 2). Kamboureli explains that these imaginative relational gestures are not "attempts to absorb the diverse lived histories of Indigenous and diasporic communities into a single continuum of oppression and injustice or into a similarly single course of resistance to colonialism, racism, and other forms of discrimination" (2). Rather, Kamboureli reads this moment as a broader reminder for non-Indigenous communities to question their location and to consider place. Kamboureli writes that "solidarity as imagined, configured, or practised in Canadian literary studies ought to be mindful of Canada as a settler nation-state, always already accompanied by uneasiness, the unsettled feeling that the question 'Should I be here?' conveys" (2).

Yet accounting for place through practices of critical self-location does not remedy the difficulty of this task. Vernon's reading of the same text answers Kamboureli's exhortation. Vernon reads the question of *here* as containing multiple temporalities for Jean as a Black subject. Vernon suggests that Jean's question, "Should I be here?" transcends the immediate place-based context of stolen Indigenous land by connecting this question to the globalized history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Vernon writes that "the grammar of Jean's 'non-sequitur' echoes the violent historical processes, beginning in the sixteenth century, that forcibly removed Africans from their lands and abruptly planted them in lands expropriated from Indigenous peoples' nations" ("Black-Indigenous Futures"). These literary analyses of place-based solidarity demonstrate how questioning location and different personal and collective histories of arrival is a fraught process. Engaging with place through "uneasiness" and "the unsettled feeling" of different arrivals, as Kamboureli suggests, requires a broadening of

relational reading practices as well as an analysis about how texts imagine place outside nationalist or multicultural frameworks of sociality ("Introduction I" 2).

In terms of place, the texts I study do not simply treat land as a spatial referent for solidarity, but they consider land as a material and discursive space that expresses the tension between Indigenous grounded normativity and what Burkhart calls "groundless normativity," a settler misreading that contests Indigenous relations to land ("The Groundedness" 46). The concept of grounded normativity is a productive epistemic location to read place-based solidarity, especially because it honours decolonial commitments and Indigenous resurgences. To this end, my dissertation does not take land or place-consciousness to necessarily entail regionalist particularities or geographical locations, although many of the works I examine refer to specific place-based historical contexts. I take locality to be a site for conceptual complexity and dissonance. Burkhart understands the "groundedness" of Coulthard's Indigenous ethics of normativity as "locality" (49). Locality is understood as "the originary and continual manifestation of being, of knowing, of meaning, and of morality out of the land," which coloniality attacks by its investment in "delocality" (49). Burkhart explains:

> Coloniality serves to laminate one locality (European) that has been delocalized or made groundless onto an actual locality, the Indigenous one. The goal of coloniality in the first place is to obscure (since locality can never be completely removed) the locality of the land upon which it operates, first through the creation of groundlessness or delocality itself, and second through attempting to inject the falsely unmoored European locality into the Indigenous land, which can only be accomplished by obscuring the original Indigenous locality from the land as well as the original European locality from which the settlers originate and are formed. (49)

I look at place as a conceptual framework that is material and simultaneously constituted by literary texts through the imagination. That is, place becomes not only a geography for solidarity but an active, lived space where coalitional potential *takes place* in reading and critical practices, as well as in shifts in consciousness that the texts call for. Texts by settler authors do not engage in locality or grounded normativity through the "originary" modes of engagement that Burkhart describes. Yet through the delocalizing forces of settler colonialism, which has brought different non-Indigenous communities into the spatio-temporality of Indigenous lands, the texts I examine are imbricated in the dualities between locality and delocality, groundedness and groundlessness (49). To better engage with grounded normativity in a way that hopefully addresses what Burkhart calls "the casual and naïve settler interpretation [that] transforms grounded normativity into groundless normativity" (46), I adopt a discursive flexibility regarding place as a conceptual lens. This flexibility allows me to avoid essentializing specific topographies or Indigenous land-based practices, while attending to the complexity of place and land in Canadian literary studies and its interaction with Indigenous literary studies. "Land," writes W.H. New in *Land Sliding*, can be seen as "a verbal trope" in order "to question or confirm configurations of power" (5). For New, literary expression and language configure land in terms of representation, and, I would add, representational power. In this sense, although decolonization "is not a metaphor" as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang have famously argued (5), metaphor as a form of relational transference establishes "incommensurability" as central to the imaginary of literary solidarities (5). That is, the metaphorical claim of relation despite paradoxical associations, the affiliative possibility it carries, is similar to the claims solidarity makes, or the claims we, as diverse readers make, in the name of solidarity.

The imaginaries of solidarity I trace in this dissertation are anticipatory and prefigurative, thus aligning with the idea that solidarity always prefigures possibilities (Bayertz qtd.in DuFord 48). The anticipatory and prefigurative nature of literary solidarity, as a product of the imagination, necessitates stronger temporal understandings of land outside the framework of the settler colonial organization of history and time in linear developmentalist frameworks. In *Beyond Settler Time*, Rifkin argues that Indigenous inclusion into the present moment "elide[s] other ways of envisioning the multivectored dynamics of Native peoples' continuity and change that exceed a frame that centers on coparticipation with non-natives" (13). Departing from this idea of the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty in what he calls "settler time," Rifkin argues for a framework that accounts for Indigenous "duration" outside the ways the present moment is registered in the settler nation-state's history of presence on Indigenous land, especially through the trajectories of development and liberal democracy (26). To this end, Rifkin argues that "Native peoples' varied experiences of duration can remain nonidentical with respect to the dynamics of settler temporal formations" (3). If grounded normativity is an enduring ethos of Indigeneity, any form of solidarity that is conscious of this ethical framework needs to decolonize the temporal moment of the 'now' and consider solidarity as a relation that reflects the struggle to disengage with one totalizing conception of time.

Risky and at Risk: Solidarity's Elusive Place in Canadian Literary Studies

The term "difficulty" in literary studies typically refers to complex forms of writing, serving as a significant focal point in cultural discussions about how texts are created. Leonard Diepeveen, in his analysis of modernist difficulty, argues that this term was seen as an "omnipresent" aspect of both form and the cultural conversations of that period (2). However,

difficulty is often overlooked as a means of engagement with texts outside the attention to form. Diepeveen notes that "[d]ifficulty floats around, apparently untethered to rigorous analysis" (2). Writers and critics focused on the historical legacies of colonialism, however, have employed difficulty as a reading methodology. In *Difficult Readings,* for example, Jason Marley reads "difficult" texts from the anglophone Caribbean tradition using Édouard Glissant's theorization of "opacity" as an important aspect of encounter with difference. The texts Marley studies encapsulate the profound struggle to narrate the "reverberations of colonial violence, presenting their frustration with clarity and precision in a way that insists on self-reflection" (14). Linking this exploration of difficulty to questions of place deepens our understanding of how literary texts engage with the complexities of identity and solidarity as formations that retain a form of "opacity." As Kamboureli suggests, the question of "here" prompts us to examine "which sites of intersectionality and solidarity we might enter into, [and] in what terms we might do so" ("Introduction I" 11). This inquiry underscores the significance of navigating generative difficulty—an endeavor that aligns with Glissant's notion of opacity as a right to maintain difference and sovereignty.

Glissant famously uses the term "opacity" to challenge the West's expectation for "transparency" as a condition for acceptance. In *A Caribbean Discourse* as well as in *Poetics of Relation,* Glissant theorizes opacity as a parallel to "the right to difference," but most importantly he sees opacity as the frustration of transparency of the non-Western "other" (*Poetics* 190). In *Poetics of Relation*, for instance, Glissant writes that "the right to opacity would not establish autism; it would be the real foundation of Relation, in freedom" (190). Freedom in relation is a state of balance, an equilibrium that anticipates dialogue that is not based on transparency or absolute readability. Rather, Glissant sees opacity, and more specifically the "right to opacity,"

as a participatory element in a "fabric," weave, or text that includes many sites of intersectionality and identity that are not, and should not be, reduced to a monolithic interpretation (190). Emphasizing ideas such as coexistence, the challenge to transparency, and the strengthening of encounter in relation, opacity entails a productive difficulty. Glissant writes, "[o]pacities can coexist and converge, weaving fabrics. To understand these truly one must focus on the texture of the weave and not on the nature of its components" (190). In the parallels between opacity, difference, and balance, we can locate a theory of textuality that engages difficulty as its communicative and affective means.

Glissant's figurative language of the fabric or weave of relations—as a unique product of heterogeneous elements that retain their difference but produce a creative, coalitional whole—is semantically close to both literary theories and theories of solidarity that emphasize difference. In this section, I attend to modes of formal or textual difficulty that connect the communicative means of texts to place-based solidarities by coding solidarity as an anticipatory relation, but also as a relation that resists prescriptive rules. Texts that take up the issue of solidarity formally opt for structures and gestures of non-closure. This relates to the idea of opacity as a form of difficulty that sharpens interpretation. Like Glissant's idea of opacity as a means to engage with a poetics of relation, texts that engage with solidarity in Canadian literature are against the enclosure of the 'other' into concrete and discursively easy assumptions and conclusions that affirm colonial dominance over place and control of temporal narratives. As Glissant writes, "concei[ving] of the opacity of the other" does not require an absolute "grasping" of their differences (193). Glissant writes:

> To feel in solidarity with [the other] or build with him or to like what he does, it is not necessary for me to grasp him. It is not necessary to try to become the other (to become

> other) nor to 'make' him my image. These projects of transmutation–without metempsychosis–have resulted from the worst presumptions and the greatest magnanimities on the part of West. (193)

This perspective amplifies the idea that literary solidarity is not predicated on a teleological process toward absolute understanding, but rather on the acknowledgment of multiplicity and the avoidance of enclosing the 'other' in easily digestible narratives. In looking at the distinct literary, (trans)local, and historically specific contexts of these texts, "Difficult Coalitions" argues that conceptual, epistemic, and textual difficulty presents readers and scholars with difficulty as a hermeneutical tool to challenge solidarity as "a European value" (Scholz 9). The complexities of literary form contribute to this hermeneutics. The textual analysis I perform begins with Maracle's novel as discursively close to the Salish origin story and to the practice of Salish oratory that engages with "obstacles" to access understanding (Maracle "Oratory" 55). I then move to the extended collaborative context of *beholden.* Although the reading experience occurs in private between text and reader, the collaborative context of the poem shifts this experience. *beholden* is a cartographic poem that was exhibited in the context of River Relations, an interdisciplinary project that engaged with the environmental politics of the Columbia River Treaty that has allowed excessive damming, has displaced communities, and has threatened Indigenous sovereignty. The last two chapters turn to two different genres, the Indigenous comic book in Hill's work and Rhodes's settler found poetry. I consider these forms as textual practices that challenge the reading process through the "multimodality" of text and image in the case of Hill's graphic artwork (Smyth, "Visual Rhetoric" 140), and the appropriation of sources of colonial duration in Rhodes's settler poetics. I consider the affordances of these different generic approaches to solidarity, difficulty, and a coalitional ethics of reading as ways to create a textual

epistemology that is not limited to solidarity as content or thematic concern, but as a broader literary practice.

Rather than turning to plot and characterization as modelling prescriptive readings about political solidarity based on identity, and to an extent, morality, there is also value in "discursive gaps and fragments" as well as "textual absences" (Alam). This reading practice, for Rusaba Alam, is generative insofar as it is "challenging readers interested in Indigenous and diasporic solidarities to describe the political imagination of literary texts without requiring characters and events to stand in for fixed categories of experience that feminist, queer, and anticolonial interventions in the academy have laboured to deconstruct" (Alam). In approaching solidarity as a place-based concern, I want to take up this challenge and look at how the texts I consider in this dissertation explore the problem of relational rupture beyond intersectional tensions. That is to say, texts also present solidarity through difficult, frustrating, and inscrutable moments of non-closure, moments that illustrate how these fraught histories disconnect solidarity from place and frame it according to linear developmental time. Finally, texts express a difficulty in theorizing solidarity as a practice that is both literary and an extradiegetic concern in terms of cultural production.

In this context, I also want to emphasize Mohawk scholar Gage Karahkwí:io Diabo's argument that "the project of coalition-building begins and develops as a literary one" (258-259). Diabo calls for a stronger engagement with negative affective responses in coalitional readings and reassesses some of the frameworks of engagement with solidarity in the literary archive of Asian and Indigenous coalitions. Significantly, they are also arguing that focusing on negative feelings moves conversations from "epistemological alliance" to the "tactile coalitions" of literary production by acknowledging the imaginative dimension of these texts, which are not

always based on reciprocity and mutual respect (258). Diabo considers Lisa Lowe's claim about "the past conditional temporality,"[4] or the imaginative potential of "what could have been" between communities bound by what she has described as "braided relations" formed by the intersections between colonialism, indentured labour, and slavery (Lowe qtd. in 259). In this "past conditional temporality," Diabo detects imaginative potential. What Diabo considers as "tactile coalitions," which they explain as "cultural production, such as literary and filmic texts," are seen as "vital to coalition-building insofar as they are partly responsible for (pre-)staging and setting the affective tone for the worlds that we build in coalition" (259).

If texts as "tactile coalition" navigate the idea of "what could have been," they ultimately open up to the ethical, instructive, and didactic possibilities of solidarity by framing it is an anticipation, something that cannot necessarily be contained in the text proper as a material work (Diabo 259). For instance, Wong reads coalitional gestures between racialized Asian communities and Indigenous communities in terms of this non-closure as a form of generative difficulty or generative failure. Wong identifies texts from the Asian-Indigenous canon that are interested in solidarity as an "affective" and "political" relationality ("Decolonizasian" 339). Texts such as Maracle's "Yin Chin," Marie Clements's *Burning Vision* and Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Cafe* are often discussed for their affiliative poetics and their interest in generating alliances in the contexts of Indigenous and Asian relations, a cultural context scholars refer to so as to theorize alliances as well as to problematize notions of settlement outside whiteness. These alliances, however, as Wong discusses in "Decolonizasian," are often about

[4] *In Intimacies of Four Continents*, Lowe discusses the idea of a "past conditional temporality" in more detail in the chapter "Freedoms Yet to Come" (40). Lowe defines "past conditional temporality" as an alternative approach to navigate the intimacies between four continents by widening notions of time outside European domination and liberalism. She argues that "it is possible to conceive the past, not as fixed or settled, not as inaugurating the temporality into which our present falls, but as a configuration of multiple contingent possibilities, all present, yet none inevitable" (175).

crises of solidarity, ruptures of potential coalitions between racialized and Indigenous subjects, and ambivalent experiences within the nation (337). For example, in her reading of *Disappearing Moon Café,* Wong focuses on the problematic relationship Wong Gwei Chang has with Kelora, a woman of mixed Indigenous and Chinese heritage, as a moment of failed alliance despite the text's inclusion of conditions of possibility for such alliances. That is, while the text "posits a potential alliance between two people who were both excluded by the Canadian nation in historically specific, racialized, gendered, and classed ways," the fact that Wong Gwei Chang abandons the pregnant Kelora engenders a double colonial trauma (334). As Wong argues, the Chinese diasporic subjects in the text, although outside of the space of the nation through the processes of racial othering and legislative exclusion, are implicated in the colonial project of nation-building, especially through their labour in the railway (334). This social context, along with the personal context of the damaged relationship, challenges the potentiality of coalitions. Considering these aspects of Lee's narrative, Wong rightly wonders about "what would have happened had Gwei Chang challenged ethnic containment and asserted solidarity with Kelora and her community" (336).

This reading, like Maracle's poem about language landing on "blank spaces," shows that teasing out the potential of solidarity requires readings that focus on ruptures to make claims about solidarity as an anticipatory relation. I am highlighting this reading because the texts I examine also frame solidarity in unpredictability. This potential failure of solidarity shows the social and historical conditions that emplace solidarity deeply within the colonial fabric of Canada as a settler culture, thus rendering it a risky relationality because of the colonial inheritance of histories of complicity and disavowal. At the same time, solidarity is also rendered at risk because these same difficulties threaten its relational integrity and render it suspicious at

best or rejected as performative at worst. As Kamboureli notes, "solidarity is responsive to vulnerability, but it is also vulnerable itself" ("Introduction I" 2). In this context of the vulnerability of solidarity, Wong turns to the "speculative space" of texts to show that although texts might rupture those potential coalitional possibilities, what remains is the textual gesture toward solidarity, the potentiality that exists on the page as a site of epistemological renewal and frustration (338). *Disappearing Moon Café*, like other texts that contemplate solidarity, "makes visible the importance of alliances along cross-racial, feminist, and anticapitalist lines, even though some of these alliances may not be directly achieved or successful in the novel's plot per se" (338). Frustrating solidarity's idealization then shifts "the onus … to the reader" to grapple with the missing literary possibilities (338). Part of this interpretative task is to consider the ambivalent and ruptured representation of solidarity in texts which, like Lee's novel, ground solidarity in the difficult terrain and temporality of colonial traumatization, complicity, and ambivalence that can come from emplaced histories of proximity. Texts like *Disappearing Moon Café trouble* solidarity by focusing on the oxymoron of generative failure, another textual expression of difficulty.

This line of thinking underscores a larger question: what is the role of literary texts, especially texts that highlight these moments of generative failure and call the reader to grapple with the question of difficult solidarities? In her reading of instances from Lee's novel that invite solidarity and in the same vein undermine it, Wong connects the "affective" solidarities of literary texts to "political solidarity" and alliance-building in the world of praxis and activism. According to Wong:

> Reading *Disappearing Moon Café* from this perspective only signals how much more there remains to do if cultural workers are to play a role in supporting alliance-building to

> work toward decolonization. These temporary but strong affective bonds suggest that promise exists, even though it has not been fulfilled. Affective bonds do not necessarily translate into political solidarity, but effective political solidarity is also less likely to happen without a deeply felt understanding of each other's perspectives and the ways in which oppression is both common and different for people racialized as 'First Nations' and 'Asian.' Fiction offers a speculative space and challenges us to imagine the ways in which dialogue and interaction could spark deeper understanding of our interrelatedness. (339)

Wong distinguishes between "affective" literary solidarity and "political solidarity" (339). What this distinction shows is that Canadian cultural conversations about literary solidarities have been aware of "the epistemological side" of solidarity (Scholz 4). Political thinker Sally Scholz, for example, notes that "[s]olidarity is a feeling that moves people to action, and it is an action that invokes strong feelings" (17). Texts, in this sense, reflect an understanding of solidarity as both a discursive site to interrogate the "social ontology of the group relation described by 'solidarity'" as well as a creative site that shows the limits, difficulties, and gaps of what we know as solidarity, of our epistemological practices and engagement with this concept (4). Building on Wong's insights, a reading of difficult solidarities with a place-based lens opens solidarity to rupture and ambivalence, recognizing that building alliances across lines of difference and distinct experiences of arrival to a shared place disrupts the teleology attached to solidarity as a relation oriented toward redressing injustice.

The dual—affective and political—contributions of literary texts are further explored in several analytics that reflect the complexities of affiliative politics in coalitional texts. Although these analytics have not centrally focused on solidarity conceptually, they nevertheless allude to

solidarity's fault lines. Although not always referencing solidarity in specific terms, Phung and Lai, who are both interested in Indigenous and 'Asian' diasporic kinship and alliance-building in historical fictions, have used the terms "indebtedness" and "epistemologies of respect" in their analyses to showcase those affective bonds that texts demonstrate and undermine at the same time. For Phung, the idea of Chinese Canadian "indebtedness" as well as migrant and refugee "gratitude" form "the basis of Asian-Indigenous relations" and constitute experiences that allow us to question "solidarity calls…to claim these historical Asian-Indigenous relations" (61;62). Phung's notions of indebtedness and gratitude are not liberal notions of inclusion and participation based on "a coercive relation of obligation towards the state" (65). Indebtedness, at least for "heterogeneous" communities of Asian descent, is a position of ambivalence that connotes indebtedness to Indigenous communities with whom they have formed positive affiliations, and it is also a position that involves "historical debt" in that diasporic subjects participate in the colonial project of nation-building (Lai qtd. in Phung 62). While indebtedness carries both an affiliative connection and a historical remembrance of complicity, Phung's idea of "migrant and refugee gratitude," a different diasporic experience, focuses on inter-communal relations rather than statist discourses (64). A synthesis of both related frameworks, indebtedness and gratitude, for Phung, is not about "repayment," but about a "process of relation building [that] inaugurates an ongoing, future-oriented relation of social return, requiring a continual maintenance of inter-community relations and a constant renewal of trust and solidarity" (65).

These textual readings of affiliation outside idealized histories of coexistence emphasize the need to renew the way we, as scholars in Canadian literature, come to know solidarity. Although not explicitly articulating a theory of place-based literary solidarity, these kinship-informed analytics compel scholars to shift identity-centric analyses into the complexities of the

histories of coexistence and the specific histories of place, thus offering epistemological frameworks for reading literary solidarity through the lens of place as a dissonant site between projects of nation-building and as Indigenous land that conveys "intimate" knowledge for Indigenous communities (Burkhart "Groundedness" 46). Burkhart writes about intimacy as a distinct land-based form of coming to relationship with land in Indigenous philosophies: "Knowledge and morality, even our 'ethical commitments to land' in an Indigenous context, are framed by an intimate relationship to land. It is then through land and our intimate relationship to it that knowledge and normativity both come to be and are thereby contained" (46). The texts that Wong, Phung, and Lai read offer frameworks as sites for epistemological engagement. Lai's framework, for example, turns to respect as an epistemology and to kinship as forming "epistemologies of respect" (126). Lai revisits important texts like Maracle's "Yin Chin" and Clements's *Burning Vision* and reads them as examples of "respect in action," where "respect" is a generative feeling and practice of interconnection, but also understood as a "a poetics, a metaphysics, or an epistemology" that can bring about "balance" (126). Like Phung's frame of indebtedness, and Wong's insights on the affective solidarity-building within texts and their practices, Lai's focus on epistemologies opens up space to interrogate the conceptual possibilities of literary solidarity as a place-based relation. Respect, a feeling and practice at the same time, is an overarching idiom of solidarity and its collectives, whose members are bound together not by absolute sameness or homogeneity, but by feelings of confluence and consonance, a form of "balance" in interdependence, as Lai describes (126). For Indigenous scholars like Leanne Simpson, relational practices and allyship are understood through the framework "constellations of coresistance" wherein constellations constitute "a different conceptual way of collectively ordering beyond individual everyday acts of resurgence" within

the place-based framework of Indigenous land relations (216). Constellations, for Simpson, are not only allied collectives, but "place-based relationships, and land-based relationships [as] the foundation of Indigenous thought" (213).

"Difficult Coalitions" engages these diverse and insightful frameworks from previous criticism on Indigenous-allied texts by mobilizing solidarity as a place-based and land-based ground for decolonial thought. This thesis is also performing a coalitional reading of texts from Indigenous, diasporic, and settler cultural positions to better conceptualize the idea of ethical and literary difficulty as a hermeneutic for creative examples of solidarity. The final section of this Introduction offers more detailed chapter descriptions.

Chapter Summaries

"Difficult Coalitions" is comprised of four chapters. My chapters move through different concerns regarding literary configurations of solidarity and advance the conceptual frameworks of place and temporality as central organizing principles. My first chapter reads Maracle's *Sundogs,* a fictional narrative that takes place during what Coulthard has called "the two national crises" that resulted in Canada's Reconciliation policy: the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the standoff at Kanehsatake (*Red Skins* 115). Maracle's novel, which Joy Harjo describes as a coming-of-age narrative and an "origin story," centres on the life of a young Okanagan woman, Marianne and her family (*Sojourners* 13). The novel focuses on the character's personal and political *bildungsroman,* her movement from colonial alienation, shame, and "ideological diaspora," to land-based and relational awareness of solidarity (Neal McLeod 19). The text portrays Indigenous solidarity acts, such as a fictionalized account of the Okanagan Peace Run to Ottawa, as didactic for the character's entry into solidarity through "intimate" and relational

knowledge about land (Burkhart, "The Groundedness" 46). I start my discussion from the historical location of the standoff at Kanehsatake because it inspired what is now known as Canada's reconciliation policy since the standoff and the failure of the Meech Lake Accord inspired Canada's *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) (Coulthard *Red Skins* 116). Maracle's novel conveys the tensions between ideas of settler sovereignty and forms of protest that express solidarity in land-based terms of peace-making, relationship-building, and ultimately calls for accountable coexistence (6).

My second chapter reads the collaborative poem *beholden: a poem as long as the river* by Wong and Wah. *beholden* originates from a larger artistic project called *River Relations: A Beholder's Share of the Columbia River*, an interdisciplinary project that included different artistic works and perspectives on the Columbia River. *beholden* addresses the environmental impact of the Columbia River Treaty, an international water management treaty between Canada and the United States that has produced intense damming on the Columbia River. In the poetic dialogue between Wong and Wah's lines in the poem, the Columbia River Treaty is represented as a settler agreement that distorts the notion of treaty from the spiritual and agential significance of land systems. I consider how Wah and Wong address the material "difficulties" of environmental harm incurred by the Columbia River Treaty through a poetic struggle to find an ethical language to address the significance of water (141). In the shared idea of difficulty, Wong and Wah generate coalitional spaces through the poem's representation of embodiment and the attention to language as the means to evoke a strong coalitional "we." Taking the collaborative aesthetic of the poem as a coalitional attempt to be beholden to water, I consider how the poem as a material response to difficulty constitutes an act of solidarity by attending to language as a means to imagine community amid environmental devastation.

The third chapter extends the analytic of difficulty by turning to temporality as a concomitant problematic in discussions of place and coalition-building on occupied Indigenous lands. In this chapter, I suggest that criticisms of solidarity as ahistorical, presentist, and ephemeral inadvertently replicate the colonial construction of a singular temporal frame of reference—one that seeks to establish settler historicity as a totalizing, ubiquitous expression of time, thereby further naturalizing the colonial act (Rifkin 19). Under this temporal paradigm of settler colonialism, the notions of place and solidarity are coded in a settler colonial "now," in a presentism that, according to the settler state, casts Indigenous resistances as reactive expressions invested in an allochronic temporality. Coding both place and solidarity in settler presentism as an example of an assumed linear time—always moving toward futurities of extraction and expropriation—intensifies suspicions around the ethical relevance of solidarity. Under this temporal construction, Indigenous movements figure either as anachronistic or as forms of domestic crisis, and are rendered illegitimate, violent, and criminalized, something that gets transferred to coalitional support toward these movements.

In this chapter, I read Hill's revisions and expansions across the two versions of his comic book on Indigenous resistance, *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* (2010) and *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* (2021), to frame solidarity as a continuity that reconfigures temporality outside settler notions of time. I read Hill's project as an evolving one, departing from previous criticism that prioritizes the first version. The comics present solidarity through the inclusion of different anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements that interact with Indigenous resistances. In both versions, there are direct references to solidarities that involve non-Indigenous communities, as Hill creates cross-coalitional spaces where Black and Indigenous anti-colonialism meet at a confluence of solidaristic action, thought, theory, and art.

For instance, Hill acknowledges the debt of Indigenous movements like the American Indian Movement to Black intellectualism and militarism in the 1950s and 1960s, thus including ongoing conversations about Indigenous and Black solidarities in his artistic archive of Indigenous resistance. Moreover, in the updated version of the comic, Hill does not exclude the potential for cross-cultural solidarities with Indigenous peoples and resistances, especially in his consideration of Idle No More.

The final chapter focuses on the Idle No More movement in terms of activist and artistic calls for place-based solidarity. I analyze cultural criticism on Idle No More by looking at how its temporalities reveal a dissonance between the continuity illustrated in Hill's work and settler readings that treat Indigenous resistance as anachronistic. I examine Idle No More's impact on coalitional thought by looking at the ways the movement's resurgent practices challenged the temporal organization of the settler state since Idle No More exceeded the temporal limitations of an event and enacted resurgence, as a form of diachronic Indigenous presence, movement-building, and shared-agency. Sylvia McAdam, one of the movement's founders, affirms the diachronic nature of Idle No More: "Idle No More resistance began long before in different names, different locations through the generations since the arrival of Europeans" (65). Attending to this form of temporal complexity challenges dominant settler perceptions of the movement as politically aimless or disorganized and allows for a critical investigation of how solidarity politics becomes implicated in those same notions of temporal complexity. I connect this reading of Idle No More's temporality to Rhodes's found poetry collection *X: Poems and Anti-Poems*, a segment of which is anthologized in *The Winter We Danced* under the section "Friendships." If Hill's work resists an ethnographic impulse to frame Indigenous resistance in a settler temporal singularity, Rhodes's poetry constitutes a reckoning with the endurance of

settlement. *X* engages with the act of writing and the poetic medium as a territorial and emplaced retelling of the history of settlement. I argue that Rhodes's appropriation-based or found poetry expands the terms "duration" and "emplacement" as significant place-based and temporal features that naturalize settler history.

Chapter One

Place-Based Solidarity in Lee Maracle's *Sundogs*

> Martha: "They're standing up for their rights. They're showing the rest of us what solidarity means"
> Mary: "Solidarity, that's a scary word"
>
> -Douglas Raymond Nepinak "The Crisis in Oka, Manitoba" (qtd. in Simpson and Ladner 133)

> Sometimes it even seems as if people would like to forget the whole thing. When they invite me to speak at churches, universities, or meeting halls, it seems as if they consider me entertainment. It's as if they're watching me spill my guts in front of them. They seem detached, untouchable, like they're watching something on TV. I get tired of it, because I want them to take responsibility individually and collectively. They seem to want me to do something for them; to keep fighting the battles and never give up. To ease their guilt.
>
> -Joe Tehawehron David "How to Become an Activist in One Easy Lesson" (David https://joedavidtribute-hommage.ca/)

The above epigraphs reflect two distinct problems surrounding solidarity in writing about the standoff at Kanehsatake.[5] In the play "The Crisis in Oka, Manitoba," Douglas Nepinak (Pine Creek Nation) critiques the criminalization of Indigenous solidarities during the Oka crisis. The play relates the quest of Isaac, a young Saulteaux man from Manitoba, who is compelled to join the resistance in Kanehsatake and "stand in solidarity with [his] people," as he tells his disapproving mother, Mary, who responds: "you're Saulteaux, not Mohawk" (134). Isaac justifies his desire to join the blockades based on an intrinsic sense of responsibility that

[5] While the standoff is widely known as the "Oka crisis," Leanne Simpson and Kiera Ladner have pointed out that these terms miss the fact that it was the Mohawk nation, and not the settler town of Oka, that was under siege during the events of 1990. Simpson and Ladner encourage different readers and communities to "disrupt colonial labels" by using the terms "standoff at Kanehsatake" or "resistance at Kanehsatake" (9).

transcends national affiliation, that is, the fact that he is "not Mohawk," as his mother pointedly remarks (134). This tension is also evident in Nepinak's toponymic play in the title where the standoff, as a crisis that invites pan-national anticolonial solidarities, is not contained in the Québécois town of Oka, but is figuratively transferred to the locale of Oka, Manitoba. Isaac's desire to travel to Mohawk land and stand in solidarity with the land defenders from Kanehsatake and Kahnawake reflects a place-based solidarity *for land* and for fellow Indigenous nations across settler Canada. At the same time, the play suggests that Indigenous solidarities produced risk for Indigenous communities who were represented as domestic terrorists[6] by the political discourse of the time. Mary's statement "solidarity, that's a scary word" dramatizes this risk (133).

The second epigraph comes from the creative non-fiction essay "How to Become an Activist in a One Day Lesson," a self-reflexive work by Kanien'kehaka artist and journalist Joe Tehawehron David.[7] David was a land defender during the standoff and was imprisoned along with fellow community members during the confrontation with the Sûreté du Quebec. [8] In his essay, David laments how spaces of potential solidarity-building are permeated by a colonial ethic of extraction after the events at Kanehsatake. spaces like universities could be sites of encounter and dialogue that eventually prefigure accountable anticolonial solidarity; however, as David suggests, such spaces become sites where Indigenous resistance is appropriated or consumed as a form of entertainment. David's essay takes place in the aftermath of the Oka

[6] According to Donna Goodleaf in *Entering the Warzone*, the popular representation of the Kanien'keha:ka land defenders as "terrorists" was first attributed to a statement from Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in the press.
[7] "How to Become an Activist in One Day Lesson" was first published in 1994 in *Semiotext(e)* and was then reproduced in different collections. A website that pays homage to David identifies the first publication of his essay in *This Magazine*, 25th Anniversary Double Issue, in 1991. The website, built by Patrick Denny, includes David's poems, as well as designs and photographs assembled by Carole Beaulieu. David's essays and poems are translated into Mohawk by Hilda Nicholas. This work can be accessed at: https://joedavidtribute-hommage.ca/.
[8] In the essay, David mentions his arrest and release ("How to Become as Activist").

crisis and contemplates the "implosion that follows resistance" (Maracle qtd. in Fachinger 74), that is, the climate of emotional traumatization in a post-Oka world. In this world, solidarity is entangled in colonial dynamics that continue to be visible in Canada's reconciliation discourse and its insistence on settling colonial histories. I read this short excerpt from David's essay as a textual moment that prefigures how solidarity gets imagined in a (neo)liberal reconciliation politics, which gained momentum in the aftermath of the standoff at Kanehsatake. The mixed responses between apathy and the fetishization of Kanien'kehaka grief minimize the possibility for generating meaningful relationships of solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The affective context of "How to Be an Activist in a One Day Lesson" is similar to the testimonial character of survivors telling their stories in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Just as the discourse surrounding the TRC focused more on reconciliation rather than truth-telling (Gaertner 5), the responses David describes extract Indigenous testimony for forgetfulness while bolstering Canada's moral superiority through sympathetic detachment.

Countering these attitudes, David's call for "personal" and "collective" accountability opens space for a different framework for envisioning solidarity since these concerns remain relevant in a post-TRC Canada where the discourse of recognition has been replaced by reconciliation (Coulthard *Red Skins* 106). The lack of genuine recognition, reciprocity, and solidarity evident in David's essay communicates a desire to move on while solidarity actions maintain the need to interact with the broader "crisis," which liberal attitudes decline to engage with: the invisibility of Indigenous nations and the aggressive suppression of Indigenous dissent when it comes to land conflicts. In *The Theatre of Regret*, David Gaertner writes that "truth is obscured in the TRC formulation because the settler emphasis on reconciliation obstructs

intellectual access to the ongoing histories of settler violence that sit at the core of Indigenous-settler relations" (5). Although the problem of apologies does not figure in David's essay and neither does reconciliation as it is known today, the discursive presence of a neoliberal diminishment of collective accountability appears in the essay's commentary on settler responses to the Oka crisis. In fact, in the essay, tension is made more visible when a Canadian professor offers sympathy instead of the personal recognition and accountability that David calls for. Frustrated by the professor's declaration that there was nothing he could have done apart from ruminating in guilt, David writes: "I understood how he felt. But I also got pissed off at him because I couldn't fathom his not doing anything or not knowing what to do" (David). A proleptic reflection on the politics of apology, this uncomfortable encounter shows how the text implies that political solidarity based on anticolonial accountability is depoliticized by liberal notions of guilt and sympathy. In David's story, whatever affective dispositions the professor has stem from guilt and inaction, and these affects sustain a broader ethos of transaction, thus reducing the political and ethical relevance of solidarity as a mode of redress.

I begin my discussion of place-based solidarity in this chapter through comparing these two paradigmatic excerpts from works on the Oka crisis to foreground solidarity as a central leitmotif in creative responses to the standoff at Kanehsatake. These two texts, moreover, reflect on two different temporalities of solidarity vis-à-vis the Oka crisis that are important for tracing literary attention on coalitions. Nepinak's play is situated during the events of Kanehsatake and David's essay remembers the Oka crisis from a historical location where the Canadian government's inquiry into this crisis, the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*,[9] was already

[9] The *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) was a government initiative that was mandated by the Government of Canada in 1991. The Commission aimed to "investigate and propose solutions to the challenges affecting the relationship between Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Metis Nation), the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole" (Library and Archives Canada). The Commission resulted in a final report

mandated by the Canadian government. Importantly, both texts present a parallel regarding how solidarity becomes contained in liberal democratic imaginings of Indigenous and settler relations in the context of land and land conflicts like Oka. That is, in the social model reconciliation advocates for, solidarity becomes synonymous with the sympathetic attitudes David's essay describes, while being disconnected from land as an affect or action that is necessarily connected to anticolonial engagement with Indigenous land. This conundrum is in keeping with a current culture of reconciliation, which temporally contains the colonial past while pushing for a shared future that depends on Indigenous forgiveness and the moral progress of Canada as the framework that will contain these narratives of coexistence (Coulthard *Red Skins* 109). Coulthard puts it this way: "'Forgiveness' and 'reconciliation' are posited as a fundamental step in transcending the painful 'legacy' that has hampered our collective efforts to 'move on'" (125).

These texts do not simply work as social criticisms of an emerging reconciliation discourse that is historically related to the standoff at Kanehsatake. Literary texts that remember the standoff demonstrate how solidarity is entangled in colonial logics and developmental

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submitted in 1996. In 1998, *Gathering Strength* was the official report in response to the 1996 recommendations and was undertaken by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, which was established as part of the strategy to address the colonial legacy of Residential Schools. Many scholars discuss the RCAP in terms of the institutional and cultural politics of recognition regarding Indigenous people. Coulthard, in *Red Skins White Masks*, attributes the RCAP to two important political events of 1990 that pointed out the ongoing state of "crisis" between Canada and Indigenous people, that is, the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the standoff at Kanehsatake, which escalated with the Canadian army's intervention (116;119). Coulthard also points out that the recommendations, as a precursor to Reconciliation policy, expressed a lack of recognition of a "colonial present" moment (121). In some way, the RCAP prefigures, for Coulthard, the "rigid historical temporalization" in the government's approach to reconciliation (120). Rita Dhamoon and Yasmeen Abu-Laban, in "Dangerous (Internal) Foreigners and Nation-Building: The Case of Canada," are also critical of the RCAP as "an act of re-nationalization which promoted the idea that the Canadian nation-state was democratic, fair, and historically conscious" (177).

schemes that are reproduced by reconciliation as "a Canadian act of goodwill" and "as a demonstration of Canada's moral superiority" (Gaertner 6). Development remains the ideological foundation of the settler colonial nation as well as a pervasive economic modality based on the "liberalization of the natural environment" through myths of "emptiness," among other ideological structures of Indigenous displacement (Altamirano-Jimenez 71). Liberal attachments of developmentalism in imaginings of solidarity depoliticize it as a placeless and landless relation, divesting it of its instructive and political goals and ultimately rendering it only visible as an offering of sympathy. In the context of Canada's colonial history, modern translations of "developmental schemes" such as "enlightenment, civilization, progress, social evolution, economic growth, modernization" get refracted into neoliberal value-systems like the framing of historical injustice as "personal injury" (McCarthy 1; Wylie 128). The extended figuration of developmentalism ultimately removes or extracts solidarity from the semantic importance of land in ways that echo and replicate the colonial act.

Maracle's novel *Sundogs*, as I will argue in this chapter, responds to this problem by reframing personal and collective responsibility toward grounded forms of redress, advocating for a place-based solidarity that imagines alternative modes of accountability. *Sundogs: A Novel* was first published in 1992 by Theytus Books, two years after the standoff at Kanehsatake. In 1999, Press Gang Publishers republished the novel with several of Maracle's short stories in a joint edition called *Sojourners and Sundogs*. In this new edition, the *bildungsroman*-like narrative of the young Okanagan character, Marianne, comprises the first part of the volume, while the second part includes short stories such as "Sojourner's Truth," "Yin Chin," and "Who's Political Now." As Janey Lew notes, many of the short stories that accompany *Sundogs* are examples of creative work that comprises Maracle's poetics of intersectional solidarity and

"Indigenous feminist praxis," especially in imagining solidarities with Black and Asian Canadian women, a line of coalition also evident in *Sundogs* (225). *Sundogs* focuses on the personal narrative of Marianne, who is represented as culturally and emotionally displaced within her Okanagan and Métis[10] family dynamic; however, through the events of the novel, Marianne "develops into a young adult with a politicized consciousness" (244). As Joy Harjo points out in her Foreword to *Sojourners and Sundogs,* the novel is "the coming-of-age story of a young native woman growing up when the world appears to be coming apart" (10). What "appears to be coming apart" in *Sundogs* is the pervasive structure of colonial alienation, shame, and colonial suppression. This happens through two central events that constitute interconnected narratives in *Sundogs*: the Oka crisis and the failure of the Meech Lake Accord because of Elijah Harper's refusal of the legislation. These two moments, which in the novel inspire empowerment and movement-building among the Indigenous characters, are extended metaphors for how Marianne's personal narrative represents the collective experience of Indigenous "awakening" during these significant political events of the early 1990s (Kelly 77).

In *Sundogs*, the Oka crisis is portrayed as an "event [that] dramatically brought Indigenous concerns to the foreground of the national consciousness" (Cariou 578). Solidarity in the novel does not only arise as an immediate response to the failed Meech Lake Accord and the

[10] The character of Anne, Marianne's mother, is described as Métis in *Sojourners and Sundogs* and sometimes as "French": "[Momma] is Native enough to feel everything she thinks and hears, but French enough to get wild about it" (20). The novel distinguishes between Anne's heritage and that of Marianne's father, who is described as Okanagan. It is noted that her mother speaks another language with Marianne's aunt, Mary, and the family's children have access to two different Indigenous languages. Anne, for example, tells Marianne: "I didn't want you to speak this language. It is not my language. It is your father's language […] No one except for Mary speaks my language, so I didn't teach you either" (156). The character of Marianne corresponds with some biographical elements of Maracle's life. Maracle's mother has also been described as Métis in different sources, including in Maracle's entry in the Canadian Encyclopedia (https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lee-maracle) and in Maracle's 1994 interview "Coming Out of the House" with Jennifer Kelly. As a European reader, I acknowledge that Indigenous identity, heritage, and membership are complex categories, and I refer to Maracle as Coast Salish and Stó:lō as it is described in her work.

resistance at Kanehsatake as the two "crises" of 1990 (Coulthard *Red Skins* 116); rather, *Sundogs* suggests that place-based solidarity, as a practice cognizant of land as a principle for coexistence, emerges from the difficulties of confronting relational ruptures between Indigenous and settler communities, including diasporic subjects. Solidarity in *Sundogs* also emerges from the gradual abandonment of epistemic frames that affirm coloniality as the governing logic of relations in the novel, for example, in his reading of the novel, points out the difference between liberal democratic ideals and discourses and Indigenous "place-based relationality" in the practices of self-deterministic activism and Indigenous relations to land through the Oka crisis (124). McLeod specifically reads the narrative of *Sundogs* and its critique of settler colonial frames of belonging and political participation in relation to the Idle No More movement. While this criticism references Indigenous movements as part of a wider "place-based relationality" (124), this claim can also be significant for a discussion of post-Oka imaginings of solidarity, which is the intervention of this chapter. I read *Sundogs* as a text that makes an earlier call for place-based solidarity by presenting fraught moments of friction between liberal legacies of recognition and a premature politics of reconciliation and "sovereignty association" as Marianne calls it in the novel (Maracle *Sojourners* 136). Ultimately, *Sundogs* asks its intended and unintended audiences to discern what constitutes accountable anticolonial solidarity.

In this regard, Harjo, in her Foreword to the novel, importantly notes that Marianne's "questions may be universal, but the answers will have the shape of the city, the road along which her family travelled to that city, and the shape and stories of the land and people from which they arrived" (10). The "political consciousness" that Marianne develops, that is, is not only informed by the political advancement of Indigenous aspirations and goals in the early 1990s but opens space for a broader momentum that guides a resurgent (re)turn to Indigenous

sovereign and self-deterministic forms of being in the world (Lew 244). This turn, in the novel, is facilitated by the difficult and didactic role of solidarity both as "sovereignty association" and as an extended, relational and reflective practice that reaches settlers and diasporic subjects through the novel's exploration of moments of failure and possibility (Maracle *Sojourners* 139). Importantly, Harjo also characterizes the text's coming-of-age narrative as a narrative form that draws from Maracle's Salish teachings on oratory (10). That is, Marianne's *bildungsroman* or her coming-of-age story is communicated by "questions" that reflect her family's place-based histories, and such questions are "found in that ongoing conversation that is both inside and outside," which corresponds with Maracle's notions of the personal and collective fabric of orature (10). This connection to fundamental practices of Maracle's Salish storytelling adds another level of formal reading in a first-person narrative that maps the character's movement from colonial alienation to political and personal renewal and place-based anticolonial solidarity.

I build on previous critical emphasis on the link between the genre of the novel and the origin story to juxtapose Marianne's Indigenous coming-of-age narrative to another *bildungsroman* that runs parallel to her story: the development narrative of Canadian reconciliation that deterritorializes and depoliticizes solidarity. In her preface to *Sojourners and Sundogs*, Maracle writes that the genre of the short story "for Salish people is an old medium" while "the novel is fairly new" (*Sojourners* 13). She further explains that "the only form comparable to a novel in the history of our storytelling is our origin story" (13). For McLeod, *Sundogs* constitutes "an origin story of contemporary Indigenous place-based activism in Canada" (124). Within the broader activist context of the novel, Petra Fachinger reads the family's experience of "transformative" events as Maracle's oratorical move that blends the familial narrative with wider narratives of community (79). Fachinger adds that the connection

between personal events and the collective anticolonial struggle "is indicative of her interweaving of novelistic discourse and oratory" (79). Both Fachinger and McLeod turn to Maracle's scholarship on oratory to convey the ways *Sundogs* builds on ideas about the transformative processes of story. Indeed, Salish oratory, which Maracle elaborates on in her essay "Oratory on Oratory," is different from European notions of rhetoric and public speaking, particularly in the sense that it focuses on relational processes embedded in storytelling and oral traditions of the Salish people. Oratory also places an emphasis on the process of coming toward knowledge and understanding through "study," which is the objective of Salish oratory according to Maracle ("Oratory" 55). Maracle explains "study" as the "contemplative, reflective, dramatic, responsive, analytical, dynamic, collaborative, and inspiring" process of engaging with story (56). As the main objective of oratory, study "is capable of sparking and moving people toward social transformation, dissolving inequities, eradicating dangerous assumptions, and altering oppressive conditions" (56).

Reading the novel's fictionalized narrative as connected to the creative, representational, and methodological aspects of what Maracle has theorized as Salish orature makes a critical link between the narrative of *Sundogs* and an origin story. Marianne's narrative of transformation is based on the interplay between "obstacles" and the generative process of uncovering meaning through these obstacles (56). *Sundogs* as "oratory" emphasizes the idea of "obstacles," of difficulty, as part of oratorical "study." *Sundogs* traces the movement of Marianne's character from frustration within her family and the society she lives in toward a process of coming to realize what solidarity looks like for Indigenous people in the context of the Oka crisis and beyond. Maracle's teachings on "obstacles" and "study," as central aspects in storytelling practices, inform the text's coming-of-age narrative that does not aim for easy or smooth routes

to collective advocacy and political advancement. According to Maracle, "Salish study looks for the obstacles to growth and transformation, both in the external and the internal worlds" (56*).* In the text, moments of "study" are communicated by the formal moves that connect the political events that *Sundogs* memorializes to the "internal" and "external" worlds the character navigates. It is within this context of the notion of "study" and the movement between "internal" and "external," personal and collective, that the novel suggests solidarity as a difficult yet transformative relation, as it drives the character to make these moments visible through her reflective, interpretative, and emotional responses to the obstacles and possibilities of solidarity. If we can understand this movement as a *bildungsroman* narrative or a coming-of-age story, as Harjo called it, the trajectory toward personal growth and transformation through political empowerment and renewal is contrasted with Canada's *bildungsroman* narrative of liberal progress that underpins the obstacles toward solidarity in this text. In this juxtaposition, I locate coalitional potential in Maracle's novel, as an earlier text about solidarity set in a critical decade for Indigenous literary studies and Canadian responses to a post-Oka world. This is the same world that Beth Cuthand's well-known poem, "Post-Oka Kinda Woman" alludes to: a world of Indigenous refusal and resurgence.

Before I turn to *Sundogs*, it is important to consider how the Oka crisis figures in Indigenous and Canadian literary texts that contemplate solidarity as a central thematic concern. The choice to read Maracle's novel as an example for articulating an imaginary of place-based solidarity in Indigenous and Canadian coalitional texts acknowledges the broader network of Indigenous coalitional responses to the standoff at Kanehsatake. In *This Is An Honour Song*, Leanne Simpson and Kiera L. Ladner write that the standoff at Kanehsatake was "a critical act of resistance, but it was also a vision of reclamation, revitalization and restoration of

Haudenosaunee lands, treaties, political traditions and responsibilities" (2). This broader context of resistance was inspirational for Indigenous nations who were not part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy like Nepinak's text, which can be also seen as an act of literary solidarity and a pan-national coalitional response to the standoff. Simpson and Ladner write that "such visions of resistance served to inspire countless individuals and communities across the country as they put up their own blockades in solidarity with Kanien'kehaka and/or to empower other struggles of resistance" (2). Maracle was Stó:lō and was born in Vancouver. Her anticolonial and solidarity-building work between Indigenous and diasporic communities, especially through feminist circles in the 80s and 90s, is place-based and has accommodated the affinities between Indigenous and Asian Canadian communities who inhabit the same territory. Although Maracle was not Mohawk, *Sundogs* takes the Oka crisis to be the critical moment of trans-Indigenous solidarity.[11] *Sundogs* also suggests that Oka became a moment that inspired broader thinking about solidarity between all people who inhabit Indigenous lands by imagining both place and solidarity as mutually constitutive. It is in this context of fraught histories of coexistence and difficult, place-based solidarities that I contextualize how the Oka crisis or the standoff at Kanehsatake figures in Indigenous and Canadian literary responses.

The Oka Crisis and its Literary Archive

[11] In *Entering the Warzone,* Goodleaf highlights various solidarity actions in response to the Oka crisis, including blockades by the Lillooet Nation at Seton Portage and the Mount Currie Reserve in BC (136). The Sacred Feather Peace Run to Oka, which Maracle's novel evokes, was organized by the Okanagan Nation, mobilized support from Indigenous communities across Canada, where Goodleaf, who was a delegate from Mohawk land to the Okanagan, witnessed unity and resilience among various nations. Additionally, a spiritual alliance agreement established in 1987 between the Confederated Okanagan, Shuswap Nation, and the Haudenosaunee Six Nations underscores the strong historical connections and support among these communities (148).

Simpson and Ladner argue that "for many Canadians, 'Oka' was the first time they encountered Indigenous anger, resistance, and standoff" (2). For the Kanien'kehaka of Kanehsatake, however, the seventy-eight-day standoff "was about 400 years of resistance" and the struggle to remain sovereign on their land through histories of land theft, settler governmentality, and forced displacement (1). This distinction in the perception of the standoff is important for understanding the difficult stakes of solidarity in this context. Indeed, Coulthard, like other scholars, points out that while there were strong solidarities between Indigenous communities during the standoff, the conflict highlighted a lack of meaningful solidarity from Canadian settlers and other non-Indigenous communities (*Red Skins* 118). This lack of solidarity was bolstered by nationalist discourses that "delinked" land from the conflict, portraying the town of Oka as a site of besiegement, as Amelia Kalant argues (146). Central to this discourse was an attack on political solidarity by identifying the Kanien'kehaka as radicalized "outlaws" whose actions contradicted Canadian liberal values of tolerance, peace, and multiculturalism (Dhamoon and Abu-Laban 175).

In this context, Mohawk scholars like Taiaiake Alfred, Donna Goodleaf, and Audra Simpson have argued that the standoff at Kanehsatake exposed the dissonance between liberal democracy and colonial encroachment. The dispute broadly recognized as the "Oka crisis" became widely known when the municipality of Oka attempted to expand a golf course on a wooded area called the Pines, where there is a burial ground for the Kanien'kehaka people. Loreen Pindera and Geoffrey York in *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka* mention that the Pines was always a place of spiritual significance for the Mohawk community, apart from being a burial site. They write that "The Pines are at the heart of the territory the people of Kanesatake have called their own for more than 270 years" (43). Their connection to

the land is also historically located in the context of land protection. For example, Pindera and York note that "when the deforested hillside was in danger of collapsing into the town of Oka and the lake below, the Mohawks planted tens of thousands of trees in the shifting sand" while the land was in the official property of the Sulpician priests (43). Pindera and York also add that "their ancestors named their settlement after this place on the crest of the hill above Lake of Two Mountains: Kanesatake, 'where the sandy crust dunes are"' (43). While the municipality of Oka legally owns the area, which is a park, the Mohawk community refuses to acknowledge Oka's authority. Although the Canadian political discourse around the standoff focused on this "crisis" as an event, the standoff at Kanehsatake is implicated in long histories of anticolonial struggle dating back to the eighteenth century when Kanien'kehaka communities were systematically removed from the land that passed to the authority of the Sulpician Catholic order. In *Entering the Warzone: A Mohawk Perspective on Resisting Invasions*, Goodleaf contextualizes the standoff in terms of ongoing Kanien'kehaka resistance against colonial extraction and expropriation. Goodleaf clarifies that "neither the Haudenosaunee nor the Kanienkehaka have never ceded its title to lands on either side of this alien border line, and we never will" (10). Challenging the popular representation of the standoff as a crisis that erupted suddenly, Goodleaf locates the 1990 conflict over the golf course in a long history of expropriation for development. Simpson, in *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*, discusses the standoff at Kanehsatake in chapter six of her book. Moving from the idea of "refusal," which she articulates in the previous chapter (11), Simpson discusses the Oka crisis as a point of departure for calling into question the political governance of settler states. Taiaiake Alfred in *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* also locates Oka as an event that called

into question ideas of peace and cooperation. Alfred, moreover, writes against the idea that before Oka and 1990, Indigenous grassroots activism was not prominent (122).

Despite the popularized media representation of the radicalized "Mohawk Warrior," scholars have challenged this representation. In *Mohawk Interruptus*, Audra Simpson explains that the Oka crisis began as a smaller blockade organized by Kanien'kehaka women and eventually after months of failed negotiations, the Rotiskenrahkete, otherwise known as "Men's Society" or "Warrior society" erected a large roadblock (150). Progressively, a great number of blockades took place between Oka and Kanehesatake, as well as in other parts of the country in solidarity with the Mohawk people (Coulthard *Red Skins* 116). Most notably, land defenders from Kahnawake blockaded Mercier Bridge, obstructing the flows of capital into Montreal while they received extremist attacks of racial violence by mobs near the area and outside the province of Québec. [12] When the land defenders refused to abide by the court injunction to dissolve the blockades, the conflict notoriously escalated into an armed confrontation with the Sûreté Du Québec and the Canadian army on July 11th, 1990.

Literary work on the standoff locates it at a critical juncture for conversations about solidarity and identity. McCall, for example, writes that the standoff shifted solidarity politics in Canadian literary studies because "Aboriginal writers joined with writers of colour in condemning systemic racism in publishing, institutions, and the media" ("There is a Time-Bomb" 78). At the same time, the Oka crisis highlighted the need for solidarity that centred around the question of land and place-based responsibility, the recognition that it is the colonial

[12] Goodleaf notes that "approximately 5000 to 8000 Chateauguay rioters gathered near the barricades, dressed in battle fatigues and masks while others wore feathers, and marched down the streets chanting" (61). There was a surge of racial violence when "local white Chateauguay residents attempted to attack Kanienkehaka people who resided in Chateauguay" (61). Goodleaf also describes how the authorities did not stop the extremist violence. She writes, for example, "the SQ police force stood by passively and allowed the stoning of the people of Kahnawake" (63). Tracey Deer's film *Beans* (2020) portrays the passivity of the authorities when mobs were pelting Mohawk people with rocks.

relationship that underlines the ethical difficulty of accountability and solidarity. Literary remembrances of the standoff rethink solidarity in terms of amplifying Indigenous sovereignties and not aligning affective coalitional efforts with statist frameworks. Fachinger juxtaposes the creative shift toward solidarity to institutional discourses, noting that "whereas the official discourse has focused on reconciliation, affiliation and solidarity in the struggle against oppression and colonization have been the objective of racialized minority groups in political and academic debates and in cultural and artistic production" (75). The turn to solidarity as part of a broader creative affiliative politics plays a significant role in literary work on the standoff from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers who connect this turn to solidarity with burgeoning discourses of Indigenous resurgence and settler anticolonial reckoning

The emphasis on writing as a means to reclaim representation speaks to the emergence of a dynamic Indigenous aesthetics of "awakening" as Maracle described it in a 1994 interview with Jennifer Kelly titled "Coming Out of the House" (77). Maracle noted that the resistance at Kanehsatake "was a moment of recognition that [Indigenous nations] were not destroyed, that you cannot destroy culture, you cannot destroy the spirit of people" (77). According to Cariou, the standoff "showed Indigenous people that they had the power to assert their voices on the national stage, and it revealed that many non-Native Canadians were interested in hearing those voices," again affirming a renewed interest in solidarity (2). This resulted in the production of several influential examples of Indigenous literature. Some examples include works such as Joe David's "How to Become an Activist in a One Day Lesson" and Daniel David's "Razorwire Dreams." Indigenous authors who are not Mohawk have also produced work that contemplated the crisis at Kanehsatake, including Ojibway writer Drew Hayden Taylor's story "A Blurry Image on the Six O'clock News," Richard Wagamese's novel, *A Quality of Light*, Saulteaux

playwright Douglas Nepinak's "The Crisis at Oka, Manitoba," and Maracle's novels *Sundogs* and *Daughters are Forever*.[13]

Settler and diasporic authors have also engaged with the standoff at Kanehsatake. In *Stories of Oka: Land, Film, and Literature*, Isabelle St. Amand argues that texts "open up a free space in which the outline of the Oka Crisis, or the resistance at Kanehsatà:ke, can be redrawn" (170). In this regard, it should be noted that although there are sustained examples of literature about the standoff, previous criticism has highlighted that the Oka crisis is critically neglected due to a lack of literary production. Fachinger, for instance, attributes this gap in a lack of literary production due to colonial traumas, noting that "the paucity of texts concerned with this national crisis and with five centuries of colonial injustice is surprising" (74). For Fachinger, this absence is due to the emotional difficulty the standoff poses for literary expression for Indigenous authors and for non-Indigenous authors who perhaps have not arrived at a place of understanding the conflict (74). While this line of thought might be correct, I would argue that texts that engage with the standoff as a central theme have not been a major part of critical conversations in Canadian literary studies not because they lack in volume, but rather because Canadian scholarly criticism is still reckoning with Indigenous mobilizations and is still in the process of "redraw[ing]" the lines (St. Amand 170).

If textual examples clash with official responses that focus on recognition and reconciliation, as Fachinger suggests, criticism motivated by studying the contributions of such texts in terms of articulating a politics of solidarity must engage with reconciliation discourses more closely in order to examine how such discourses interact with place-based solidarity.

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[13] In *Stories of Oka: Film, Literature and Land*, Isabelle St. Amand discusses both Indigenous and settler literary and filmic work on the standoff, including the examples I reference here. For a more detailed discussion of these works, see chapters six and seven in *Stories of Oka*.

Reconciliation as "a state good" (Gaertner 8) distorts the political impetus of solidarity as a relationality "directed ...toward community" (Scholz 75). If reconciliation advocates for a relational model, this model, by contrast, prioritizes the movement of the nation toward maturity and the leaving behind of a colonial past. This has direct impacts in terms of understanding what solidarity actions mean politically because the collective ideas that solidarities appeal to disintegrate when historical injustice is negotiated between the frameworks of past and future. In the context of thinking critically about reconciliation, Hannah Wylie, for instance, argues that neoliberal democracies "divorce historical injustices from their social contexts, propagating the myth that we live in a 'postracial society'" (127). Building on Herb Wyile's analysis on literary resistance to neoliberalism, Wylie reads neoliberal economics as an imperative for sustaining Canadian reconciliation and its emphasis on historical and communal injustice as "personal injury" (128). Indeed, this problematic neoliberal departure from collective responsibility "evacuates the normativity from social life by, above all, abolishing the idea of society altogether" (DuFord 26). DuFord, who considers solidarity in terms of neoliberal frameworks of sociality, also echoes the neoliberalization of solidarities on the basis that neoliberalism "translates political and social questions into individualized market questions and makes the reasons of the market into the reasons of the political and social" (27).

In the context of the social character Canadian reconciliation discourse has taken, critics within the field of Canadian literary and cultural studies have critiqued the connection between reconciliation discourse, the neoliberalization of colonial grievances, and ongoing settler colonial dynamics. Pauline Wakeham, for instance, analyzes reconciliation in the neoliberal framework of market values and transaction. Wakeham takes Daniel Coleman's analytic of white civility as the context under which reconciliation fashions itself in federal policy, discussing reconciliation as

an apparatus of the material and ideological economies of settler extraction. For Wakeham, "reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples is of even greater concern to Canada's transnational economic development due to the perceived threat Indigenous constituencies pose to disrupting resource extraction" (229-30). In this same context, it needs to be noted that Canadian peacemaking, which also figures in reconciliation politics, collapses into "transactions of conscience, where wrongs are converted into evidence of national right" (210). Given the close relationship between the standoff and the evolution of reconciliation discourse as a critical problematic in literature in Canada, I consider literature about the standoff at Kanehsatake to be a creative site in which to theorize place-based solidarity as an alternative relational possibility to liberal, progress-oriented forms of reconciliatory practices. Given recent calls made by many scholars to ground solidarity in place-based practices, I begin my textual readings in this dissertation with a return to the standoff at Kanehsatake and in particular to identify and explore an earlier call for place-based solidarities in Maracle's *Sundogs*.

***Sundogs*: The Novel as Origin Story**

The beginning of *Sundogs* focuses on Marianne's ambivalent positionality within her family and the social milieu she inhabits. Marianne experiences racial alienation at the university she attends, and specifically in her discipline, sociology, where she is seen as "a generic Native without much capacity for thought" (Maracle *Sojourners* 90). At the same time, her family, which is led by her mother, known as "Momma," is also a source of tension for the first half of the novel. The affective register of frustration, which is amplified by Marianne's first-person narrative, sets the emotional landscape for the text, but also communicates how Maracle focalizes the colonial contexts of the novel through the representation of the family and their lives as urban Indigenous people in Vancouver. A telling moment early in the novel that attests

to this sense of ambivalence is when Marianne is frustrated by her mother's political anger over the settler administration's "welfare cuts" (25). Anne's frustration, which Marianne initially dismisses as a "genocidal theory," is a source of tension that foregrounds their familial dynamic as problematic and fraught (25). Her mother's accusation "you sound like them" intensifies the distance Marianne experiences in the family dynamic, where she is seen as culturally disconnected compared to her siblings. Maracle describes this tension as a form of double alienation, within Marianne's family and within a white polity that systemically excludes her: "at home, I am not Indian enough and at school I am too much Indian" (25).

The beginning of *Sundogs* suggests that Marianne wants to distance herself from the "structural racism that does violence to Indigenous characters on a daily basis" (St-Amand 221). As she will admit later in the novel, her understanding of colonial violation is influenced by her academic training in sociology that is "divorced from living people" (162). By focusing the space of the family so prominently at the beginning of the novel, Maracle represents the colonial attack on Indigenous families through systems of racialization, the imposition of hetero-patriarchal structures of control and violence, and ultimately through the removal from land as a form of physical, affective, and spiritual loss. Marianne's family is an urban Indigenous family, and while this does not diminish the family's ties to their identity, the reason for their urban move reflects familial and communal losses. We are told, for example, that after the death of their father, Richard, Momma decides to leave her "village" and move to East Vancouver, hoping for a better life (80).

The novel also portrays pervasive gendered violence and patriarchal struggles connected to the colonial imposition of Euro-Western gendered norms. Marianne's older sister Lacey, who is described as "an equal-rights-for women activist," for instance, is at odds with their brother

Rudy, who demonstrates patriarchal behaviours and eventually abuses his wife and children (57). Marianne describes this moment not only as a family crisis, but as a crisis of Indigenous gendered relations due to "racism and every other white male conspiracy against Native womanhood" (66). Fachinger's reading of the diasporic politics of the text affirms how the presence of gendered violence in *Sundogs* is connected to a broader attack on Indigenous relationships and family structures: "The text suggests that Aboriginal families have suffered because Aboriginal men have been divested of their masculinity through repeated acts of colonization" (78). The ways colonial systems have consistently attacked Indigenous family structures and legitimized violence against Indigenous women is at the very core of *Sundogs*, a text that is also ironically cognizant of the sociological interoperations of Indigeneity, womanhood, and colonial violence, thus echoing Maracle's significant work in *I am Woman*, an example of her feminist politics and acute critique of colonial violation and the imposition of gendered dynamics. This is echoed in the novel, both in the lives of Marianne's siblings, who often find themselves experiencing the intersections of racial and gendered violence, but in the experiences of Marianne herself, as she comes to understand them through the activist events and experiences in the novel. For example, Marianne's love interest, Mark, is estranged from his wife and children and at the same time he is an Indigenous activist who is unable "to include women in his strategy sessions" during the Oka crisis (Maracle *Sojourners* 99).

Apart from these structural forms of colonial violence, the novel explores cultural and epistemic alienation as one of the obstacles Maracle identifies in oratory. For instance, Marianne describes herself as the "only social idiot in the family" (57), and her investment in sociology adds to her sense of *ideological diaspora*, the term Cree poet Neal McLeod uses to describe a state of cultural removal from "story" that is part of the broader colonial project of land theft.

According to McLeod, the state of *ideological diaspora* erodes the idea of *ideological home* which he defines as "the interpretative location of a people" (19). For McLeod, being home ideologically "provides people with an Indigenous location to begin discourse, to tell stories and to live life in their own terms" (19). As Marianne admits, she is the only one from her siblings who does not understand their maternal or paternal Indigenous languages and is removed from the cultural understanding her mother and older sisters share, which explains her problematic relationship with her mother at the beginning of the novel. In fact, Marianne's experiences as an Indigenous sociology student at a Canadian university reify a narrative of colonial shame she internalizes through her adoption of sociological readings of Indigeneity and Indigenous life. In *Sundogs*, sociology perpetuates the stories of Indigenous "deficiency," what Daniel Heath Justice describes as "toxic" and "corrosive" narratives that dehumanize Indigenous people (2). In contrast to her mother's vocal expressions of frustration and resentment against the settler administration and broader society, Marianne internalizes a loss of response that is driven by colonial and racial shame, something Maracle portrays through the representation of quotidian and institutional forms of pathologizing and invalidating Indigenous people. In Marianne's words: "I am more than aware of how many of us are on welfare in this city[...] The shame burns holes in whatever sympathy I may have for Indians" (19). Her response is problematically one of sociological distance, of studying "Indians" through a combination of colonial sympathy and patronization, but it is also a painful confession of shame. If the colonialist and racist stories of "Indigenous deficiency" are perpetuated by Canadian and Euro-Western sociology, Marianne's initial participation in this scholarly discipline reveals her complex entanglement in these harmful stories of cultural "deficiency." Commenting on this sense of entanglement, Daniel Heath Justice explains that:

> The story [of Indigenous deficiency] wasn't of our making, but we are part of it now. Perhaps the most wounding way in which this story works is how it displaces our other stories, the stories of complexity, love, and possibility. If the simplistic deficiency accounts are all we see, all we hear, and that's expected from us, it's hard to find room for the more nourishing stories of significance. (4)

Marianne experiences, at least at the beginning of the novel, an ideological distance from story as a relational code of communication and belonging. This is dramatized in her admission that her mother and sisters speak in "riddles" when they engage in telling their people's stories (Maracle *Sojourners* 28). In *Sundogs* Marianne's movement toward finding an ideological home through her involvement in activism, however, renews her relationship with her family and potentially enacts a larger move toward rematriation of knowledge and storytelling, which is taken up by female "knowledge keepers" in the text, such as Marianne's mother, her Aunt Mary, or her sister Lacey (Fachinger 79).

We know from the end of *Sundogs*, which ends with the Peace Run, that sociological understandings of Indigenous life collapse, as Marianne moves from these understandings toward place-based solidarity and the political and relational bonds that form around "sovereignty association" (Maracle *Sojourners* 135). Marianne's movement through the oratory of the novel, the continuous movement through obstacles toward a place of understanding, maps, or rather unmaps, a trajectory from "colonial annihilation" to "sovereignty association" as a site for Indigenous solidarities, which do not remain inward, in-group, but eventually call settlers and diasporic subjects into relationships of accountability (139). This character's movement through different moments of difficulty ultimately shifts solidarity from a sociological relation, which typically revolves around the dynamics of the group as a social ontology, to a way of knowing

and coming to understanding, which are the creative objectives of oratory. The novel's focus on the Indigenous family—through loss and resilience—is a central gesture toward a sense of solidarity that Indigenous activism rehabilitates in the narrative space of *Sundogs*. In the novel, solidarity moves from the sociological toward place-based affirmations of Indigenous and intersectional solidarities. These solidarities include moments of "meetings" with diasporic people and white settlers but didactically return to the conception of the family as a centre that anticipates the solidarity-building that happens on the run (Lew 244).

Returning to the idea of *Sundogs* as an origin story, the novel's different readers encounter different levels of story. These levels of story, the interplay between personal and collective, involves the personal narrative of "mature, transformative governance" where the individual navigates the process of study on their own to collective stories of transformation that can be "liberating" (Maracle "Oratory" 55; 56). Maracle makes these moments available to Marianne in *Sundogs*, although Marianne is not able to discern these moments of self-determination, continuity, and resilience. For example, the narrative begins with the birth of twin sisters, Marianne's nieces, as a gesture of grounding the story in Indigenous cosmological understanding. Marianne comments on the significance of this: "Our twins are special, so says Auntie Mary in lecture after lecture. Twin sisters mark our beginning in the land we now occupy. They also represent peace between the Nations of the West-Coast" (54). What Marianne characterizes as "lectures," given by older female family members, dramatizes the tension between the traditional *bildungsroman* and the Salish origin story-telling tradition, which is described as "ancient and sweet music" (54). Older women like Marianne's mother, her older sister Lacey, and her aunt Mary are described as speaking in the riddled language of "literary confusion" (28). For example, when Mary insists upon the importance of twin sisters, the text

demonstrates the Salish processes of orature, especially the "storying up" of elements and its activation of "study," the process of receiving story and of "maturation" as Maracle describes it ("Oratory" 55).

In *Sundogs*, Marianne's listening to her aunt's story produces the need to "re-search [her own] world" (Maracle *Sojourners* 54). According to Maracle, "study is directed at that which is not seen, not known, at what is cherished and hidden" ("Oratory" 57). As Maracle explains in "Oratory on Oratory":

> The point of hearing (and now reading) story is to study in and of itself, to examine the context in which it is told, to understand the obstacles to being that it presents, and then to see ourselves through the story, that is, transform ourselves in accordance with our agreement with and understanding of the story. (55)

This process, for Maracle, engages with difficulty and with obstacles in the process of study as part of the transformative elements inherent to orature whose objective is the "mature, transformative governance" of the listener (55). Just as oratories "loo[k] for obstacles to growth and transformation, both in the external and internal worlds" (57), the structure of *Sundogs* makes visible these obstacles, exposing those difficult moments of relational rupture as generative. Solidarity, as a place-based trajectory of transformation and personal difficulty, is part of the narrative's fabric of textual obstacles set by colonial hegemonic systems of control and restriction, heteropatriarchy, violence, and a sense of colonial dehumanization and loss, which are made visible in the climax of the novel: the loss of Lacey's daughter, Dorry, and the desecration of graves and the loss of land at Kanehsatake.

"Solidarity with Eachother": Indigenous Refusal in the Meech Lake Accord and the Standoff at Kanehsatake

Harper's role at Meech Lake foregrounds the importance of the standoff at Kanehsatake because it is the first instance of Indigenous refusal Marianne encounters in public discourse. The Meech Lake Accord[14] was a series of proposed constitutional amendments aimed at securing Quebec's approval of the 1982 Constitution Act. During the ratification process, Elijah Harper, a Cree member of the Manitoba legislature, effectively stopped the accord by repeatedly refusing to grant the unanimous consent needed, arguing that Indigenous concerns had not been adequately addressed in the agreement. Harper's refusal was a significant moment for Indigenous empowerment and signaled the 1990s as a critical decade for Indigenous activism that had been gaining momentum from the 1960s and 1970s during the Red Power movement. Although it is the standoff that climaxes Marianne's involvement in land-based resistance, it is important to read the two events in relation in order to challenge the view that the standoff was an isolated and localized event and not an instance of Indigenous refusal within the context of centuries of colonial violation and disenfranchisement (Kalant 134). Isolating the standoff from the continuum of Indigenous anticolonialism reproduces another extractive narrative: the narrative that "distinguished between the conflict over land and the crisis itself" (134). The

[14] The Meech Lake Accord was a series of negotiations aimed at amending the 1982 constitutional changes to address Quebec's position. Legal scholar John Borrows, who is a member of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, explains that although the 1982 constitution recognized treaty-rights, First Nations were excluded during the negotiations. For Indigenous communities and political organizations, the accord was "a troubling return" to a situation that existed before 1982, where formalized amendments would affect their future without their participation or consent" as in the case of the White Paper (124). Elijah Harper, a Maverick Manitoba MLA and former Chief of the Red Sucker Band, was a catalyst in the failure of the accord. Harper repeated a firm "no" during the legislative negotiations while holding an eagle feather, effectively "killing" the accord as it required unanimous ratification (Wagamese 56). In *This Terrible Summer*, Ojibwe author Richard Wagamese describes the Accord as a legislation that aimed to eschew Indigenous self-determination. In Wagamese's words: "With the patriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982, the 'acts of faith' in which the treaties were signed was taken forever. The Indians never signed a treaty with the Canadian government. They were signed with the Queen, and were to last, literally, for as long the grass should grow and the rivers run. The grass was cut and the rivers drained in 1983 (56). Wagamese's words convey the disappointment many Indigenous people who advocated for institutional recognition felt because of the arbitrary character of the negotiations which limited self-determination (57).

collapse of the Meech Lake Accord is an event that presents the difficulty of fostering accountable solidarities with Canadian settlers in the novel.

The failure of the constitutional amendments becomes a moment that shows the difficulties of solidarity in *Sundogs* as the public's reactions against Harper's intervention showcases a fundamental lack of recognition settlers have for Indigenous nations at an institutional level. This is acutely visible in the text when Marianne explains this to a white settler classmate, James: "Canada has not only erased us as a people, but it has cut its own people off from learning from us, and Canadians have much to learn from us" (Maracle *Sojourners* 89). As Marianne notes in her interaction with James, who has not been paying attention to her comments in class about the Meech Lake negotiations, "Indians are capable of great invisibility in the context of Canadians and their sacred institutions" (95). This encounter, a failed moment of recognition from the standpoint of settler Canada, critiques how liberal democratic institutions perpetuate misrecognition in the discourses that are meant to foster liberal ideals of freedom per se. Marianne's statement that "until Elijah messed up the legislature, [Indigenous people] didn't exist" shows the contradictions of liberal values and Canada's legal culture, which facilitates Indigenous erasure (95). Harper's refusal, as the first instance of solidarity-building in Indigenous communities and as an event that shows the relational ruptures between settlers and Indigenous nations, is an extended metaphor for difficult relations that the novel will further unravel in its representation of the Oka crisis, which opens solidarity to a sense of crisis, but also a sense of critical reckoning with rupture. As Marianne confesses, "if Elijah upset Canada, he upset me a great deal more," again connecting her personal narrative of empowerment and refusal to the unravelling of liberal ideas Canada as a settler nation espouses (89).

It is important that in *Sundogs* both the standoff at Kanehsatake and the Meech Lake Accord enter the domestic space of the family through the media, and especially the television screen. As Steven McLeod points out, "the television in Maracle's novel often functions as a metaphor for settler colonial discourse, in the form of national narratives that characterize Indigenous peoples and relationality as irrelevant, out-of-date in the face of liberal democratic institutions, state sovereignty, and market capitalism" (120). For McLeod, the familial space in the novel constitutes a site of resistance as an Indigenous "counter public" that critiques liberal discourse, a central argument he advances about the contrast between settler colonial governance and Indigenous activism as represented in *Sundogs* (120). My analysis in this chapter builds on this useful critique of the novel's unravelling liberal democratic discourses of recognition, and as I outlined earlier, reconciliation—frameworks I discuss as parts of the developmentalist settler *bildungsroman* that is juxtaposed with Marianne's movement toward place-based solidarity. Through the critique of the media and its perpetuation of liberal democratic debates over Indigenous rights, land claims, and recognition, Marianne's family becomes a didactic site of resistance and a site of return to a sense of "honest social affection" which she describes as lacking toward Indigenous communities (Maracle *Sojourners* 89). This is immediately noticeable when Marianne's family is confronted with a journalist's representation of Harper's actions as incompatible with Canada's racialized concepts of progress and tolerance: "Despite a number of attempts by a dozen Native political organizations to be included in the constitutional talks over the last ten years, so far we are not considered a part of this momentous attempt to carve out a constitution uniquely Canadian. No one has been concerned until now" (61).

Marianne's commentary conveys the contradictory nature of institutional recognition and Indigenous rights-discourse in what she describes as a blurring of the lines between recognition

and erasure. Coulthard notes that the "relatively recent 'reconciliation politics' converge with a slightly older 'politics of recognition,' advocating institutional recognition and accommodation of Indigenous cultural difference as an important means of reconciling the colonial relationship between Indigenous people and the state" (*Red Skins* 106). In this view, Indigenous jurisdiction must be contained within settler sovereignty and accommodated through institutional recognition which, as Coulthard has argued, fails its promise of egalitarian coexistence. For Coulthard, the politics of recognition "reproduce[s] the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous people's demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend" because recognition does not address the issue of land (3). In the journalist's perception of the negotiations, Indigenous self-determination does not fit in the liberal sequence of progress embedded in the constitutional development of the Canadian nation.

Harper's refusal represents a commitment to Indigenous nationhood that is incompatible with settler institutional paradigms of recognition, thus, revealing the paradox of liberal democratic development. This is evident in the same episode when Marianne's mother becomes furious by a journalist's assumption that Indigenous leaders "were asking too much" during the constitutional conversations (61). Anne poignantly presents a painful overview of Canada's colonial history, the ongoing sequence of violence that is eclipsed in the Canadian social imaginary of democratic progress: "You got the whole damn country, all of its resources, by dint of the bayonet and now you accuse us for wanting too much" (61). Marianne, empowered by Harper's refusal, critiques a history of colonial violence that relocates relational ruptures and lack of genuine recognition in terms of colonial erasure and violence. This is visible in *Sundogs* when Marianne connects the backlash Indigenous leaders receive in the legislative discussions to the larger project of the liberal nation-state. As Marianne states, the development of the liberal

democratic Canadian nation relies on colonial devastation: “and there on the television, for all the world to see, is the battle laid out, the struggle for personal and psychological survival of Momma and all our old women” (81). The ammunition of settler colonialism is identified poignantly by Marianne as “organized violence, conquest by swords and musket, organized child stealing through the school system and the Child Welfare Act, apprehension, terror, defamation of national character, racism, alcohol poisoning, imprisonment, hanging, language and cultural prohibition, total racial invalidation” (81).

In the novel, Harper’s “no” paves the way for Indigenous solidarity-building, which culminates in the central role of the Peace Run to Oka, which “sheds light on the difference between participating in liberal discourse and place-based relationality” (Steven McLeod 128). But more effectively, solidarity starts from the space of the family, from the living room where Marianne’s mother and her siblings are all watching the rounds of negotiations. Connecting this back to Maracle’s teachings about oratory, the gathering of the family can be read as symbolic of moments of collective confrontation of the obstacles Marianne identified earlier. This is implied by the shift that Marianne experiences in her perception of her mother’s interactions with the media. Once Harper is introduced in the narrative, Marianne’s family shifts from ambivalence and colonial pathologization to empowerment and resistance. We are told by Marianne that she does not view her mother’s interventions as problematic forms of resentment anymore; rather, now, “[Momma’s] discourse on TV takes a ritual, ceremonial quality” (61). Furthermore, apart from gaining better understanding of her mother, Marianne also expunges colonial invalidation: “I feel exonerated from a crime I never committed. I feel like my entire lineage since these people came has been on trial” (81-2). Harper, for Marianne, becomes a reminder of personal and communal worth and this is evident in the way Marianne perceives his words as a way to

reconnect with her heritage: “three generations of us glued to the words of a little man whose command of English is connected to some other language, some other rhythm, a rhythm my mother bemoans is lost” (80). The emphasis on Harper’s language, a language assertive of his refusal and the connection to Indigenous cultural domains, to heritage and land via his spoken words in English, regenerates a form of empathy in Marianne, that is, empathy for her family, community, and herself. Harper’s narrative in *Sundogs* therefore does not only anticipate the imperialist desires liberal development systems assert in the case of the standoff but also instills a renewed communal and political consciousness in Marianne: “his message to us [First Nations] was profoundly simple: we are worth fighting for, we are worth caring for, we are worthy” (89).

Steven McLeod, in his analysis of the novel, also affirms that Harper’s involvement in Meech Lake signaled the “dawning of a new Canada where Indigenous peoples can articulate their traumas, truths, and aspirations” (120). Although McLeod does not read Harper’s anti-constitutionalism in the same terms as the resistance during the standoff at Kanehsatake, in that the Mohawk people directly opposed settler colonial forms of recognition and the standoff incited colonial violence (109), his claim that both the standoff and Harper “restored a sense of place-based relationality and pride amongst Indigenous people in Canada” illustrates the ways the text suggests a trajectory toward place-based solidarity as an integral part of relation (100-101). This resurgence of empowerment activates solidarity as a transitive relationality, as solidarity exceeds the space of the family and moves Marianne and her *bildungsroman* narrative toward “sovereignty association” (136). At the Indigenous organization where she works during the coverage of Oka, Marianne notes: “we talk about things that feel safe—work, Oka and Elijah; between the lines lies the world of our alienation that is disappearing like smoke in the fire of our new sense of solidarity with others like us” (141). The formation of Indigenous

solidarities in the novel and the resurgence of the Indigenous family as a space of worth amplifies solidarity as a site of refusal of "annihilation" and "encroachment" (135). Solidarity figures as an important relation that stems from the refusal of the conditions of colonial "annihilation," the "plot" Marianne starts to believe as historical fact (135). The sections of *Sundogs* that follow Harper's refusal register how the standoff at Kanehsatake and the Indigenous activism surrounding the conflict shifted notions of solidarity in the framework of Indigenous sovereignty. Marianne defines solidarity in land-based terms as part of "sovereignty association" (135):

> The process Elijah began is rolling out over the land, rooting itself in all of us—*solidarity with each other*. Sovereignty association as a possibility, as a solution, now looks sensible, possible. Tribal council after tribal council joins the fight. Individual after individual lines up with the Mohawks. Tear-filled calls from Elder after Elder inspire us to carry on supporting the struggle for a little graveyard thousands of kilometers away. (136; emphasis mine)

"Sovereignty association" as an Indigenous ontology where solidarity enacts sovereign refusal brings to mind Gaztambide-Fernández's theory of how *transitive solidarity* insists on "praxis" and not only on the relational elements of a group or collective identity (54). This solidarity that Marianne describes *moves* and *exceeds* the space of the familial while relating it to the sovereign association of Indigenous solidarity and mobilization during the standoff. At the same time, this form of solidarity, as kinetic, exceeding, relational, and land-based across different places and geographies is an aspect of story, of Maracle's oratory that presents the role of the "obstacle" for understanding and transformation, personal and collective "growth" and "maturation" as she explains in "Oratory on Oratory" (55; 57).

Gaztambide-Fernández explains his theory of a decolonizing "pedagogy of solidarity" as having different "modes" (50). What is pedagogical about solidarity, for Gaztambide-Fernández, is its "relational," "transitive," and "creative" possibilities (50). More specifically, a *transitive* mode of solidarity entails the relational and intersectional moves solidarity creates (54). This emphasis on *movement* is explained as a shift from a condition or state of being in solidarity to concrete actions:

> The pedagogy of solidarity is not simply about entering into a state of *solidarity*—to be in solidarity—which might suggest feelings towards, but about actions taken in relationship to someone. More importantly, perhaps, the pedagogy of solidarity is about an action that also affects or modifies the one who acts—*to solidarize oneself with*. It is the middle voice, in which the action of the verb is not only directed to another but also modifies the subject that takes the action. (54)

Significantly, the novel's commentary on solidarity emerges through the ways Elijah Harper and the standoff at Kanehsatake move Marianne toward a praxis of Indigenous resistance and "social affection" (Maracle *Sojourners* 89). Marianne, like many Indigenous people, recognized the standoff at Kenehsatake as a collective challenge to Indigenous relationships to land: "Oka changes the nature of our work. There is a desperate tension in the air. We put everything on hold. Behind the crisis lies the threat of annihilation, and we all feel it" (135). Again, the television works to augment the sense of besiegement that Indigenous viewers have felt in seeing the images of the armed conflict at Kanehsatake. As Simpson argues in *Mohawk Interruptus*, the Oka crisis "was a spectacular event that pronounced the structure of settler colonialism in Canada, illuminating its desire for land, its propensity to consume, and its indifference to life, to will, to what is considered sacred, binding, and fair" (147). The textual images of the standoff

affirm Simpson's characterization by representing the shock Indigenous communities felt before images of extremist violence in the army's intervention and in racist violence against the Kanien'kehaka communities around the area. We are told by Marianne that "Momma cries in front of the television each night, powerless to express the horror and deep sadness she feels" (Maracle *Sojourners*134). Marianne is also devastated by violent images of the conflict: "I experience love for ourselves and sorrow I never felt before" (135). She feels sorrow for the violence Kanien'kehaka people are subjected to—not only in terms of the crisis, but within the larger system of dispossession and displacement from land. This affective climate of sorrow moves the narrative of solidarity toward place-based actions.

Sundogs demonstrates this attack on Indigenous place-based solidarity by manipulating the language of recognition. This becomes evident through Marianne's critique of the language of Indigenous land claims:

> The press fills its pages with broadcasts full of ridiculous comments about how this is not going to do our land claims struggle any good, etc. Not a word about the shame the Quebec government and the town of Oka should feel about golfing on other people's graves. Our land claims struggle has not been doing us any good anyway, limping along as it has been for a hundred years now. I think about the twenty-seven court cases we won. Don't know how to convey the land. Please spare me. There is no longer a question in my mind about genocide. (135)

Marianne's commentary conveys how the ideological rendering of the Oka crisis as a national crisis depended on a displaced representation of violence and besiegement to delegitimize Kanien'keha:ka sovereignty and the "spatial solidarities" that sought to "localize struggles for Indigenous resurgence," to ground such struggles in land and place-based histories of

communities and resistances (Snelgrove et al, 21). Just as the Kanien'kehaka became "a synecdoche" for terrorism, as Simpson put it (151), Oka also became a synecdoche for the settler nations of Quebec and Canada as a strategy of deferral of land theft and colonial violation. In this regard, Kalant argues that the Canadian media represented Oka as "the epitome of the Québécois pastoral town," weaponizing a parochial representation of "a quiet, cheese-making rural backwater and the last place that one would expect a violent conflict" (139). In this visual paradigm, "Oka as a Canadian crisis belongs to an historical cultural project of making Canada a 'home and native land" (139), the project that engendered the developmentalist narratives of vacancy and settler emplacement. In this crisis, Kanien'kehaka land is considered vacant and available for extraction for Quebec's development project of a golf course; at the same time, Kanien'kehaka land is saleable when the federal government decided to purchase the land ostensibly to alleviate the conflict and arguably to assert its reputation as a peacemaker. Countering this narrative, Marianne recontextualizes the standoff at Kanehsatake in terms of ongoing colonial violation and encroachment. As she remarks, "I can't believe that the town could come to own our graveyards by legitimate means; more so, I can't believe anyone would want to play golf on someone else's graveyard" (134). At the same time, Marianne sees the standoff as an example of Kanien'kehaka refusal and sovereignty: "the warriors of Kanesatake know the attack on their grandmothers' graves; the evidence of our genocide is an assault on their will to live. They take up arms, not to deprive anyone of life, but to show the world they are serious about living" she says (170).

Marianne's descriptions of the standoff in terms of a place-based sense of solidarity evoke Simpson and Ladner's statement that "Kanasata:ke was different" than previous resistances (3). As they explain, the difference of the standoff at Kanehsatake was "Not because

of the ripple, but because we saw those powerful images every night on the news for months—images that became a defining moment for many of us ... Images that generated unprecedented Indigenous response in the form of solidarity blockades across Turtle Island" (3). Goodleaf also describes the impact of various solidarity actions aside from blockading such as the Sacred Feather Peace Run to Oka, the Oka Peace Camp near Oka which was organized by Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members, and the Grandmothers Walk in Solidarity with Mohawk Clan Mothers, which was organized by Indigenous matriarchs from various nations, among others (150). This turn to place-based actions as epistemological, ethical, and political sites for solidarity speaks to Coulthard's concept of grounded normativity. Although Indigenous grounded normativity is different across nations, experiences, and relationships with land, it is a useful analytic through which to understand the political aspirations of Indigenous solidarities during the standoff and the demands and commitments these solidarities posit for non-Indigenous communities.

For Marianne, Harper's anti-constitutionalism and the standoff at Kanehsatake became events that ignited a sense of reorientation toward Indigenous grounded normativities. This commitment, in turn, guides the text's representation of place-based solidarity which acquires different political import in the context of Indigenous solidarities during the standoff. In *Political Solidarity*, Sally Scholz clarifies that while there cannot be a singular theory of political solidarity, it is distinct from other social forms of solidarity because it "shifts the emphasis of solidarity" (33). Most importantly, forms of political solidarity carry the potential of challenging oppressive structures because "political solidarity…arises in response to a situation of injustice or oppression" (34). Indigenous solidarities with the Kanien'kehaka shifted political solidarity into the context of grounded normativity, which posed a distinct challenge to the settler nation.

Stated otherwise, place-based solidarities that formed around the basis of affirming Kanien'kehaka sovereignty did not only oppose settler colonial violence but fundamentally contested the larger project of colonial development. As Coulthard explains, the standoff and the coalitions that formed around it directly undermined settler colonial authority: "if settler-state stability and authority is required to ensure 'certainty' over Indigenous lands and resources to create an investment climate friendly for expanded capitalist accumulation, then the barrage of Indigenous practices of disruptive-countersovereignty that emerged with increased frequency in the 1980s was an embarrassing demonstration that Canada no longer had its shit together with respect to managing the so-called 'Indian Problem"' (118). In this already fragile colonial context, as Dhamoon and Abu-Laban note, the participation of other Indigenous nations beyond the Canadian borders further troubled the colonial administration as such acts directly challenged the firmly contained notion of national integrity (175). Accordingly, "the presence of Mohawks from across Canada and the US was especially seen as a threat to the nation-state because the Mohawks (and other Indigenous people) rejected the legitimacy of colonially defined national borders, and because of fears that alliances would be strengthened among Mohawks" (175).

The standoff at Kanehsatake as a settler crisis became a point of departure for depoliticizing solidarity in the neoliberal framework of relationships advocated for by Canadian reconciliation and peacemaking. During the conflict and in its aftermath, the "delinking" of solidarity from land was extremely important for the integrity of the settler colonial nation as a peaceful, tolerant, and multicultural society (Kalant 146). In this context, critics like Coulthard, Goodleaf, Simpson, and Kalant have discussed how the settler administration sought to displace the image of Canada as a colonial aggressor by representing the Kanien'kehaka as domestic terrorists. Robin Redhead has also analyzed the significance of this visual regime through the

media: “with the SQ and the Quebec government failing to end the standoff, the federal government strategically policed a Canadian context through this visual disruption in order to send the message to the Mohawks (and Canadians) that the federal government will not tolerate sovereign “Indian” identities in Canada” (149). In this contradictory representational scheme, solidarities with the Kanien’kehaka became an affront to liberal peacemaking. Kalant argues that during the standoff, political solidarity was represented as a form of radical culturalism that defied Canadian notions of multicultural tolerance (146). Furthermore, this discourse maintained that “solidarity on behalf of ‘culture’ must be kept distinct from political solidarity or the entire history of Canada, understood as the “clash of cultures” always resolvable through dialogue, is jeopardized” (146). Therefore, as Kalant notes, “land was an issue of community rather than polity, of tradition and custom, affection and sense of identity, rather than a matter of political standing” (147).

Indigenous solidarities in the context of grounded normativities, resurgence, and “sovereignty association” confront the obstacles of the rendering of the standoff as another contentious land claim and a settler crisis (Maracle *Sojourners* 136). In this frame of relations, the text moves its storyline of place-based solidarity by engaging with how solidarity becomes eroded and distorted in encounters with non-Indigenous people who are invested in the language of state recognition, and what Maracle depicts as an early form of reconciliatory discourse that is based on a desire to move on according to the developmental trajectory of liberal democratic values. In this context, Maracle turns to the polarizing relationships between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous settlers in a narrative leap that generates a parabolic reading of liberal hindrances to solidarity. *Sundogs* complicates the “critical refrain regarding settlers’ failure to listen” that is evident in writing about the standoff (St. Amand 228) by connecting this

failure to the broader crisis of solidarity maintained by imperialism and the developmentalist attitudes which survive in encounters between Indigenous and settler communities. This tension is animated in the encounter between Marianne and James, her white settler classmate, who enters the narrative when Elijah Harper upsets the constitutional conversations in the context of Meech Lake, earlier in the novel. James's character enters the narrative in a way that mirrors some nationalist discourses reproduced by the media about Harper and the standoff. His interaction with Marianne constitutes a failed moment of "meeting" to borrow Lew's useful frame. James's character engenders the perceptions Canadians have for Indigenous communities in times of crisis. That is, although James is not described as hostile and overtly racist as the mobs at Kanehsatake, he represents ignorance as the grounding principle of relational failures in the novel. The interaction between Marianne and James can be critically read through the analytics of colonial encroachment and Indigenous refusal. James is initially described as an aspiring sociologist who approaches Marianne to know more about Harper and Meech Lake because "Elijah is reshaping the direction of Canadian sociology" (94). The way James approaches Marianne after a class is immediately registered in the dynamic of encroachment, as he chases Marianne outside the classroom and then follows her home, inviting himself in to "get a real Native's perspective" on Harper, as she tells her relatives who are perplexed by this intrusion (106). The fact that James only shows interest in Marianne's thoughts at a moment of settler crisis demonstrates the failings of discourses of mutual recognition and respectful relations. Like the journalist's misrepresentation of Harper earlier in the novel, James's inability to understand the Indigenous positions on the accord and to see Marianne as a person with thoughts and agency conveys the deeply entrenched developmentalist logic that characterizes settler relations with Indigenous communities.

Steven McLeod also considers this encounter as a failed moment of potential understanding and solidarity. He notes that "James is more than a mere foil to Marianne's increasingly sophisticated Indigenous critique. His blunders and missteps offer teachings, by way of allegory, to non-Indigenous peoples about how settler colonial narratives produce and pervade the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship" (132). As McLeod suggests, this failed point of encounter shows how liberal forms of solidarity based on ideas about dialogue are marked by the fissures of developmentalism, which constantly reconfigures encounters with Indigenous people as a form of *terra nullius*, as a new territory available for charting out relations of mutuality, reconciliation, and peace. This investment into liberal dialogue and knowledge at a time of settler crisis elides the reality of colonialism in the relationships between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous settlers, which also manifests in the extractive means James uses to reach understanding. When Marianne connects the Meech Lake accord to the preservation of a colonial economy in Canada and genocidal practices, for example, James cannot recognize the violent colonial reality eclipsed by notions of tolerance and cooperation. His insistence that he is "ignorant" can be read as what Tiffany Lethabo King characterizes as '"colonial unknowing"' (44), that is, a generalized attitude of settler disavowal of conquest in terms of Indigenous genocide and Black enslavement. This interaction begs questions about what solidarity signifies and entails in liberal inquiry and encounter, which enact what Lethabo King describes as the "violent humanisms that feed off Indigenous genocide and Black social death" (10). This appeal to liberal humanist ideas prevents a decolonizing ethos of solidarity which, according to Gaztambide-Fernández, necessarily "challenges the very idea of what it means to be human, and by extension, the logics of inclusion and exclusion that enforce social boundaries" (49). Contrary

to this ethos of decolonizing solidarity, James's "innocent questions" permit "his brazen invasion of [Marianne's] home" (Maracle *Sojourners* 145).

This encounter, to put it otherwise, recenters whiteness through the insistence on ignorance as innocence. Marianne's response to James, in this episode, highlights how liberalism fails to address the ethical and political demands of decolonization by rejecting liberal notions of accommodation in terms of the Meech Lake accord negotiations: "Elijah thinks we deserve to live. He believes we deserve to live despite the way we are, and because of the way we are. He bent his back to the plow and he is churning up old sod, dry from want of rain and hard from lack of attention. He sweats it out so that this country can imagine a garden. Imagine a garden which provides for us all" (96). If the idea of the garden in the above passage also includes accountable co-existence between communities and meaningful, non-extractive solidarity, James's approach hinders this allied imaginary and by extension prevents solidarity from fulfilling its political register. As Gaztambide-Fernández argues, "a decolonizing pedagogy of solidarity must shift the focus away from either explaining or enhancing existing social arrangements, seeking instead to challenge such arrangements and their implied colonial logic" (49). I read this failed moment of meeting between Marianne and James as a prefigurative narrative turn that cautions against the solidarity politics that neoliberal reconciliation discourses advocate for, where solidarity becomes a transaction, a commodity that can be granted and withheld "when [it] becomes difficult, mundane, or hazardous" (Scholz 75). Interestingly, the disruption of James's "invasion" of Marianne's home mirrors the violation at Kanehsatake: "they are out there bulldozing graves for a golf course" (135).

Instead of coding solidarity through the liberal ideas of recognition and the accommodation of Indigenous political goals within the settler state, *Sundogs* explores solidarity

through “sudden and sharp switches between building ‘bridges’ across cultural gaps and sabotaging bridges that others have endeavoured to build” (McCall, “There is a Time-Bomb” 105). Given the novel’s critique of failing recognition paradigms, it is no coincidence that a gesture to the coalitional potential between Indigenous and Black communities foregrounds this episode. In *Sundogs*, the role of Dorry, Marianne’s niece, symbolizes Maracle’s solidarity politics. Just before Marianne encounters James, Dorry shows her a painting about an anti-apartheid allied protest. The painting depicts “a solitary Black woman [...] silhouetted over an indigenous woman, also young and innocent, in the foreground. Behind them the illusion of crowds and picket signs, with no writing on them, makes the background” (84). The painting, an ekphrastic moment that visualizes the potentiality of Indigenous and Black solidarities through the imagery of the two women conjoined by solidarity opens space for a syncretic critique of colonial containment and suppression, something that is extended by the novel’s arc, especially during the Peace Run, where Marianne meets Indigenous sovereigntists, who connect the colonial present of Canada to other parts of the world, unlike the failed moment of encounter with James, a white settler. The painting is a visual allusion to the coalitional potential between communities of struggle, who, whole in proximity, do not encroach or collapse their politics into each other. In this context of intersectional anti-colonial alliances, Lew also reads the painting as a metaphor for Maracle’s “passionate commitments to both anti-colonialism and feminism” (245). The painting, however, can also be read as a moment that visualizes study in Marianne’s journey, providing her with an opportunity to consider solidarity beyond the framework of whiteness and recognition. The painting, put otherwise, embodies how Maracle’s oratorical practice focuses on relationality.

For Maracle, oratory results from the "social structures" that oppose colonialism and its founding principle of conquest (65). These are forms of sociality, "social structures, which lend themselves to creative, re-creative formation and transformation" (65). Maracle adds that "this is how oratory is born. Oratory is a painting[..] it is about relationship, and as such it is about life" (65). Dorry's painting is an oratorical site for relationship-building, a moment where a generative link is born in the broader context of personal obstacles, including the family's grief, and the anticolonial struggle at Oka. The painting is also a textual reminder to visualize possibility in shared struggle, relations that arise from coexistence, and embody the reciprocity that Marianne's encounter with her white classmate lacks. The interplay between the painting and the concept of oratory highlights how both serve as vibrant, creative spaces where relational elements are intricately mixed. Dorry's painting is a textual moment that connects solidarity as a product of imaginative relationality. Maracle explains that:

> Oratory is comprised of the complex relations between disparate characters in their concatenation or their lack of it. It is the story of patterned events. Oratory is a human story in relation to the story of other beings, and so it is fiction, for it takes place in, while engaging, the imagination of ourselves in relation to all beings. Oratory informs the stories of our nations in relation to beings of all life. (65)

Maracle's gesture to Black-Indigenous coalitions allows the text to didactically juxtapose the potentiality and failings of solidarity, thus affirming Lew's important remark that "the notion of solidarity [is] encapsulated in the novel's central image of sundogs" (245). The image of sundogs as a metaphor for solidarity figures prominently in the text's representation of the solidarity run, which climaxes the novel as Marianne's engagement with place-based Indigenous solidarity.

The Okanagan Peace Run: Place-Based Solidarity and Peace-Making

The Okanagan peace run enters the narrative in the context of tragedy: the death of Dorry in a car crash and the violent besiegement of the Kanien'kehaka people. Amid the standoff at Kanehsatake and right after Dorry's funeral, for example, Marianne's brother Rudy decides to join a blockade at Mount Currie. As Marianne notes, different communities were involved in various actions and campaigns in support of the Kanien'keha:ka: "the entire country—Indian country—and a good many white folks too—are busy struggling for peace. The reasons for our participation vary; some want peace at any price and others want sovereignty" (159). Initially, for Marianne, it is grief that leads her toward activism, as she sees a chance for emotional respite in the peace run: "Peace. It is what I need now. I need a reprieve from this war raging inside" (146). Soon, however, the text registers Dorry's loss as a point of entry for revitalization and refusal. Compared to the blockades at Kanehsatake, the run deploys different activist tactics insofar as it is not an armed conflict, nor does it draw the same attention as the blockades which "[cost] the country money" by blocking the movement of capital (198). Even before the text delves into Marianne's experiences on the land, the activist sites of the blockades and the run parallel each other in the sense that both sites affirm the embodied ontology of "land [as] life" (Alfred and Corntassel 600). Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel discuss the imperative "land is life" as a primary step toward Indigenous resurgence (600). Alfred and Corntassel call this a "mantra" for understanding resurgence, but ultimately it is also considered an avenue toward decolonized consciousness (600).

The loss of Dorry in the novel engenders Marianne's commitment to Indigenous life and deeply connects the resistance at Kanehsatake to her loss and family grievances. As Marianne concludes, it is "no wonder [that] those men at Kanesatake have armed themselves, armed

themselves for our dead. Our dead constitute the lost potential for our race. They evidence our genocide" (Maracle *Sojourners* 166). Indeed, as St-Amand argues, the standoff is perceived as a trauma for Marianne's family because "it reminds them of their own unresolved land claims, their continued land struggles" (232). As Marianne ponders the links between encroachment and genocide, she laments: "Land. Land. We are landless. The land dribbled through our hands in moments when disease and hunger rendered us impotent" (Maracle *Sojourners* 163). The imminent threat to Indigenous life at Kanehsatake reminds Marianne of her family's histories of persecution and loss, as her matrilineal family was displaced from a village that was rampaged by epidemics caused by genocidal colonial policies. In this context, Marianne's grief for Dorry "punctures holes in the glorious trail of life" but also "sharpens [her] vision, deepens [her] perception" and incites action (148)

The run mirrors the blockades to the extent that it advocates for peace-making outside the maintenance of liberalism. This is immediately visible in the re-contextualization of peace within the framework of Okanagan sovereignty during the run. As an Elder explains to the runners, solidarity as commitment to peace stems from the ethical obligations of Okanagan alliance to the Haudenosaunee. Initially Marianne is surprised at the run's emphasis on sovereignty. She wonders, for example, why the runners "talk a lot about sovereignty" in an activist site that is dedicated to peace. She admits, "I thought I was clear; I want to promote peace" (181). Historically, Maracle's fictional run corresponds to the Sacred Feather Peace Run to Oka, a solidarity run that took place in the summer of 1990 for six weeks. The original run was joined by over seventy Okanagan Nation Members and members from other Indigenous nations (Sylix Okanagan Nation Alliance). Goodleaf, who was one of the Kanien'kehaka women who met the runners in Manitoba, noted that the run was a result of solidarity based on "a spiritual alliance

agreement" between the Okanagan Confederacy and the Six Nations Haudenosaunee Confederacy made in 1987 (148). For Goodleaf, the run "symbolized the spiritual unity between the two sovereign Confederacies" and "carr[ied] a message of peace and justice for all Indigenous Nations across the country" (148). Although most of the runners had to stop in Ottawa because of the heightened climate of racist violence directed at the Kanien'kehaka and their supporters, the run was a significant moment of solidarity that "helped to increase the public's awareness of the aggressive cruelties perpetrated by the SQ police and the military in Kanehsatake and Kahnawake" (148). Given this history, the dismantling of Canadian peacemaking through place-based solidarity actions is an important closing argument in *Sundogs* as the text finally suggests a framework of place-conscious-solidarities that affirm Indigenous sovereignties and also provide a relational epistemological framework for coalition-building

The departure from liberal mythologies of peacemaking is important for the text's engagement with Indigenous activisms, as the run's connection to the land defenders at Kanehsatake reveals Canadian peace as an apparatus for managing Indigenous dissent movements. In the case of the standoff, as in many other forms of Indigenous dissent, discourses of peacemaking functioned as a discursive tool for the control over resources. As Paulette Regan discusses, the Canadian peacemaking mythology solidifies itself from new and old regimes of peacemaking, such as the desire to naturalize Canada as a peaceful nation. Peace as a Canadian value is also asserted in the liberal representation of treaty-making with Indigenous people wherein Indigenous nations are bestowed '"the gifts' of recognition, tolerance, inclusion, again mythologizing European settlers as "benevolent peacemakers – neutral arbiters of British law and justice, Christian messengers of the peaceable kingdom" (81). In "Oka Peace Camp—September 9, 1990," the preface to an updated edition of *Bobbi Lee Indian Rebel*, Maracle

defines peace as "freedom from conditions which annoy the mind" (9). As Maracle further explains, to be apathetic to ongoing colonial encroachment and extraction creates conditions of mental unfreedom. While the standoff at Kanehsatake, in this context, is located outside the Canadian notions of "peaceful struggle," the Okanagan peace run deconstructs Indigenous dissent movements and political solidarities as disruptive and violent expressions of "Indigenous peoples' uncontrollable anger and resentment" (Coulthard 116). As Maracle writes in "Oka Peace Camp—September 9, 1990":

> Peaceful struggle is all about expending great, strenuous effort to live free from strife, free from war, free from conditions which annoy the mind. It annoys our minds to imagine golfers tramping on the grave of Mohawk grandmothers. It annoys our minds to think, to feel, that we are less than sovereign people in our homelands. And it annoys a good many Canadians as well. (9)

Identifying the violation of the Kanien'kehaka people as the source of unfreedom, Maracle also makes a call to see the liberal Canadian peacemaking myth as a structure that promotes "apathy" (10). "Apathy," for Maracle, "is a kind of admission of insignificance, a form of self-erasure" (10). In this context, the refusal of apathy is integral to a peacemaking that contests colonial unfreedom and, as indicated in this passage, this form of refusal does not reject solidarity-building from non-Indigenous communities who also figure as mentally "annoyed" by colonial injustice. For Maracle, as for many Indigenous communities, the standoff was a direct moment of enacting what Audra Simpson calls "refusal" (11), that is, the "political alternative to 'recognition,' the much sought- after and presumed 'good' of multicultural politics" (11). Although Maracle was not a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy like Simpson, who is Kanien'kehaka from Kahnawake and discusses refusal in specific place-based terms and

histories, Maracle's philosophy of peace as a place-based solidaristic refusal of apathy evinces the coalitional potential in her writings. As Maracle writes: "Some of the citizens of this land wish to be significant. They refuse to be erased. They want peace and solidarity, with each other, with all people and with the earth. And they are prepared to actively search out this peace, be resolute and caring about the promise of solidarity" (10).

The run's affirmation of peace within the ethical and political directives of Indigenous sovereignty directly connects the specific place-based based context of the run to the broader "promise of solidarity" around the Kanien'kehaka resistance as Maracle describes (10). Although Marianne initially questions what Okanagan sovereignty entails in terms of activism for peace, the embeddedness in the physical place as well as the act of running in solidarity with the Kanien'kehaka engender these connections. That is, although Marianne "[had] never heard of [the Okanagan Nation] in [her] geography studies" the geography of solidarity enabled by Okanagan sovereignty teaches her how to trace the links "between the feather, the allegiance to Nations, the loyalty and faith in [their] mission" (Maracle *Sojourners* 176; 179). In *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*, Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman uses the analytic of (*re)mapping* to convey "the labor Native authors and the communities they write within and about undertake, in the simultaneously metaphoric and material capacities of map making, to generate new possibilities" (3). For Marianne, the act of running on her own land and within the obligations of Okanagan sovereignty does not only constitute an "unsettling of imperial and colonial geographies" (3) but also creates new relational possibilities. As Marianne had described before joining the run, this quest for peace parallels the need for resurgence through embodied practices: "the run for peace holds promise. It promises in every step across the country to fill me with affection for my own. It promises to give me the courage to take up

the broken thread of my aborted past and march forward into life from a place where I am both familiar and accepted" (170). Marianne's hope for connectedness comes as a process of being on the land and being part of the run's solidarity group, which is an Indigenous relational site of alliance based on the idea of "march[ing] forward" from a location of refusing colonial "annihilation" and refusing the liberal alternatives to Indigenous place-based relation (135).

By grounding solidarity to place-based understandings of sovereignty and non-Indigenous responses that support sovereignty, Maracle recuperates the "fluency in land and Indigenous sovereignty" which, for Eve Tuck and K.W. Yang, is missing in many critical pedagogies that reference decolonization (30). The physical place and the relational capacities of solidarity materialize the spiritual obligations that stem from Okanagan-Six Nations alliance-building. Marianne, for example, states: "running is a solitary thing" yet at the same time running is an action that elucidates "the smallness of the human form against the greatness of [the runners'] task" (177). The act of running, as a praxis of solidarity, generates a relational framework that is guided by the land-based expression of spiritual obligations to honour an alliance with another nation. Stated otherwise, the run registers Indigenous place as ground for engaging with a decolonializing *pedagogy for solidarity*, as Gaztambide-Fernández calls it, in the sense that solidarity is a political praxis that stems from a particular place-based ethical, spiritual, and political system of relation in this case. Although Gaztambide-Fernández does not reference place-based actions specifically, he theorizes the need to connect solidarity with challenging the epistemic legacies of imperialism and coloniality: "a decolonizing pedagogy of solidarity must shift the focus away from either explaining or enhancing existing social arrangements, seeking instead to challenge such arrangements and their implied colonial logic" (49).

The run in *Sundogs* materializes specific obligations of Okanagan sovereignty, but at the same time it generates a broader communal space of relation that negotiates matters of peace and justice beyond the Canadian nation as an analytic. As Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel emphasized, place-based solidarities can be understood as "practices that centre both Indigenous resurgences and more relational approaches to settler colonial power" (27). The run, in this sense, locates its collective and its shared agency in the place-based commitments Okanagan nationhood honours. In doing so, the run also locates solidarity through its specific epistemic environment, which is sovereign acts toward peace and refusal. It is important to note, in this context, that instead of essentialist and extractive understandings of place and land evident in different forms of liberalism, "Indigenous nationalism" as Altamirano-Jimenez writes, "articulates forms of resistance to external threats aimed at destroying people's senses of place" (43) with place being "not reducible to attachment to the land" (43), but rather a "space of ontological relationships among people and their environments" (43). Importantly, physical place in this regard becomes a renewed site of epistemic negotiation of peace outside institutional discourses and neoliberal investments. The solidarities Maracle advocates for do not essentialize Indigenous lands and struggles as temporal or ephemeral resistances, too closely associated with specific territorial conflicts. In the novel, this is visible by moments of "study" within the solidarity group of the runners of the Okanagan peace run. These moments appear as the runners also engage in a syncretic critique of colonialism as a global system of domination and capital acquisition.

Like the historical Sacred Feather run organized by the Okanagan nation, different Indigenous communities join the run, thus creating a network of Indigenous international solidarities that contest the validity of borders between the colonial nations of Canada and the

United States of America, as Dhamoon and Abu-Laban argue (175). Marianne, for example, becomes closer with Pete and Monty, "an Okanagan boy from Penticton and a Hochunk La raised in Minnesota," (179). In their conversations, Marianne becomes familiarized with different perspectives on Indigenous sovereignty and negotiates her own position within this collective. Moreover, the formation of this particular solidarity group registers place-based solidarities with the Kanien'kehaka in terms of an ethos of parallel imperial grievances, as Marianne and fellow runners also consider apartheid and American imperialism in the Middle East, something that is reminiscent of Maracle's coalitional representation of syncretic solidarities between Indigenous and black women in Dorry's art. Marianne's experience within this solidarity group, in other words, allows her to acquire a renewed politicized consciousness wherein solidarity with one community or in one place also necessarily relates to broader systems of colonial and imperial injustices in other parts of the world. The solidarity formation of the Okanagan peace run, furthermore, is not depicted as an idealized site of agreement and lack of difficulties, as Maracle portrays clashes between different generations of Indigenous people, between youth and organizers, as well as differences between urban Indigenous members and organizers and community-members based on reservations. This portrayal of solidarity as a difficult site for coalition offers a non-essentializing imaginary of solidarity-relations between members with different perspectives. As Marianne mentions, "circles are made. We struggle to understand, communicate across webs of desperation and youthful confusion, but we keep tying ourselves in knots of misunderstanding. Still, we run" (180).

As Lew argues in her coalitional reading of *Sundogs*, solidarity registers in the text in an almost allegorical manner as Maracle's didactic mirroring between potential solidarities and potentially problematic solidarities. This evokes the imagery of twinning, of sundogs, the focal

trope in Marianne's origin story of resurgence. It is no coincidence, again, that before Marianne arrives to the run, we see one of Maracle's "sharp turns" toward building bridges across intersectional experiences of racial injustice (McCall, "There is a Time-Bomb" 105). Just like Dorry's painting, which represented allied possibilities between Indigenous and Black women, when Marianne arrives at Penticton to join the runners, she reminisces about Sue, a Chinese Canadian woman in her sociology program. As Marianne says, Sue "had entrapped herself in an Asian Studies course" and "[was] treated like [the] personal property" of white academics (161). Like Marianne, Sue also experiences encroachment by white Canadians and becomes a liminal subject whose experiences are extractible and fetishized within her academic discipline, sociology, and by extension within the liberal democratic social fabric of Canada as a settler nation. This turn to relationship-building with racialized diasporic communities allows Marianne to contemplate again how solidarity can be based on intimacies with other communities of struggle, who experience different yet relatable oppressions, as Sue is also excluded from a white polity based on racial and intellectual supremacy. As Marianne says, both are "not exactly relevant to sociology" (161). The turn to Sue and her struggles is another didactic moment in the text that prefigures a basis for coalition between Indigenous and diasporic subjects. This moment also juxtaposes sociology to the epistemologies of Indigenous place-based praxis.

During the run, Marianne abandons theoretical sociological understanding of place as the run enacts an Indigenous epistemology of being on the land and acting in solidarity. Marianne admits: "my entire educational framework tells me this is really far-fetched. My body carries me away; it trudges on with a will of its own. The hills of the Okanagan breathe all around me a different truth. My sociological structures have no relevance here" (177). Indeed, Marianne's personal story of resurgence gradually departs from the continental configurations of the

bildungsroman genre's emphasis on emotional maturity and personal progress as another liberal developmentalist infrastructure. By the time Marianne participates in the run, she is already cognizant of her need to find "Indigenous pathways of authentic action and freedom" in order to "[transcend] colonialism" (Alfred and Corntassel 600). The rejection of sociology as a framework of understanding solidarity and agency renews Marianne's understanding of peace in her participation in the run: "the feather erases the state of the siege from my mind. It has been so long that I can't remember not feeling besieged. No. It has been so long that the state of siege felt like freedom. Peace, freedom, freedom from grief, freedom, peace—peace the end of siege. End the siege of sovereign Mohawks who want to live (180). Departing from a theoretical sociological understanding of the connection between Okanagan sovereignty and the obligation toward peace and alliance with the Kanien'kehaka, Marianne finds renewed understanding in the experience of acting in solidarity on her own and other nations' traditional territories. This renewed ontological understanding between sovereignty, solidarity, and peace elevate place and land as "a way of knowing, of experiencing and relating to the world with others" as Coulthard has stated (61).

Coulthard also connects the ontological, spiritual, and ethico-political meanings of place to Indigenous resistance movements, arguing that place–based "relational practices and forms of knowledge guide forms of resistance against other rationalizations of the world that threaten to erase or destroy [Indigenous] senses of place" (*Red Skins* 61). Indeed, the deconstruction that Indigenous place-based solidarities are simply coalitions based on culturalism and not political networks based on "sovereignty association" as Marianne described earlier in the novel, is important for the text's arguments on place-based solidarities across Indigenous nations and across non-Indigenous communities (136). A systematic ethos of solidarity against colonialism

requires “lived and contentious engagement with the literal and stolen ground on which people stand and come together upon” (Snelgrove et al 27). *Sundogs* demonstrates this engagement by gesturing to the involvement of different communities of settlers in solidarity actions that support Kanien’kehaka sovereignty, but do not take over the commitment to resurgence by centering on whiteness as a symbolic capital for solidarity, “the promised land of the changed” as Leanne Simpson calls fetishized notions of white allyship in *As We Have Always Done* (229). For instance, while Marianne is still in the run, she contemplates the involvement of different communities in activism that amplifies Kanien’keha:ka sovereignty:

> All across the country demonstrations fill us with hope. Most of the urban demonstrators are white. White people stand along the highway holding peace signs, Blacks and whites in Kingston are arrested for blocking the bridge during rush hour and daily petitions are signed and sent calling for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Although white Canadians and Native people carry out their actions largely separated from one another, their sense of solidarity is powerful. We feel like this country will never be able to erase us again. (Maracle *Sojourners* 198)

In this context, the novel does not reject cross-cultural alliances with white settlers and diasporic communities but rather emphasizes a decentering of whiteness. As Marianne contemplates, these actions “fill” the runners “with hope” but do not take away from their task and its specific sovereignty-based actions of allyship (198). The participation of these non-Indigenous communities in solidarity actions is given as complementary to the Okanagan peace run, which models a place-based and relational engagement with land through solidarity. *Sundogs*, in this sense, does not glorify non-Indigenous solidarity actions, but didactically demonstrates that while solidarity carries certain liberal epistemologies and legacies of colonialism, place-based

solidarities can bring about epistemological renewal. As Simpson writes, recentering solidarity in the context of *grounded normativity* allows for the development of more meaningful political solidarity actions: “when we put our energy into building constellations of coresistance within grounded normativity that refuse to center whiteness, our real white allies show up in solidarity anyway” writes Simpson (231).

In keeping with the affirmation of Indigenous sovereignty and grounded normativity as sites for redefining peace and solidarity relations, the novel ends with the call for an ethos of decolonizing solidarity as a sustained practice, beyond crisis. Although Marianne is initially disappointed that the run stops in Ottawa, she soon recognizes that the reorientation into Indigenous relational systems of sovereignty, generated by the run, carries future hope:

> We have sunk little webs of roots in the vast soil of our homeland. The run re-created each of us. We re-imagined in every stop of the run and acquired a vision of a different world. A world rich with peace. A world in which we are not invisible. We acquire a vision of the world in which the besiegement of ourselves, the encroachment upon our communities and the death and neglect of one another are no longer acceptable. (203)

The language of “webs of roots” as well as the language “re-imagination” that Marianne uses at the end of the run imply that the solidarity actions rehabilitated a sense of rootedness in place, while the aspect of reimagination points to a resurgence that marks a profound shift in all aspects of the character's life, extending beyond mere grassroots actions to influence her identity, relationships, and understanding of the world. True to its titular image of the twin suns, the parallel possibilities of solidarity (Lew 225), *Sundogs* ends with an emphasis on place-based solidarities as commitment to land and life as a “dream” that becomes actualized through embodied actions. Irrespective of the outcome of the run, Marianne’s goals and hopes for

achieving closeness, understanding, and community gets actualized through the renewal she acquires during the run, the embodied practice of "sovereignty association" (136), which engages Marianne in a holistic relationship with land and different communities. As she admits, the run materializes her personal and communal political aspirations: "equality, solidarity with all creation—a pipe dream. Drum songs and pipe dreams" (206). In this context of wholistic place-based solidarity as "a pipe dream," Marianne also embodies the capacious workings of sundogs, as she mirrors her fellow runners, family members, and community members in a strong "web of sovereignty" (206). As she evocatively admits, "each strand [of sovereignty] spins itself in its own direction, independent of the others and yet bound by a sense of co-operation and equality between them. Sundogs" (206). Marianne, in this instance, defines the relationalities within grounded normativity as an expression of Indigenous sovereignty as a form of twinning, a mutual sense of response-ability symbolized in the image of sundogs. Under this renewed framework of sovereignty, the text displaces the analytic of the colonial nation. That is, if the liberal democratic policies that followed the standoff at Kanehsateke produced a "re-nationalization" of the settler nation in their aspirations for reconciliation, closure, and the decentering of land (Dhamoon and Abu-Laban 177), *Sundogs* deconstructs and inverses the workings of liberal democracy and settler nationalism by affirming that "this is my Momma's country and she can do just exactly what she wants to do wants to in it" (218).

Chapter Two

"the fork of tongue talking treaty–how we gonna dislodge the fishing weir of nation long enough to regain sincerity": Poetics of Place-Conscious Solidarity in *beholden: a poem as long as the river*

> It is very late, but not too late to find a focus on solidarity and peace-making through the water-based ecology that connects, not just humans, but animals, plants and life at the micro and macro scales.
>
> - Rita Wong, "Waters as Potential Paths to Peace"

This chapter continues to explore the idea of difficulty by looking at the formal and political affordances of collaborative poetics and water-based alliances. Maracle's novel explored the possibilities of place-based solidarity as a relation of historical accountability that necessitates a critique of liberal and neo-liberal frameworks of relationship and collectivity. In this chapter, I turn to *beholden: a poem as long as the river*. *beholden* is a collaborative poem that explores how the difficulty of reckoning with ecological harm translates into expressive difficulty, a poetic struggle to engage with water through the creative methodologies of poetry as a material act. While Maracle's novel focused primarily on the issue of shifting notions of solidarity from liberal sociality and into land, *beholden* constitutes an attempt to foster ethical, epistemic, and political alliances through its attention to water as a growing site of activism and scholarly discussion about resistance. *beholden* can be contextualized as a form of "creative solidarity" allied with ongoing movements of water protection and efforts to recognize the colonialist underpinnings of water instrumentalization (Gaztambide-Fernández 56). Significant contemporary Indigenous mobilizations, such as the Idle No More movement in Canada in 2012-2013 and the protest against the South Dakota pipeline in Standing Rock in 2016, created wider nodes of coalitional potential for water protection. These movements historicize *beholden* as a

creative attempt to place poetry in conversation with important grassroots coalitions, such as the Water is Life movement, which originated from the #NoDapl protests, and the Alberta Tar Sands Walks in the context of Canada. Positioning themselves as racialized Canadian citizens, "grateful guest[s]," and sometimes as "unsettlers,"[15] Wong and Wah shift their politics of location into a wider collaborative poetics of coalition that practices solidarity to form environmental community and support water protectors and resurgences (45; 144)

In *beholden* difficulty emerges through the poetic engagement with the environmental politics of the Columbia River Treaty, which was due for renegotiation in 2018. In "Afterwards, A Dialogue," their conversation that appears at the end of *beholden*, Wong and Wah directly address the element of "difficulty" that permeates their engagement with the Columbia River (141). For Wong, the difficulty of engaging with the river stems from human complicity inherent in the intensified hydroelectric development along the Columbia River. She explicitly states, "I don't want to be benefitting from the fourteen dams along the Columbia River and the electric power that comes from those hydro dams" (140). While acknowledging this problem, Wong embraces a form of embodiment through her compositional practice. Her act of witnessing "massive devastation" wrought by the Columbia River Treaty gets reframed as a call for responsibility and presence (140). Wah echoes Wong's concerns about human complicity; however, he frames difficulty as a poetic struggle with language and expression. Wah grapples with the challenge of finding adequate expression for ecological loss and forging a meaningful relationship with the river. As he explains, his experience of difficulty in *beholden* involved the

[15] The term *unsettler* or *un-settler* is discussed by Fred Wah in his conversation with Wong in *beholden.* Wah uses it to describe settlers who wish to unsettle by acknowledging colonial extraction. Dina Al-Kassim in "Listing Waters," clarifies that this term originates from Wong's *undercurrent.* The line reads: "unsettlers excavate like there's no tomorrow" (Wong 13). The term unsettler has gained critical interest. In her contribution to *Downstream*, "Saturate/ Dissolve: Water for Itself, Un-Settler Responsibility and Radical Humility," Larissa Lai also uses this term to connect cultural and activist praxis about water to theories of accountable coexistence.

ethical challenge of the finding language to engage with the river's "materiality" (141). In "Afterwards, A Dialogue," Wah notes that "[l]ooking for language that represents that materiality, finding words for the surface of the water, the depth of the water, the things in the water, was a constant awareness" during his compositional practice (141).

This shared awareness of a multifaceted difficulty—both material and expressive—translates into a poetic struggle to ethically represent the riparian history of the Columbia River in the current historical moment where Indigenous resurgent activisms call for responsible engagement with colonial policies of extraction. The poets grapple with how to craft a textual response that "gives back to the river," as they acknowledge the possibility that "maybe the River gifted [them] [the] words of poetry (141). Building upon this notion of language as a generative struggle but also a "gift," Wong introduces the concept of "debt" as a marker of necessary reciprocity between humans and the environment (141). For Wong, "paying attention and being present" constitutes a form of repaying this debt of gratitude to the river (141). Furthermore, both poets identify the act of creating the poem as a provisional return of this gift/debt. Although the poem's "smallness" is juxtaposed to "the largeness of the watershed" (144), the poem becomes a material form of returning to the river and its peoples, the various Indigenous nations that rely on the river. Wong frames this moment, the historical impetus for the poetry, as a heightened call for solidarity for Indigenous water protectors, which again makes *beholden* closely connected to critical grassroots mobilizations for water protection: "We're in this historical moment with this possible Columbia River Treaty negotiation, so it would be doing whatever we can to support the Indigenous peoples' efforts to help the salmon return, to get ecosystems valued as much as everything else on that river" (141). Wong continues by adding that actions of solidarity during this moment "would be a form of giving back that has an

impact for future generations and would make a difference for somebody else besides [herself]" (141). Analyzing *beholden* as a coalitional project, this chapter explores how the ethics of being beholden to water connects the poem to the relational imperative of anticolonial solidarity, thus exploring another form of place-based solidarity through a poetic form that thinks the concept of alliance and notions of responsibility.

The poem intervenes in the Columbia River Treaty across an extended collaborative aesthetics that generates textual and extra-literary sites of collaboration. *beholden* originates from a larger artistic project, *River Relations: A Beholder's Share of the Columbia River*. *River Relations* is an "an interdisciplinary artistic research project undertaken as a response to the damming and development of the Columbia River in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon" (River Relations, "About"). This project hosts drawings, photos, mixed-media prints, and poetry and combines artistic representation with a historical understanding of the economics of a "dammed river" (Evenden "Statement"). In the context of this project, *beholden* has been exhibited as a 113-foot map and has been made available online as an interactive cartographic poem. The print version, published in 2018 by Talonbooks, consists of two single lines of poetry that span across a hundred and thirty-seven pages, following a design of a map of the river by Nick Conbere and various illustrations of riparian elements including plant and animal life.

The resonance between the two poetic lines connects artistic collaboration with coalition. Although the poets wrote their segments independently, their poetries correspond with each other in various moments, inviting the reader to read across both poetic lines. For instance, Wong conceptualizes allyship as "kinship of rivers [that] flags another path for allegiance to take" (104). This emphasis on water-based kinship finds its counterpart in Wah's line. Wah acknowledges Wong on the opposite shore and positions their collaboration as a process of

reciprocal listening "to mediate [the river's] forgotten language" (105). Although their compositional practices and methods differed, as Wah notes in an interview with Nicholas Bradley, the resonance between the two poetic lines established a broader poetic dialogue. As Wah notes: "Rita wrote her poem totally separate from me. We weren't sharing our writing as we were going along. When we were actually designing it, putting it all together with Nick Conbere, the designer, the resonance of the two lines frequently surprised me" (Wah "Huckleberries"). Moreover, while Wah's line is reproduced as typed, Wong's is reproduced as handwritten. Wong explains this decision as an attempt to emplace the poetry in the fluid rhythm of the water. In Wong's words: "I wanted to stay with the hand, with the flow, with the body" (140). Despite their different creative methodologies and approaches, their poetries parallel each other like "streams of words," as Wah quotes at the end of his line (136). The stream-like quality of the writing, the "flow" that Wong names in her practice, is amplified by the map design of the river by Conbere. The map materializes a mutual poetic attention to riparian histories and topographies, human communities, animal and plant life, as well as the emplaced experiences of the poets.

The collaborative aesthetics of *beholden* has been discussed as coalitional in previous criticism. Heather Smyth, in her discussion of Wong's collaborations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, includes *beholden* in her analysis and argues that a poetics of collaboration contributes to a prefigurative activist politics ("The Need" 950-1). For Smyth, it is the "poetics of embodied action" that is amplified by a collaborative aesthetics in Wong's work that connects creative practices to "direct action" (952). The spatial aesthetic of the cartographic poem expands this "poetics of embodied action" (952). The need to relay another aspect of the story of a dammed river, that is, the relational and affective sites of community-building and solidarity,

exceeds the form of a cartographic exhibition and circulates these calls into textuality. In its visual and poetic attention to the page, *beholden* demands closer attention to these allied sites and gestures toward extra-textual solidarity. For example, apart from the map of the river, the book of poetry includes sites for further reflection that prompt readers to stay with water, to remain with the difficulties Wah and Wong present in their poem. These elements include a bibliographical page with critical scholarship on water relations, a conversation between Wong and Wah titled "Afterwards, A Dialogue," as well as a map by Jeremy FiveCrows which details the First Nations[16] of the Columbia River Basin.

beholden, as its title suggests, is about being beholden to water as part of a broader "land ethics" (89). Wong and Wah relate to the watershed in ways that connect the poem to the personal, sympathetic, and activist relations the poets have with this watershed. Wah was born in the West Kootenays and still returns to Nelson, British Columbia. As he admits in "Afterwards, a Dialogue," Wah is aware of the environmental politics of the Columbia River Treaty and the impact on the watershed. Whether in Wah's earlier association with *Tish* in the 1960s, or his "belated" identification as a racialized writer in the 1980s and 1990s, he treats language as a means through which to navigate one's position in the world (Yu 50). The materiality of place, and specifically the notion of home, are idiomatic aspects of his poetry and call attention to local particularity. This search for place-consciousness, as something that is integral to articulating a language of belonging, is visible in Wah's undertaking of the role of a listener in *beholden.*

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[16] Many of the nations that appear in FiveCrows's map organize themselves under the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, an assembly of Indigenous nations of the basin who are involved in the renegotiation processes of the Columbia River Treaty to protect tribal rights.

Wah's understanding of embodiment speaks to the strong place-based elements in his poetic practice where language and expression originate from place but also become practices of place-making. As Wah tells Bradley, being a "place poet" entails looking at poetic expression as "a way to pay attention to place as a serious, almost spiritual, element in life" (Wah "Huckleberries"). Wong's work is inextricably linked to the Columbia River watershed. Bradley, in *Current, Climate: The Poetry of Rita Wong*, notes that Wong has been called "a poet of rivers" and a "poet of the Canadian petro state," reflecting her focus on water (xviii). However, Bradley clarifies Wong's careful place-based focus: "Wong is a poet not of Vancouver or Calgary per se, but of the territories of the Indigenous peoples who have lived there since time immemorial" (xviii). Wong, who traces her diasporic ties to other places through water, specifically the Pearl River watershed and Toisan, Guangdong, China considers water to be a connector between places and personal and collective histories that travel through water (Wong and Christian 1-2). Moreover, her poetry is linked to her activist involvement, especially at Site C. In 2019, Wong was sentenced to twenty-eight days in prison for peacefully protesting in front of one of the oil handling facilities of the Trans Mountain Pipeline in the port of Vancouver (Wong, "Lessons" 258).

beholden reflects developments in literary and cultural criticism that connect "land ethics" to broader scholarly attention to water (89). Scholarly discussions in Canadian literary studies have responded to the "hydrological turn" in Humanities and cultural studies (Boast 748), a creative and theoretical turn to water as a site that bolsters "an ethics of environmental community" (Chen 275). As Christian and Wong write in *Downstream*, "water is a bond that brings us together" (1). Hannah Boast suggests that this turn to water has a particular meaning for Canadian writing. In her examination of Wong's poetic practices, Boast argues that Wong's

activist poetry advances "a wider contemporary shift in which poetry has emerged as a key form for the articulation of environmental concern and environmental hope" and identifies this as "a trend that has been prominent in Canadian literature" (748). Poet and scholar Stephen Collis, in his essay "Riparian Entanglements: An Ecopoetics of the Colonial River," looks at the work of "Black, Asian, and Indigenous poets [who are] writing through, across, and against the colonial lines that inscribe global space" (145). Against the extractive forms that loosen the connection to the environment, the poetry of "racialized river walkers" articulates a theory of coalition through embodied awareness of "entanglement" with water and the riparian (145). "Poetry," Collis suggests, "is written to entangle, not to disentangle—to locate and enliven entanglements—insuperabilities—constitutive relations" (144).

In *beholden*, solidarity is a "constitutive relation" that is expressed by the poets' engagement with materialities of difficulty that are produced by the neoliberalization of the environment, the invisibility of water, and the erosion of affective ties of empathy toward the environment (144). Poetic language animates and assembles what is compromised or lost by navigating the conditions produced by the Columbia River Treaty and its creation "of a material world dematerialized by colonial occupation and neoliberal erasure of lived environment, which ruins watersheds while shifting population" (Al-Kassim 253). For Dina Al-Kassim, poetry can "rematerialize" what is "ruined" by these forces (253). In her analysis that traces solidarity politics in the poetics of Rita Wong and Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, Al-Kassim contends that "ruined watersheds and shifting populations" are "materialized" in poetic practices that offer a coalitional response of assemblage, which Al-Kassim locates in Wong's use of the list or poetic catalogue (253). Like Collis's idea of poetic "entanglement," place-based solidarity in *beholden* conveys the struggle to rematerialize and reassemble the riparian through a poetics

of being beholden, of being present, and of being accountable to water. Wah's question "Will the riparian be repaired" grounds this inquiry into a poetic questioning that nevertheless exceeds the form of the poem, the boundedness of the text, and becomes a solidaristic call outwards (Wong and Wah 49). If the poem proposes "a radical ecopoetic solidarity," as Collis suggests (149), this happens through the exploration of difficulties produced by the politics surrounding the Columbia River Treaty, but also through the struggle to articulate an idiom of being beholden to water as allied others. This is a coalitional gesture that counters neoliberal erasure by asserting community through forming a solidaristic "we," which I discuss in this chapter.

I consider how *beholden* engenders the collective aspects of literary solidarity. This reading continues to build a theory of how texts become sites where community and decolonial place-consciousness materialize. In this chapter, I show how such a place-consciousness emerges from poetry's attention to its own formal constitution and relational capabilities. Solidarity, to put it otherwise, is also constituted by expressive means. As Dean argues in her formulation of *reflective solidarity*, it is "through language [that] we establish a relationship, creating a common, social space" (31). Astrida Neimanis, Steven Collis, and Jodi Dean think through the collectivity of "we" in ways that can connect decolonial environmental discussions to theories of solidarity. Dean analyzes the invocation of a coalitional, discursive "we" as an act that is inherently "communicative" (30). "We," Dean suggests, is not a reflection of fixed identities collapsed under a form of sameness, but a heterogeneous assembly generated by language that is capacious and does not necessarily define "we" against a categorical "them" (30). Dean further explains: "Because this 'we' provides an inclusive understanding of solidarity, it avoids the exclusion of individual difference" (32). Dean's idea that collectivity is created by language, revealed in space by language, and circulated by this coalitional idiom, is important for a theory

of literary solidarity, and especially a poetic imagining of solidarity where any expression of "we" is under-construction and unstable, just like the process of reading.

beholden is a collaborative poetic attempt at relationship-building with water and with Indigenous and non-Indigenous allied others. The poem, which is also a map, an exhibition, and a product of collaboration between two poets and different artists, embodies the idea of water-based alliance and invites a relational audience to engage with the Columbia River. These multiple levels of coalition configure solidarity for the river as the textual animus behind the poetry. Collis builds on Neimanis's commentary on the plurality and problematic nature of "we" in *Bodies of Water*, where she argues that "as bodies of water, 'we' are in this together, but 'we' are not all the same, nor are we all 'in this' in the same way" (15). As Collis suggests, this is a process that generates risk because a "large enough 'we' runs the risk of turning into a universal idea (151). Although fragile, this possibility of an allied "we" through poetic utterance recasts solidarity as a matter of the imagination, which is a central argument in this dissertation. The relevance of an expressive and communicative "we" in *beholden* demonstrates solidarity as a difficult act of imagining collective possibility. What Collis calls "imaginative collectivities," a plurality that is constituted by an ecopoetic "we" embodies an imaginative potential made possible by the generative relationship between language, difficulty, and solidarity (151).

I argue that *beholden* presents an imagining of place-based coalition or "allegiance" through two primary poetic exhortations that are also calls to action in the relational aesthetic of this poem (Wong and Wah 104). Wah practices what I discuss as an *ecopoetic listening*, in which his creative agency is defined by listening acts: listening to the river as a storytelling agent, a source for sound, language, and interpretative difficulty through confronting environmental harm and colonial histories. Interpretation is cast as a critical task of discerning between a coalitional

language of human hydro-dependency and the discourse of nationalist treaty-making in the context of the Columbia River Treaty and its internationalist politics of hydro-development. For Wah, acts of listening focus on problems of language as a grounded practice for articulating ethical relationships with water and place as opposed to what he calls "treaty talk" or the "forked" language of the Columbia River Treaty (65). I read this practice as a meta-poetic gesture that has didactic possibilities for water-based solidarity. These calls for listening are in creative dialogue with Wong's emphasis on the dual figuration of *return* in her poetry. Wong's exhortations to return to the river's "story" update the framework of indebtedness that she articulated in her conversation with Wah by taking up the call to listen and "tur[n] truth into a verb" (22;71). Wong, moreover, prioritizes the idiom of resurgence through a representation of solidarity as a liquid assemblage from material engagement with water and its lived surroundings that are fragmented. I discuss these poetic calls as expressive and activist gestures that meet at a critique of treaty-making in the case of the transboundary agreement of the Columbia River Treaty that evokes the history of settler treaty-making.

To understand the place-specific environmental context of *beholden*, it is important to understand the ways the poetry draws attention to the Columbia River Treaty as a form of extraction. The Columbia River Treaty was signed in 1961 and ratified in 1964 but was preceded by decade-long conversations about damming and hydroelectric development in the region. Historically, the 1948 floods were identified as the main reason for a water storage agreement in the Pacific Northwest ("About the Columbia River Treaty"). The need for hydroelectric energy, however, was also a central factor in these earlier conversations, as demands for development in the area existed before the building of the first dam in 1932 ("About the Columbia River Treaty"). According to the Sylix/ Okanagan Alliance, the creation of the reservoirs, although

profitable for the province of British Columbia, drastically changed the environment because the run-off stored in Canadian dams "converted the Upper British Columbia watershed into a massive reservoir system, flooding an est. 270,000 acres, forever altering the environment" ("Columbia River Treaty"). The official webpage of the province of British Columbia confirms that the Treaty was signed without the consent or involvement of any Indigenous nations who inhabit the river's basin ("About the Columbia River Treaty"). Accordingly, the lack of involvement of Indigenous nations in the negotiations is attributed to historical omissions: "by today's standards, there was a lack of consultation with the Columbia River basin residents and First Nations when the Columbia River Treaty was negotiated in the early 1960s" ("About the Columbia River Treaty"). Contemporary criticisms of the Columbia River Treaty, however, connect its environmental impact to a broader structure of extractivism and the suppression of Indigenous sovereignties. The Columbia River Treaty cannot be seen outside a colonial context, as bordering practices—integral in the negotiations—have contributed to further "invisibilization" of the Indigenous nations of the river (Baltutis and Moore 586). In fact, many nations, such as the Ktunaxa, Okanagan, and Secwepemc, have never ceded their authority of their territories to Canada or to British Columbia (Paisley qtd. in Baltutis and Moore 587). Among other repercussions, the progressive building of dams and reservoirs in the region has impacted the lives of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities as well as wildlife: "flooding inundated traditional First Nations' sites and artefacts, took productive agricultural and forestry areas out of the local economy, displaced communities, and impacted fish and wildlife habitat" ("About the Columbia River Treaty").

In *beholden*, the Columbia River Treaty ironically evokes the fraught history of treaty-making on occupied Indigenous territories (Wong and Wah 144). The Treaty also provides a

point of entry for critiquing modern settler treaty-making as an expression of ownership, extraction, and developmentalism. Wah, in his poetic line, also includes the term reconciliation as another "forked tongue" similar to the discursive register of the Treaty (53). In this sense, the poem's engagement with the Treaty evokes current critical conversations about decolonizing concepts of treaty as a site of coalition for non-Indigenous communities, especially diasporic communities of colour. Treaties have been frequently revisited in conversations about decolonial practices and discussions of solidarities. Robinder Kaur Sehdev, for example, turns to Indigenous notions of treaty as a renewed epistemological ground to navigate the responsibility of diasporic communities in decolonization (267). Sehdev recognizes all settlers, including people of colour, as "treaty people" based on the premise that the ability to live on Indigenous lands comes from treaty relations, in their Indigenous understandings (267). However, this is not without problems as "treaty is also the space that the state has attempted to appropriate and empty of meaning" (270), thus seeking to erode Indigenous sovereignty and to render it a form of symbolic culturalism. Considering these problematic contexts in conversations about treaty-making as a practice that is not equivalent to the historical treaties between the Crown and Indigenous nations, Sehdev makes a useful call: "we need to turn from an understanding of treaty as a historical artefact, based on European notions of rights and freedoms, and move toward Aboriginal philosophies of treaty as a process of making and keeping good relations" (273). If "we" in Sehdev's call includes all settler people, both diasporic subjects and white settlers, then the question of treaty as a potential site for more rigorous self-location, place-consciousness and solidarity necessitates an engagement with how *beholden* as a poetic expression of coalition takes up the question of community and collectivity.

Listening to the River's Language: Fred Wah's Ecopoetic Listening and the Expressive Register of Solidarity

While Wong's poetry begins with the situational declaration "Sacred starts here," at the source of the river on Columbia Lake (1), Wah opens with the exhortation that apostrophizes the reader and appears to readerly engagement as a form of listening. Wah writes: "Listen—on my way to get a pail of water down by the creek buhdum, buhdum, Columbia River starts humming its invisible Kootenay qi path" (1-2). This listening culminates in a cyclical return, expressed as a thanksgiving to the reader at the end: "thanks for listening to this stream of words become the surf and now the River's voice is free to roar within the sound of silence" (136). For Wah, listening materializes sound as a key element in forming a connection with water. Sound for Wah is the river's "language" and constitutes its "voice." His poetry, as an expression of his listening to the river's language presents moments of clarity and disorientation, lament, and hope. This is particularly evident in his portrayal of ecological loss, communicated through the imagery of cacophony. In Wah's line, cacophonous sounds are comprised of "concrete of contradiction" (21), the "muffled rumbling" of the freight train that the kokanee hear (19), and the nationalist ideas of treaty-making that embody colonial histories of extraction. As the poem progresses, the playful opening of Wah's poetry transforms into a call to interpret the language of treaty, to discern the "irony of this adamantine River slipping past the concrete of contradiction just to exist through itself" (20-12). In Wah's line, these ironies sustain "the mathematics of extraction" (36), the "data" that indicates loss of wildlife, as well as the commodification of water through treaty as part of the "scat song of high modernity" (59).

For Wah, listening to the sound of water translates the bodily experience of being on the watershed into "poetic memories" as Smyth suggests, noting that in Wah's line "the river's sounds and associations guide his revisiting of these poetic memories" ("The Need" 961). The

poetic impulse to translate the sensory experience of listening into poetic language offers an alternative metaphor for hydro-dependency. The playful act of visiting the river to take "a pail of water" becomes the actual poetry (1), the "stream" of writing Wah describes at the end of his line (136). This can be understood as an act of counter-extraction, as a modelling of a form of engagement with the riparian that does not involve ridding the environment of its lived components through the act of partaking. In "Afterwards, A Dialogue," Wah comments on the practice of ecopoetic listening as a poetic methodology of relation with water: "One of the greatest experiences of making this composition was finding out that I had to listen to the river to hear what resonations were available. Language was something that bounced back from the river" (139). Listening as an embodied form of engagement in Wah's poetry is related to Wong's understanding of poetry as an embodied praxis, specifically the choice to write the lines instead of typing them. While Wah depends on listening and acoustic language as a sensory, interpretative, and relational experience, Wong chooses to stay with the body's awareness of the riparian (140). This resonance between their poetic methods connects the practices of listening to Wong's embodied methods of staying with the body in place.

In the metaphor of navigating "poetic memories" as taking water (Smyth 961), Wah configures the poetry as liquid, as a product of water-based interaction and "entanglement" (Collis 145). The exhortations to listen in his poetry work as interpretative paradigms that challenge "treaty talk" but also the mentality that naturalizes these discourses. In fact, the imperative to "listen" is repeated at different moments in Wah's line sometimes followed by the imperatives to "think" and "focus" (25;27). For example, when Wah relates the presence of the freight train, he calls the reader to "listen to the golden gravel of Louis Lee Creek" that aggregates "CPR money from these mountains" to show the capitalist context of development in

the region (21-23). The normalization of capitalist extraction, which manifests as the commodification of water for hydroelectric power and the lack of cognizance over the Columbia River Treaty are aspects of a broader mentality of invisibility of water. Thinking about how the poem intervenes in these problems, Wah exhorts the reader to confront the "Goldstream" that runs into our consciousness, replacing "Coldstream" and seeping into thought (24-25). "Goldstream" represents how the nature of capital exploitation, prioritizes "downstream greed" at the expense of the health of the river and the communities that depend on it (12). In this regard, Wah immediately poses a question that forces readers to reckon with non-human losses in order to challenge anthropocentric thinking. He asks, "how to think like a sturgeon spawning for the first time" in the degraded spawning grounds decimated by dam construction and altered river flows (25). The immediate exhortation to "focus on how breathing holds the heart for that loud Pacific tide" is meant to remind the reader, as part of a relational audience and a potential "we," to not "forget that there's gratitude in those overhead wires" of electricity (27).

These exhortations can be interpreted as coalitional gestures, inviting readers to "think with water" (Neimanis, "Water and Knowledge" 52). In her chapter "Water and Knowledge," Neimanis discusses a conscious turn toward "thinking *with* water rather than *about* it," as a relational theory that "invite[s] water to be a collaborator or an interlocutor" (52). Neimanis explains thinking with water as a critical framework that questions renewed imaginative and interpretative possibilities. She considers, for example the following question: "How might paying attention to water—really paying attention to it, its movements and relations, its vulnerabilities and gifts, what it does, and how it organizes itself and other bodies—open up a different sort of imaginative space, perhaps interrupting some of the foundational concepts and beliefs in dominant Western systems of thought" (51-52). This form of thinking, moreover, is

"imaginative," in that thinking with water as "an aqueous imaginary" requires challenging deeply seated structures of Western thought and imagining other, more capacious experiences of knowledge-creation (52). The calls to "listen," "think," and "focus" in Wah's line communicate poetry as a means with which to challenge the environmental politics of hydro-development that is often presented as inevitable. This emphasis on water as an interlocutor, collaborator, or even ally, establishes the poem as an "imaginative space" for considering necessary paradigm shifts. This extends the collaborative aesthetic and ethic of the poem and makes listening relational against the overall context of transaction, where water is invisible as electricity.

Wah engages in a relational practice that mirrors Neimanis's ideas. The encounter between Wah and Wong in Wah's line exemplifies this thinking. When Wah *meets* Wong on the other shore, his verse acknowledges this moment of encounter by defining the poetic act in this project. Wah greets Wong, acknowledging the difficulty of physically hearing what the other poet says: "hello Rita nice to see you on the other shore not drowning but waving over this ghost of impoundment whose desire was inundated by the backwaters of reconnaissance" (103-4). Wah alludes to British canonical author Stevie Smith, reappropriating a line from the famous poem "Not Waving But Drowning," which potentially comments on the overall thematic concern of the need to encourage more acute visibility, perception, and solidarity toward water as provider for life. In this encounter, Wah engages in another act of listening, acknowledging the shared poetic project as embedded in acts of listening as coalitional reciprocity, but also conveys his literary solidarity toward other poets in gesturing to Smith's work. In addressing Wong, Wah says: "your voice drowned in the Union Pacific diesel on the other shore" (105). He then acknowledges that their mutual poetic task is to "gaze at this water for the ear of the other and meditate on the forgotten thinking of the River's language not its meaning" (105-6). The line

where Wah addresses the difficulty of hearing Wong's voice embodies the complexity of listening in a world shaped by hydro-development and environmental extraction. In describing their mutual task as that of contemplating the "the River's language" and not "its meaning" in a categorical way (106), the listening carries the difficulty of "hearing," of trying to discern those moments of mutuality in the soundscape of the river as "lived environment" and as an environment that cannot be disentangled from the cacophony of extraction (Al-Kassim 254). By meditating on "the River's language," Wah and Wong engage in a form of listening that transcends mere sound, inviting a pause to consider the implications of water as a collaborator in their creative process. Thus, the encounter is not only a meeting of voices but also an acknowledgment of the relational and often challenging nature of understanding and interpreting compromised environments like the riparian locale of the Columbia River. The line that acknowledges Wong's voice as a moment of difficult listening emphasizes the attempt as an act of poetic solidarity not only with Wong, but with the other poets, such as Stevie Smith, George Eliot, Wang Ping, Jeannette Armstrong, and Gloria Bird in a poetic gesture of intertextuality as literary solidarity and as part of Wah's hyphenated poetics.

Wah gestures to the poetic work of different poets who have engaged with water in ways that rehabilitate a lost spirituality obscured by the commodification of water. Wah, for example, greets or acknowledges another poet of Chinese descent, Chinese American poet Wang Ping whose project *Kinship of Rivers* builds on connections between river across different places. In another moment of apostrophe, Wah's speaker exclaims: "O Golden morning far off Tiananmen Square turns to Wang Ping's Kinship of Rivers whose borders are altitude and flow along the Pleistocene shale of hydraulic memory" (12-14). The interplay between locales, with Tiananmen Square being indelibly connected with the 1989 pro-democracy protests in Beijing, and the

Columbia River creating avenues for kinship as Ping's work suggests speaks to how place engenders the hyphen in Wah's poetics. The hyphen extends to Indigenous poets as well in a gesture of poetic solidarity. In another instance, Wah exhorts to "listen to Spokane poet Gloria Bird sing 'what we owe, we owe'—"' (66-67). In another moment of using the hyphen, Wah calls for responsibility and exhorts to "return those salmon bones to the water" as an act of "turning truth into a verb—" (71). The use of the hyphen communicates the pressing, ongoing need for action, for "turning truth into a verb—" (71). What comes after the hyphen, on the next page, is a reference to Jeannette Armstrong's poem "Water is Siwlkw," in an intertextual gesture of solidarity that involves reading poetry as part of the listening Wah advocates for (72).Wah's intertextual references to other poets' work as a process understanding relationally through poetic creation is not the only meta-poetic trait of his line. Significantly, Wah's listening imbues the poem with a fluidity that mirrors the water's flow to draw attention to the formal affordances of a poetic text that is aware of its own constitution. Wah comments on his poetic practices and his idiosyncratic syntax patterns, which in the poem disrupt an orderly organization of language, perhaps as an attempt to avoid replicating the language of the treaty and bordering processes. Instead, Wah lets the line flow, following the water and the listening processes of interpretative difficulty and possibility. He writes, for example, that "Site C marches on watching for a period at the end of *this* floating sentence" (28; emphasis mine). The commentary on these compositional practices highlights how Wah prioritizes the hyphen, as a signal of contemplative pause, rather than the period. The poem extends this reflection on punctuation with Wah wondering "how do you ask the River the right question when the water's a mirror" (29). The absence of a formal question mark transfers Wah's aporia in the next clause of the line: "watch the River from the bridge—you move the River stays—but *listen* closely who talks back" (29-30;

emphasis mine). The hyphen, in Wah's line, effectively replaces the period because Wah sees the hyphen as a generative site of relation, a testament to the connecting capacities of water. In this regard, we get an explicit exhortation from Wah to "just think of the River as a hyphen to the other shore" (31-32). This poetics of hyphenation gestures to solidarity as an element that binds the connections and links produced by the hyphen, returning to the idea of the attempt to find a language that best navigates the material difficulties of the river. In his longstanding poetic career, Wah has turned to the hyphen to explore his mixed-race subjectivity. His diasporic or hyphenated poetics is discussed in connection with many of his poetic works and his biotext *Diamond Grill* but also his creative essays in *Faking It* where he considers poetics and his relationship to language and place-making. Joanne Saul notes the hyphen explores the space of "between," arguing that "for Wah this space includes the space between Chinese and Canadian" (133). However, the hyphen is not only demarcating hybridity and the "problematization of settled assumptions" about identity (133). The hyphen reflects how Wah experimented with genre, noting that the space of the hyphen is also connoting the space "between reading and writing, poetry and narrative …between photograph and text" (133). In *beholden*, the hyphen is another site to contemplate community in place-based terms by shifting personal histories of self-location as well as familial histories of arrival to the location of the riparian locale as a site of alliance.

In *beholden,* poetry extends this image of the hyphen by considering the river's fragmented continuity due to the presence of hydro dams, the destruction of salmon runs, the loss of wildlife, and the forced displacement of populations. Both poems in *beholden* depict their awareness that "the river systems of what would become Canada allowed European colonialists to open new commodity frontiers" (Boast 752). The speaker in Wah's line directly connects

damming and the installation of hydroelectric generating stations to the historical pattern of colonial exploitation of natural resources. Wah writes: “this dam messed up your plan to keep this spirit flowing with respect” (49). Damming generates “river toxic” (8), compromising the watershed and its inhabitants. This toxicity manifests in the ecological damage described throughout the poem, such as the flooded spawning channels and the disappearance of plant life (41-42). Wah’s question, “what happened to the kokanee,” conveys lament, as the speaker knows the answer (41). The irony of flood protection, which results in ecological devastation, is underscored by the drowning “of many dreams” in the reservoir (41). Moreover, the compromised habitat of the kokanee and sturgeon is related to human losses, captured in the image of “someone’s village [becoming] mud lake” (37). The energy of Wah’s listening in the poetry communicates a missing interdependence, as the broader “land ethics” Wong quotes in her line (89). The river at this point becomes “just a mirror of how our greed’s cold-blooded” (42). The mirroring imagery emphasizes the relational nature of Wah’s listening, positioning it not as a passive act, but as a call for responsible engagement from the reader. Wah’s poetic line practices this by involving the reader as a wider relational audience and calling them to join a coalitional “we.” This call to the reader, again, shows how the poetry makes visible the difficulties of extraction. This transitive gesture involving both a reading audience and the poet as actors further amplifies the allied perspective *with* water rather than for or about it, as Neimanis suggests.

Throughout the poem, Wah’s exhortations to listen to the river’s voice progressively become difficult acts of sensory complexity and critical difficulty: the difficulty to discern the river’s sound or “language” amid the discursive presence of the Columbia River Treaty that presents over-damming as a modern inevitability in this environmental moment. The gesture of

critically receiving the river's "voice" through "embodied, haptic, and sensory" gestures points back to language as a constitutive element in engaging with the river (Smyth, "The Need" 960). For instance, Wah narrates the river's "Salishan story" in the stream-like lines of his verse by also punctuating this verse with images of environmental degradation (Wah and Wong 57). Moments of cacophony in the storytelling of Wah's listening are not only registered as interruptions, but as contradictory forces that occupy the riparian environment as colonizing elements that exist in the soundscape of the river. This includes the diesel train whose "rumbling" (19) constitutes a form of cacophonous extraction, the "truck dream of logs" and the overall presence of concrete, and the image of the dams, which are described as "concrete of contradiction" (9;21). Early on, for instance, we are told that "now this quiet water maps diesel along the marshes of locomotion crossing North down" (6). Wah also relates the presence of logging trucks and the diesel train to colonial presence as he states: "sad those poles are not canoes spilling their machines into the forest that floats through the truck dream of logs fed by these creeks" (8-9).

If Wah's listening acts transfer solidarity as a liquid relation from the embodied position of the poet-listener to a broader relational audience that is called into action, listening to moments of difficulty, to the cacophonous interferences, portrays both the river and its listeners as entangled in those moments of difficulty (Collis 145). As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, in "Afterwards, a Dialogue," Wah speaks of the presence of such moments as "difficulties" in the overall compositional and listening praxis of the poetry (141). Moments such as "seeing a logging truck, seeing the diesel train, the tracks going alongside the river because the river has given them this graded bed of travel" are described as "'difficulties [that] kept coming up in language" (141). Notably, these moments of difficult cacophony make the

materiality of the river. For example, the presence of concrete, which relates to the increased number of reservoirs under the Columbia River Treaty, is registered in questions that are meant to generate irony or even a paradox in the poem: "as if a lake would rather be a city" (69), followed immediately by an exhortation "don't let the names replace the reflection of intention" (69-70). Within such ambiguities that create an ever-present "humming" or sometimes a "thud of ambivalence" (69), the poet struggles to find meaning in the listening acts.

Wah comments on the word "diesel" specifically, calling it "a gift of the occasion" despite its disruption and its implications in terms of the economy of oil (141). In this sense, the poet's task to listen conveys the interpretative difficulties for solidarity in terms of engaging with the river as part of land that suffers from ecological degradation. This goes back to what Wah identifies as an "ethical responsibility to look for the right language" in his conversation with Wong (141). Wah comments on how poetic language was a response to such difficulties:

> For me, the language keeps coming out of such 'difficulties.' In another sense, as I think most of us have experienced in trying to get close to the river, it is the body, touch, and sensation, that sense of materiality of the river itself. Looking for language that represents that materiality, finding words for the surface of the water, the things in the water, was constant awareness. (141)

These practices of listening as practices that necessitate a reframing of language are in turn given as attempts at responsible relation, ultimately returning to the idea that poetry is about the fluid currency of solidarity. This aligns with Wah's conception of poetics as initiating movement. As he writes in *Faking It*, his conception of poetics departs from "the theoretical sense of the study of or theory about literature" and is oriented toward "its practical and applied sense, as the tools

designed or located by writers and artists to initiate movement and change" (Wah 51). This search for a way to materialize an animated relationship with place resonates with the goal of "giving back to the river" (Wong and Wah 141). At its conception, *beholden,* as a poem that tries "to give back", *to return* to water and its vitality, engenders a kinetic language of coalition beyond the poem. In *beholden*, language is an iterative means for place-making and involves an interrogation of the poets' histories of arrival and connection to the river and the land surrounding it; at the same time, language also works as a way to be *here* in ways that affirm the resurgence efforts of the river's nations and interpret the Columbia River Treaty in the context of economic development.

The Columbia River Treaty, which appears in the text as "Treaty," is another source of difficulty for the listening acts in the poetry because "Treaty" directly reproduces colonial acquisition through the erasure of Indigenous presence and history. The language of treaty first appears in Wah's poetry with the representation of the border, which is described as "tainted as the signature of Treaty" (53). The representational choices of the border also equate the physicality of bordering with the imagery of the "forked tongue" (97), the misleading discourse of treaty-making for extractive purposes. The page is split by a bold line that carries the sign "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" and includes the geodetic coordinates of the Canadian American border (53). The Columbia River Treaty agreement is critiqued for reproducing nation-building by using the priorities of the time. Alice Cohen and Emma S. Norman note that before the Treaty's ratification in 1964, "the priorities were job creation, flood protection, and creation of hydroelectric power generation" (11). Like many Indigenous tribal organizations have noted, Cohen and Norman also emphasize that Indigenous rights over food sovereignty were elided in the history of damming in the Columbia. They note that "the international

Canada–United States boundary that makes the CRT an international treaty is a boundary not recognized by many Indigenous Peoples, as it was a border constructed and imposed by colonial act" (6). John R. Wagner, in his analysis of the Treaty's historical context, analyzes the agreement in the context of nation-building. He notes that the "Treaty is best understood as the third phase in the last large-scale government-sponsored settler colonialism project in North America" (1). Wagner historicizes the construction of the Grand Coulee dam in 1932 as demarcating this period of heightened nationalism. The connection between the nationalist and internationalist goals of the Columbia River Treaty and the "Doctrine of Discovery" amplify the treaty as "tainted" language and "forked" discourse (53-54).

In the same vein, treaty-making in the case of the Columbia River is also "tainted" by its metonymic significance (53) as well as by the history of settler peoples entering into treaties with Indigenous nations, and the misrepresentation of these treaties as acts that legalized the acquisition of land. The association between the Columbia River Treaty and the Doctrine of Discovery directly implicates the water storage agreement in a continuum of colonial practices that have facilitated Indigenous displacement and extraction of resources, including land and waters. Wah is aware of the mythologized status of settler versions of treaties, especially written treaties. In *Storying Violence: Unravelling Colonial Narratives in the Stanley Trial*, Gins Starblanket and Dallas Hunt point out that "[t]he written version of treaties only captures part of the conversations that took place during negotiations and also distorts much of what was actually discussed" (56). Common examples of distorted treaty interpretations include the "myth" of "Indigenous people's willing assimilation through treaty-making" and the parallel narrative "that Indigenous people agreed to relinquish [their] ancestral relationships with creation and [their] traditional ways of being in exchange for the promise of civilization that Europeans would bring"

(57). Hunt and Starblanket call these prominent attitudes "one-sided, Eurocentric interpretations of the numbered treaties" (54), which ultimately celebrate the creation and legal standing of Canada while "in the popular record, this is where Indigenous peoples' contribution to the creation of Canada effectively ends, at least at a symbolic level" (31). These myths run against Indigenous understandings of treaties as diplomatic and spiritual agreements based on land protection.

In Indigenous thought, treaty-making is a process invested with spiritual significance that reflects the importance of land in Indigenous philosophies and systems of governance and diplomatic relations with human and non-human nations. For Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson, this reciprocal and relational dynamic of treaty-making is primarily reflected in precolonial treaties. Simpson discusses treaties as processes "governed by the common Indigenous ethics of justice, peace, respect, reciprocity, and accountability" (29). Simpson takes the historical context of the treaty relations between the Nishnaabeg and the Haudenosaunee to discuss how Indigenous treaties are "political in nature" and "sacred [agreements], made in the presence of the spiritual world and solemnized in ceremony" (29). This complexity of Indigenous treaties is something many settlers ignore about the deep-seated historical context of Indigenous treaties before settlement. Simpson, in this context, discusses a frequent call to return to Indigenous notions of treaty in order to "renew" the relationship of the state with Indigenous people (30), admitting that this is an "important decolonizing practice" (30); however, Simpson also notes that this argument is fraught and complex as "Canadian politicians and scholars, as well as Canadians in general, have a poor understanding of Indigenous treaty-making traditions, Indigenous political traditions, and Indigenous cultures in general" (30).

Although Wah and Wong do not necessarily aim to correct this lack of understanding about Indigenous treaties, they do attend to the ways extractive policies and attitudes erode Indigenous political and ethical systems of presence and permanence. In connecting the Columbia River treaty's language to the complex history of European treaty-making practices and interpretations, Wah uses a list of negations to show how the treaty is articulated in the context of capitalist extraction and Indigenous erasure. We are told that under the logic of treaty, human relationships with the river and the riparian become fragmentary, antagonistic, and ultimately anti-relational: "Not a rival but a River Not a period but a bullet Not a war but a workforce Not a treaty but a / trait d'union Not the floods of '48 but Be Prepared Not the International Joint Commission but the Army Corps/ of Engineers 'Not Waving but Drowning' Not a list but a listening" (54-56). This asyndeton dramatizes the "forked" speech of treaty-making that negates the river's meaning yet in this list Wah still finds a conditional possibility in "listening" (53). Countering "treaty talk," Wah asserts the river is "there for crossing" (58), again affirming the hyphen as a symbol for solidarity. Wah's line confronts the "forked" speech of treaty and instead redefines the river as a "hyphen" (31), an "apostrophe" and a "cradle" (32), symbolisms that show how water can be a site of decolonial environmental solidarity.

It is important to highlight that I do not argue that *beholden* assumes a recuperative task that aspires toward a restorative poetics that seeks to imagine water and land as pristine sites of pre-colonial contact. Similarly, although treaty is seen as a site that invites decolonial engagement, it is not idealized as a solution either. Wah's speaker makes it clear that "no treaty can talk its way out" (58). As Max Karpinski writes in his analysis of Wong's petro-critical poetics, although "treaty rights-based resistance has been theorized as a primary avenue through which to challenge the accelerations of extractivism" there should be also caution because "the

tactical deployment" of treaty as a "settler colonial structure[e]" affirms those structures of profit and displacement of Indigenous sovereignties (222). Rather than identifying treaty as a solution, *beholden* presents it as a difficult "discursive space" (Sehdev 272) that is generative for solidarity while remaining aware of the problems of treaty that Karpinski outlines. In her consideration of treaty in Indigenous-diasporic relations, Sehdev takes treaty as a starting point for the creation of a larger "discursive space" where solidarity is one of the important aspects of renewed ethical and relational projects between diasporic communities and Indigenous nations (272). According to Sehdev, "the turn to treaty is important also in terms of solidarity formation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of colour because it presents the possibility to develop discursive spaces where we can begin to explore our relationship with one another within a settler and racist state" (272). Wong extends this idea of the poem as a discursive space by turning or returning to Indigenous praxes of grounded normativity in the depiction of the river's nations and their commitment to the return of the salmon and the overall integrity of the river as a spiritual site.

Solidarity as Liquid Assemblage: Water Ethics and the Activist Poetics of Return in Rita Wong's poetry in *beholden*

In her conversation with Wah regarding their responses to moments of difficulty, Wong situates her work as a commitment to "paying attention and being present" both physically and temporally. She situates *beholden* at a time when the Columbia River Treaty was due for a round of renegotiations (141). Wong identifies this moment as critical for place-based solidarities: "We're in this historical moment with this possible Columbia River Treaty renegotiation, so it would be doing whatever we can to support Indigenous Peoples' efforts to help the salmon return, to get the ecosystems valued as much as everything else on that river" (141). Moreover,

Wong identifies the poetry, in its emplaced and temporal momentum, as an act of solidarity, and as an act of "giving back," a return to the river as an element of Indigenous place and as a site for settler and diasporic reckoning with personal and familial arrivals (141). Responding to Wah's question as to whether she thinks that her "poem give[s] back," Wong replies: "I certainly hope that it does by encouraging people to consider their relationships with the river, to responsibly care for the river and its life" (142). Although Wong appears hopeful, she also conditions this possibility for change by calling for "[a] shift in consciousness [that] needs to be materialized through changes in the behaviour and actions that actually work to regenerate life with the river" (142). The need to "regenerate life with the river" is a fragile, anticipatory, and imaginative possibility that *beholden* enacts by conditioning coalitional potential through expressive, interpretative, and textual practices that suggest solidarity as intricately close to language, to a poetics of water that reveals alliance-building as an expressive effort. In the poem, these returns for Wong and the reader are "uncanny" (25) and "traumatic" (82). These returns, more importantly, involve "learning the cultures of this land" (26) as part of "keep[ing] the language and the story honest" (27). The poetic exhortations to return also locate resurgence as a political imperative that can be a space to learn "right relations" with Indigenous nations and water protectors (50). Ultimately, this multifaceted metaphor of return corresponds to Wong's idea that the poem is a form of giving back to the river.

In this context, Wong takes up Wah's question of "regain[ing] sincerity" outside the "weir" of nationalisms by engaging with the treaty as "a massive attack on river & language" (65;61). As Wong explains in her verse, language has been rendered "unreliable" because the treaty's discursive power naturalizes excessive damming (61). Wong's verse communicates this anxiety about how the treaty's environmental politics erode the ontological integrity of riparian

language, noting that "'lake' and 'river' are, for now, bloated reservoir" (61-62). The conditional statement "for now" issues a warning and simultaneously makes a call to action within the poetic struggle to communicate honesty. This is an important qualifier because Wong's exhortations to return consider the conditional "for now" as a prefigurative possibility. Wong calls for responsibly engaging with the watershed of the Columbia River, with its land and its inhabitants through the decolonial imperative of "truth-telling" that is missing from how language is rendered meaningless (Regan qtd. in Kamboureli 11). Wong exhorts: "Keep the language and the story honest" (27). To "call a reservoir a lake," according to Wong, "naturalizes the hubris" of extractive capitalism, a broader element of the ongoing colonial present (28). Like Wah's poetic call that we rid "the weir of nation" from our perception of the river as a way to "regain sincerity," Wong's poetics is an attempt at a sincere decolonial worldbuilding by taking up Wah's calls to listen. Wong, for instance, writes: "Listen for what's underneath the narrative of convenience, the inadequacy of progress, from the perspective of the trees & herons & wolves who remember the before, the during & the after as we wait for the leap to take hold" (29-31).

Wong clarifies how this form of return expresses solidarity by considering her role in the watershed. Wong describes herself as "a grateful guest" on the Columbia River as she is on unceded territory, which further problematizes the dual evocation of treaty in the poem (45). Part of being "a grateful guest" includes engaging with "historical grief in the depths" which Wong relates to the histories of ongoing colonialism (46). The poetics of embodiment dictates that to remain with the water, to follow the flow, entails confronting the restrictions set by settler colonialism. In this sense, the poetic task—as a coalitional way of being with the river—is allied with Indigenous and non-Indigenous water protectors, but also with various non-human others impacted by the extractive environmental policies like the Columbia River Treaty. Wong often

assembles a unified image of these elements of the lived environment through long lists with plants, animals, and other aspects of the riparian locale. For Wong "all modes of creation" include: "cliff swallows, crows, eagles, ospreys, turkey vultures & so many whose names I do not yet / know" (8-9). The offering of the list of animals along with the admission that the poet does not know all their names is a gesture of humility that characterizes her verse of assembly and return. If this poem can be read as offering a vision of place-based and water-based solidarity, Wong proceeds carefully, admitting: "i have more questions than answers when i look at the river & its dwellers, quietly stringing a kinship of rivers across its moving parts" (42). The lack of certainty opens up more spaces for possibility; it adds to the difficulty of communicating an honest representation of the river as "ruined watershed" and a site for decolonial struggle (Al Kassim 255). Wong's coalitional method—a central poetic method in her writing—is to "trip tentatively along [the river's] shores" as "a grateful guest" (44).

The call to "return" appears in different figurations in Wong's poetic line. The reader, for example, is called to return to the "story" of the permanence of the river despite ecological destruction (22). At the same time, this story of permanence also contains moments of realization about how we all depend on water, something Wong represents through many uses of lists in her poetry. The lists assemble what needs repair through language and evocation. They also clarify how we are all connected to water in "ways that are buried in bone and sinew" (25). Wong gestures to Wah's poetic method of listening by also incorporating listening moments as sensory acts of embodiment. Wong writes that the "body listens, lying on the ground" (21). She then offers a list that breaks down the body as a whole, offering a series of synecdoches of individuality and the mentality of autonomy: "skull, ear, shoulder, rib, hip, thigh, calf, ankle, foot, toe, everything/ supported by earth as dream engulfs the dreamer" (21-22).

As Al-Kassim notes, Wong's poetry frequently uses the technique of the list, the poetic cataloguing of fragmented elements "to rematerialize a vanishing world, to conserve it but also to communicate it" (254). Al Kassim analyzes Wong's use of the poetic catalogue as a technique that reimagines and rebuilds what is lost and attacked by colonial and capitalist systems. Al Kassim writes that "listing recalls the past and names the present; it is a political and symbolic strategy that uses poetic echo as a way to locate solidarity across time and land, between animal and element, beyond catastrophe and toward renewal" (254). Arguing that Wong's activist poetics materializes "ruined watersheds" through language, Al Kassim locates an epistemology of solidarity in this poetics (254). The lists in Wong's poetics are also a response to the attack on language that is incurred by the treaty. Although Wah's aporia about "repairing the riparian" remains a grounded difficulty of engagement and relation, *beholden* suggests that the poetic struggle for solidarity for water and land is a process of liquid assemblage of a ruined watershed in Wong's line. Although poetry is impacted by the same difficulties of language in that it carries this unreliability, the affective register of struggle in the poem shows the potential for "a radical ecopoetic solidarity" (Collis 151). This happens through conjuring up "collectivities," as Collis suggests, of humans and non-humans as relational elements coexisting in the same place (151).

Wong admits that the watershed is "older" than the "words" she offers in the poem, yet the offering of words expands on the idea of the coalitional collective (12), the "we" that Wong locates on the watershed, and by extension on the poem. Although Wong is aware that the poem is not enough, poetic utterance embodies the flow of water visually and experientially in the case of *beholden*. Wong's view of poetry as an activist mode of engagement with water is reserved and careful, as "words pile up like a log jam, dam debris, riprap" and yet she claims that poetry is a way of "giving back to the river" of embodying alternative cartographies of relation and action

(17). Countering the treaty's attack on language, Wong asks the reader to return to a language of lost or unacknowledged spirituality, unity, and gratitude through her references to the idea of a double return. This return to accountability mobilizes the communicative "we" Dean theorizes in her theory of solidarity. Much like Wah's appeal to regaining "sincerity," for Wong "keep[ing] the language and the story honest" entails a conscious turn away from popular narratives that advocate for damming at the expense of the river (28).

Part of poetic honesty is the return to the river's "story" of continuity despite commodification, which is meant to incentivize a more responsible engagement with water. This alternative, hidden story behind the narratives sustained by the environmental arguments of the Columbia River Treaty and other forms of capitalist commodification of water is a story of sacredness and permanence that the poetry venerates. Importantly, the calls to return are grounded in the poem's representation of place and time. As an act of returning the gift, the debt, the poem starts with place. Wong's first words rehabilitate a missing spiritual engagement with water as part of the land, of the broader politics of place that plays into the poem, and part of human communities. "Sacred starts here," writes Wong, reconceptualizing topographic location in terms of a spiritual beginning (1). Like Wah, Wong considers water part of a broader conceptualization of place. Wong conditions solidarity as a prefigurative possibility that stems from "think[ing] with watery place" (Chen 274). In *Thinking with Water*, co-editor Cecilia Chen uses the term *watery place* as a framework to "[think] place in terms of water" (275). According to Chen, water conceptually and physically interacts with place by expanding relations and casting places and communities as "permeable" (275), thus shifting focus away from territoriality as the sole site of meeting (275). Chen writes that "[u]nderstanding waters in place helps us to engage with waters and places as mutually transforming and transformative

phenomena" (275). This, for Chen, nuances how one perceives "an ethics of environmental community" (275). Wong's beginning grounds the poem in "an ethics of environmental community" by rehabilitating a sense of spirituality that is missing in human engagements with place and water. The river in the poem is emplaced in its lost spirituality, which is eroded by the "inadequacy of speed and progress" and the "deadly outcome" of human "convenience" as a condition that naturalizes damming, even when it causes irreparable damage for the riparian environment and its human and non-human inhabitants (28;30). Grounding the poem in spirituality rather than a more subjective beginning that situates the poet's role and place in this landscape builds the river's topography through a conscious return. This return to "sacredness" is a decolonial move. Wong's thinking and writing, especially when building solidarity with Indigenous nations, are concerned with water protection as a wider part of land-based integrity and protection.

Recuperating a spiritual presence of water and land is integral to the concept of return in *beholden* because it reframes the role of humans in place in relational ways. Despite the "artificial stop" caused by the dams and reservoirs, Wong advocates for a return to water through presence that recuperates the missing spirituality Euro-Western philosophies deprive land (49). In *Downstream*, Christian and Wong discuss how Eurocentric thought attempts to erase spiritual meanings from place, thus replicating how colonial expropriation depends on viewing place as resource. They write that "the conundrum for Euro-Western thinkers is the spiritual relationship that Indigenous peoples have with those beings and the land" (2). Wong and Christian explain the role of land in a spiritual context:

> Land, she has come to see, is the core issue between Indigenous peoples and settler populations in Canada. The Indigenous relationship to land includes all the seen

> and unseen beings—that is, not just the physical but also the spirits of the land, the waters, animals, birds, trees, plants, insects, and rocks. Each Indigenous group has cultural stories that tell them how they came to be on their ancestral homelands. Also embedded in those cultural stories is how we conduct our relationships with each other and all the other beings on the land. (2)

Wong's beginning with rehabilitating sacredness, like Wah's exhortation to "listen" and "think," is a decolonial turn towards recognition of hydro-dependency. At the same time, it is a turn toward coalitional relations with Indigenous guardians and survivors—those who, in Wong's line, are in alliance with the salmon as relatives, trying to "awaken land ethics" (89) through processes of "kinship" that are in keeping with recognizing the spirituality of place as opposed to Eurocentric worldviews (42-43; 89).

A return to place-based awareness, to fostering an environmental and inclusive solidarity with lived place, resuscitates the "story" of the river obscured by its commodification. Therefore, Wong's first exhortation of return is "return to the story that is going on with or without you" (22). This is the story of permanence and continuity, as well as Indigenous resilience of place and people. The story we, as communities of readers, are called to return to is the story that continues "through intervals of destruction for temporary power or storage" (23). For both Wong and Wah, this story is about Indigenous permanence and resilience to colonial acquisition, extractive development, and the distortion of language as a way of knowing through the slippage of the treaty into the Columbia River Treaty. Wah, for example, when encountering the electricity poles, notes that they "are not canoes" (9). He reminds us that "the truck dream of logs" is "fed by these creeks" (9) that "breathe Ktutaxa" (10), grounding the logs into the territory of the Ktunaxa. By invoking the name of the First Nations of this territory, Wah asserts

Indigenous presence on the land. Wah, moreover, juxtaposes the sound of the train, a marker of industrialization in the area, with the experiences of animal life, such as the kokanee and bull trout who hear the "muffled rumbling" of the train (19). Wong's line also acknowledges the freight train as an element of disruption at that point in the poem, writing that the presence of salmon precedes "the long, loud, loaded train rumbling through the night" (19). In addition to the disruptive presence of the train, the dam is also depicted as a symbol for disruption. Wah, however, affirms an image of Indigenous presence and continuity, noting that "even the water at the bottom of this reservoir won't inundate the Secwepemc" (20). "Story" is also a "nominative power" of First Nations and their languages, and Wah notes that this power "is worth more than the mathematics of extraction" (37).

"Story" for the poets is also a site of solidarity with place and Indigenous water protectors, as it reflects the unacknowledged human hydro-dependency on water. Wong blends the story elements with the need to return in her poetry. Early in her poetry, Wong connects the "sacred" flow of water to the decolonial imperative to "say the names" of the Indigenous Nations on the mouth of the river (3): "Ktunaxa, Sinixt, Secwepemc, Okanagan, Sylix," (2-3). Wong then proceeds to affirm the place-based history of Indigenous nations before colonization, thus challenging the "Doctrine of Discovery," where Wah places treaty and "treaty-talk" in his poetry (53-54). The initial exhortation to "return to the story that is going on with or without you through the intervals of destruction for temporary power" (22) is linked with Wong's imperative to "say the names" (2-3), something she returns to throughout the poem. Wong sees repeating the names of the river's Indigenous nations as relational "maintenance" that aligns with the memory of place, another target of the poetics of return. Wong writes that "what remains & resurges, wave by wave, generation by generation as blood memory, cell memory, is river memory" (77).

The memory of place, of the watershed, is deeply connected to the river's own story of permanence (22). "River memory" binds Indigenous nations to the land (77). When evoking this memory of place, Wong combines this act with the need for "maintenance" (74). "Without maintenance, things fall apart," writes Wong and proceeds to list the nations of the river (74): "And so it bears repeating the tribal nations of this watershed" (74). Though the act of listing, Wong implies that the return to story, to memory, is assembling the watershed as lived space and an Indigenous place.

A central part of return also presents the temporality of resurgence. The way Wong describes the returns to place-conscious awareness, to lost spirituality, to ways that make visible an invisible hydro-dependence, involves looking into the past to revitalize the present moment in continuity that is part of the acts of "maintenance" that the poetry performs (74). In an act that supports resurgences, Wong affirms the sovereignties of Indigenous nations of the river as part of the coalitional attempt to engage with water through poetry. The decision to begin by acknowledging territory foregrounds Wong's commitment to return as a form of un/settler gratitude. This also includes a decolonial account of place outside the Doctrine of Discovery and its paradigms that sustain the discourse of bordering practices, as well as reconciliation as Wah suggests (53-54). Wong acknowledges her guest status and writes that the Indigenous inhabitants of the river were "neighbours in the basin before English & after it through thousands / of thunderous water years" (3-4). The double connotation of "English" in the beginning of the segment refers both to English colonialism and the English language. Along with *watery place* as a framework that adds liquidity to "land ethics" (89), Wong's poetics present *watery time* as the river's Indigenous temporality of alternative histories aside extraction. This other history of the river questions both the expressive authority of English but also the discourse of "treaty talk" and

reconciliation which mark the present "modern" moment while ostensibly leaving behind a racist and colonial past.

Like other instances of poetic catalogue, saying the names of the Indigenous Nations of the River while acknowledging her own limited knowledge about every nation and their long-standing cultures and ties with the land (139), Wong rematerializes the presence of those histories. Moreover, this coalitional practice dismantles the "organisation of history around the coordinates of settler occupation" (Rifkin 1). We learn that the Indigenous history of the river, which is poetically given as "water years" (4), is measured by Indigenous place-making: water years [are] "measured in fishing gathering family rising from the rivers flowing steadily first in time, first in right, along with salmon, now blocked" (4-5). The "now" is modernity, or what is assumed to be modernity, but effectively it is the colonial present that attempts to represent the river as another empty site for extraction. The activities Wong describes, the watery living of the original inhabitants of the river, constitute the elided place-making *beholden* honours.

In this context of water-based alliance, Wong's exhortations to return are rooted in amplifying notions of Indigenous resurgence through attending to temporalities outside the developmentalist present moment. Wong's poetry is particularly set at building alliances through supporting Indigenous resurgences movements that draw from histories of permanence to imagine futurities, which, in Wong's lines, are futurities of accountable coexistence. For instance, the idea that the river is "remembering" both ancestors and future generations implicates the poetry, entangling it, as Collis would suggest (145), in a poetics of relationality. Water and place for Wong remember "the future generations who matter even if we do not know their names, who remain relatives to salmon, relatives to you, relatives to the river banking its perpetual wealth through veins and villages" (78). In *As We Have Always Done,* Simpson

describes how she experiences resurgence across complex experiences of time that challenge the strict temporal frames of past, present, and future. Simpson specifically discusses freedom as "a way of living in an Nishnaabeg present that collapses both the past and the future and as a way of positioning [herself] in relation to my Ancestors and my relations" (2). For Simpson, resurgence entails rejecting settler colonial ways of life and a turn or return toward Indigenous place-based relation. This also involves Indigenous notions of temporality not assimilable within colonial temporal frames. The temporality of "now," for Simpson, carries past and future aspects. She ends her book on resurgence by contemplating the connotations of the word *biidaaban* (dawn). She considers how resurgence activates this sense of multiple temporalities: "Our revolutions will be our new dawn, our biidaaban, with the past and the future collapsing in on the present, as we have always done" (257).

Reading *beholden* through the lens of amplifying resurgences along the Columbia River through the voice of two non-Indigenous poets carries both problems and possibility, blind spots and insight, but also underscores the provisional nature of the poetic medium, as a form of "creative solidarity," in attempting to foster accountable relations through language, metaphor, and the materiality of the poem (Gaztambide-Fernández 56). Wong's returns, in this context, are also embodied gestures toward decolonial place-conscious forms of living and acting that relate to Indigenous visions of treaty-making in the ways "Zone 6 treaty tribes honour the spirit of the salmon" (106). For Wong, the idea of solidarity with water necessarily engages with Indigenous resurgences on the river across Indigenous temporalities and histories of presence and place-making that runs counter to "the narrative of convenience" (29), which focuses on presentism, thus erasing the histories of Indigeneity out of water, and as a result, out of place as well. A river solidarity, for Wong, entails a reorientation toward the river's temporality of permanence and

survivance that allows for a coalitional imaginary of coexistence: “tomorrow belongs to the ancestors who return as children birthright /to live on this earth with dignity, to swim river, not slackwater” (112-113).

Wong affirms the dismantling of a settler temporal frame of commodification and inevitability with regards to the instrumentalization of water through policies like the Columbia River Treaty. In doing so through her poetic engagement with the river, Wong also reorients her own identity in the continuum of Indigenous presence and history by writing the poem as a racialized settler or unsettler. Instead of placing—that is, acknowledging her position and self-location—her act of “being present” comes with an awareness of the broader history of place and time. The intimacies between the limitations of language, the continuum of storytelling as testimony to permanence and resilience, and solidarity with Indigenous resurgences are represented as guiding frames that Wong uses to navigate the role of her poem in these conversations. For instance, there is a parallel between the temporality of the dam as an ostensibly inevitable outcome, the embodied condition of what Wong calls “the limits of the English filter” (139), and the force of colonial extraction. Wong writes that in the time “before the dam” (15), “[a]ll modes of creation, stirred by wind and carrying mountain strength, sung” (9). This specific version of the river’s story, which is targeted in the language of return, represents an Indigenous temporality that persists even though the Columbia River Treaty dams threaten it. The river’s “so many tributaries,” for instance, have been moving “implacably & inexorably century after century” in a “perpetual motion punctuated by camps alongside, sturgeon in the depths before the dam” (14-15).

In representing the “perpetual motion” of the river’s Indigenous history, the imbricated and relational imagining of “sturgeon-nosed canoes [and] white pine resurgence drums” that are

"older than the words" offered by the poet (12), Wong presents coalitional engagement in a careful attentiveness to language that is reflective of ecological theories of unknowability as a decolonial stance and point of entry into solidarity. In "Water and Knowledge," Neimanis argues that thinking "with" water necessitates more thinking about "feminist and anti-colonial concerns of power and responsibility" (56), thus making the need "to know more about what we are doing to water, and ourselves, as bodies of water, in light of water's ecological precarity" essential (65). At the same time, however, Neimanis finds meaning in an epistemology of unknowability, which is "at its most basic, an understanding of and respect for what human beings do not and cannot know, as a necessary counter to our contemporary techno-capi-talized drive toward mastery" (58). When Wah asks Wong to reflect on how the poem "gives back" (139), Wong replies that attending to questions of language and poetic expression necessarily confronts the limits that the English language posits for writing about Indigenous lands and waters (139). To acknowledge "the limits of the English filter," in this sense, as Wong puts it (139), extends beyond the recognition of Indigenous Nations, cultures, and languages that make up the unceded territories the Columbia River runs through; It also presents the difficult, critical practices that solidarity work requires. To truly "meditate the forgotten thinking of the River's language," as Wah suggests in his line (106), one must confront the difficulties of language as the basis for expressing literary imaginings of solidarity within the analogical or metonymic space of the poetry as an alternative cartographic engagement with decolonial investments.

Wong extends the idea of the river's watery temporality and permanence amid destruction by conditioning solidarity with the need to acknowledge human hydro-dependency. In the poetry, this need becomes a point of entry for cultivating water-based kinship and solidarity with the riparian environment. Wong writes, "the trees need the river and the river

needs the trees and we need both river and trees/ in ways that are buried in bone and sinew" (24-25). The lines here aim to build a form of epistemic broadening, a knowing of the riparian environment and water as an elemental aspect of human life and a site showing mutual reliance between humans and nonhumans. This attempt at a decolonial place-based solidarity widens epistemic understanding about the relations between humans and nonhumans who share the same place, broadening the idea of collectivity through different interrelations.

Collis characterizes these unacknowledged liquidities as forms of entanglement. In discussing *beholden* as another poetic instance of "riparian entanglement," Collis thinks along Neimanis's language in *Bodies of Water*, that is, of 'wet' embodiment and "inter-subjective" and "intra-active" liquidities (148). He extends this reading in his mention of *beholden* as a text that locates environmental solidarity in confluent entanglements of "interpenetrative 'wet relations"' (149). As he writes:

> Naming the constituent components of the riparian system in all their intra-active complexity becomes a way of 'repairing' the 'riparian' and resisting the 'massive attack on river & language' enacted by colonial-capitalist 'modernity.' In this way, Wong and Wah offer a form of radical ecopoetic solidarity—a call for 'union of the living, from the tardigrade to the tributary," and thus a rejection of the ideology of the 'sharp edged self-sufficiency' of the human. (149)

What Collis reads as "radical ecopoetic solidarity" is Wah and Wong's representation of the riparian environment in an attuned and relational representation of water-based ethics and kinship. As Collis suggests, Wong's synecdochic listing of individual parts that make up the larger environment and catalogues of animal and plant life is meant to provide a point of entry

for rethinking human responsibility to acknowledge hydro-dependence and the overall importance of water. Wong, whose emphasis of presence as return is a coalitional intervention and a praxis, models this activist call in her lines. To reorient human thinking in terms of relationality, empathy, and a vision of solidarity, requires "uncanny" returns that are also imaginative, creative, and poetic. Like Wah, she encourages her relational audience of this poetic project to "listen for what's underneath the narrative of convenience," (29), to read, that is, their entanglement in water politics. This creative and poetic call requires thinking "from the perspective of trees/ & herons & wolves, who remember the before, the during & the after" (30). In this sense, the nonhuman citizens of the riparian environment are more aware of entanglement even though they are also subject to environmental precarity and loss. Contrary to these nonhuman actors, "we wait / for the leap to take hold or the machinery of greed to dig a mass grave for / those who refused to learn to respect the land, the river" (31-33).

This list of "uncanny returns" while confronting the reader with the devastating problems of environmental inaction also prefigures notions of hope. More specifically, these calls to action to return are necessarily entangled with Wong's respect for Indigenous survivance despite "historical grief" (46) and "attempted genocide" (59). These returns constitute another mode of return to alternatives of "modernity" (61), which is writing itself on the physicality of the border in the language of treaty, whose cadence inflects "imperial delirium" (57). Wong's tone becomes heightened in the representation of Indigenous survivance against and across the colonial inheritance of the Columbia River Treaty: "generations after generation surviving the mines/ cold grasping extraction and toxic aftermath" (51-52), as well as the "incomprehensible speed & scale of logging, unforestry, turning / pines into poles & matchsticks, burning us faster than the glaciers" (52). Wong's line gets physically split as the cartographic incorporation of the

American border on the page splits her lines at "glaciers," connoting the climate inaction that exceeds bordering practices and national responsibility. Wong's idiomatic solidarity, in this context, is a return, as in a response and responsibility of hopeful allied communities to support resurgence efforts. Wong tells us that despite these traumatic and violent encroachments, "survivors remain" (38). Indigenous survivance exceeds the bordering practices of settler economic treaty-making in that it moves through the "dazed stupor" (59) and "imperial delirium" of non-Indigenous treaty-making (57). Wong writes that "what remains & resurges" is the need for "maintenance" (74), which in the poem is accompanied by the simultaneous need to repeat "the tribal nations of this watershed" (74). This idea of maintenance departs from technocratic and techno-rational language and functions as an alternative imagining of the spiritual comportment of treaty-making that is invested in Indigenous grounded normativities where the aspect of "non-exploitative" place-based relations are prioritized in Wong's allied thought. Present, past, and future generations of communities in this region "remain relatives to salmon/ relatives to you, relatives to the river" (78-79). These imagined relations in *beholden* simultaneously represent concrete acts of resurgence that resist erasure. We are told, for instance, that the Wanapum are "still renewing their relationship with the land," and that they are "still river guardians" (87) despite being "surrounded by nuclear waste" (86).

A poetics of solidarity, for Wong, takes heed of wider principles of land pedagogies. In this context, the poem contrasts the language and discourse of modernity, colonial extraction, and capitalist treaty-making with Indigenous resurgences and resistances on the river that counter the "attack on river & language" (61). For Wong, to depart from a discursive focus on solutions and return while giving water and land through presence is to learn from resurgences while being in a difficult coalition with water. A coalitional hope lies in the imperative to not "abandon our

mother because / she is poisoned" but rather to "learn from the Wanapum" (86). This learning, although imagined as relational, is not emulating colonial extraction but instead imagines a coalitional joining with the river as a point of "confluence," the frame Collis uses to engage ecopoetic solidarity in his poetic representation of rivers. This is echoed in Wong's question: "How can the river bring us together? For without it, we will die" (72). For Wong, being in solidarity with the river entails the turn toward building alliances with all Indigenous nations, as a part of a broader relational embodied praxis of coalition. Wong's solidarity politics ultimately reconsiders a coalitional conception of treaty in the reminder that "whether they realize it or not, every single person in the Northwest is a Wy-Kan-Ush-Pum, We are all Salmon People" (107).

Chapter Three

Toward A Temporal Concept of Solidarity: The Refusal of Colonial Time in Gord Hill's Comics on Indigenous Resistance

Today, some groups continue to organize under the INM banner

- Gord Hill, *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance*

In *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* (2010), Kwakwaka'wakw artist and author Gord Hill organizes his comic in four parts that historicize different moments of Indigenous anticolonialism since the first contact: "1492 Invasion!," "Resistance!," "Assimilation" and "Renewed Resistance." The 2010 version of the comic book starts with 1492 when Columbus arrived in the island of Hispaniola. Hill's graphic art, which often uses page-long frames that incorporate different, simultaneous historical events, traces Indigenous resistance as an immediate and ongoing response to colonial invasion and expropriation. The 2010 version concludes in 2006 with the Six Nations Land Reclamation. Hill continues his project in the revised and expanded 2021 version, *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance*, which chronologically extends his material with mobilizations since the early 2000s, while expanding the content and representational aesthetic. The revised and expanded text is longer in page numbers, physically larger, and contains colour in the illustrations, while the 2010 text maintained black and white colouring. Most notably, the 2021 version does not include the organizational units of the previous text. However, the final section of the 2010 version, "Renewed Resistance," still echoes in the loosening of Hill's temporal organization in the 2021 version. It is still helpful to pay attention to the segment "Renewed Resistance" as setting off "the ongoing repetition of resistance" in the next comic (Smyth, "Visual Rhetoric"148). The

2021 version's more lax chronology arguably underscores the continuity of Indigenous resistance, rendering renewed resistance not a distinct phase but a constitutive element of Indigenous history, an ever-present reality since the moment of European invasion. Following Hill's temporal paradigm, it can be argued that we, as multiple communities living on Indigenous lands, still inhabit a moment of renewed resistance open to intersectional and cross-coalitional solidarities. Mi'kmaw legal scholar Pamela Palmater affirms this in her introductory comments to the 2021 version. Palmater notes that Hill's illustrative work "will also speak to other racialized peoples who have suffered at the hands of colonizing invaders," thus gesturing at potential anticolonial solidarities with racialized subjects (12). Considering Hill's artwork and writing as pedagogical, Palmater also writes that "more and more Canadians stand with [Indigenous nations] in [their] demands for land back and an end to genocide," also including the potential for white settlers being more historically accountable because of the pedagogical potential in Hill's work (12).

The significant aesthetic shifts between the 2010 and 2021 versions necessitate reading the two books not as separate entities, but as a single, evolving project, where the interplay of temporality and solidarity is unveiled through the visual and aesthetic shifts from one section to the next. Within Hill's project, the "Renewed Resistance" segment takes on crucial significance, highlighting the ongoing nature of resistance and its capacity to build solidarity across time. The segment "Renewed Resistance" visually and conceptually captures this attention to solidarity-building. Positioned after—or against—the section "Assimilation" in the 2010 version, "Renewed Resistance" focuses on political movements, such as the Red Power Movement and its interaction with other movements against imperial and colonial forces. The page becomes a conceptual frame for interconnected temporalities depicted in the actions of the panels. Hill, for

example, includes the caption “68’ Rebellion” to historically link the year 1968 with other events in this section, including an installment about Wounded Knee in 1973. “’68 Rebellion” reflects a strong transnational context and covers a “world-wide rebellion” in the 1960s when “oppressed peoples organized themselves to fight the imperial system” (63). Hill’s visual choices, used to comment on the temporality of 1968 as the beginning of cross-coalitional anticolonial momentum, illustrate different interrelated moments of resistance. The first panel from the top to the bottom of the page illustrates police violence and protestors responding in “armed resistance” (63). The middle panel focuses on the war in Vietnam and portrays Vietnamese guerrilla fighters armed against American soldiers (63). The bottom panels shift to the Black Civil Rights movement in the United States. Hill also foregrounds the page-frame with two panels on the bottom: one that shows a Black man attacked by a police dog in an urban background that includes a window with the caption “Whites Only”; and another panel that shows Malcolm X and his ideas on “self-defence” (63).

The following page continues the visual exploration of “global uprising” by depicting interconnected panels of different resistances (63). These panels depict the Black Panthers in Oakland detailing their community-oriented actions, such as public education and breakfast programs, and their anti-war protests during the American invasion of Vietnam. Other panels focus on transnational contexts, such as student and labour protests in South America, Asia, Africa, Europe, and the May 1968 strikes in France (66-67). These panels create a pluralistic image of various protest movements to construct a larger representation of anticolonial solidarity in Hill’s work. The smaller panels with visual flashpoints from various transnational mobilizations also foreground the ways the American Indian Movement (AIM) drew from these contexts, and especially from Black resistance movements in the United States in the 1960s. Hill

affirms this in the 2021 version: “The Red Power movement arose in the 1960s & was inspired by the Black Civil Rights Struggle” (108). The inclusion of moments of “global uprising” against imperial and colonial forces show that important Indigenous mobilizations find intersectional moments of confluence with other movements; however, it also shows that solidarity is visualized as an anticolonial continuity where 1968 becomes a didactic spatio-temporality through which we can understand the continuum of Indigenous and allied anticolonial agency in the contemporary moment of ongoing Indigenous resistance. In framing the time period of “Renewed Resistance” with 1968, the anticolonial aesthetic of the comic demonstrates solidarity as an important political relationality of confluence where different temporalities of resistance and political goals meet on the page. The surface of the page is metonymic for land, serving as the ground for narrativizing these moments through text and image in the comic’s rhetoric.

I begin by highlighting the significance of the segment “Renewed Resistance” to show how Hill’s work visually reclaims shared time by visually expanding the temporality of 1968 to include multiple, interconnected movements. This temporal widening happens across different panels that construct a broader idea of solidarity as a confluence that includes different histories of settler colonialism, American imperialism, and anti-Blackness. Hill portrays a subversive vision of shared time, challenging the prominent idea of the *denial of coevalness*. In *Time and the Other,* Fabian analyzes how anthropology and its sub-field of ethnography denied non-Europeans access to a global present or shared time. This denial or “distancing” was achieved by evolutionary anthropology’s “persistent and systematic tendency to place [its] referents in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse” (31). The denial of coevalness, otherwise known as “allochronism,” also denies the historical and collective narratives of non-European and non-Western others (30). Hill’s work represents the collective

narrative of Indigenous resistance in an evolving project that continues to respond to colonial violence, expropriation, and displaced ideas of history and temporality. Analyzing Hill's aesthetics of revision and expansion across this project on Indigenous resistance is important for place-based solidarity because solidarity is also responsive to and conditioned by temporal understandings that construct the idea of "here" through spatializing time. In Hill's work, I locate a literary solidarity that shows its didactic workings through an anticolonial analysis of temporality that underwrites notions of history on Indigenous lands. The emphasis on revising time in the dialogic relationship between the two comics suggests that solidarity is an emplaced and temporal relation that connects "different generations across seemingly separate historical epochs" (Wilder 120). Across his evolving graphic artwork and writing in the comics on Indigenous resistance, Hill's reclamation of place and time frustrates the idea of solidarity as an ahistorical, depoliticized, and presentist relation. Rather, Hill's work suggests that solidarity is retrievable in a visual and spatial reading of history, time, and place in the settler colonial present.

Hill turns to different Indigenous mobilizations not to exalt the past, but to reframe Indigenous agency against linearity as the temporal signature of liberal modernity. By locating solidarity in a state of renewed resistance and by breaking the temporal organizational units of the first version of his work, Hill implies that solidarity and coalition-building can be read as anticolonial continuities that challenge how the present moment views Indigenous resistances: as anachronistic attempts to stall development or reactive, violent, and illegitimate acts that threaten the integrity of the state. By saying that Hill reclaims shared time, I do not mean that Hill's temporal aesthetic strategy seeks to catch up with time as colonialism defines it. After all, "for two people to inhabit shared time or to partake in a common present, they would need to occupy

the same frame of reference" and colonial frames of reference maintain allochronic views of Indigenous nations (Rifkin 21). In Hill's work, solidarity makes visible how multiple and opposing temporalities intersect in a temporal moment defined mainly by the asymmetries that colonial and imperial injustices produce. By historicizing Indigenous resistance and solidarity in this evolving and multiple temporal aesthetic, Hill troubles common temporal or historical understandings surrounding Indigenous movements. These understandings tend to view Indigenous resistance movements as anachronistic attempts to stall the progress-orientated trajectory into the future, or as products of the here and now, particularly when considering the resurgent work of movements like Idle No More (Aguirre 194). This chapter, therefore, considers temporality as an important but overlooked concern in discussions of how literary texts represent place-based expressions of solidarity in occupied Indigenous lands. Engaging with temporality in analyses of solidarity, especially through literary interventions, is important because solidarity remains a prefigurative relationality and is often imagined as anticipatory if not a relation always already deferred in some future speculative timeframe. Solidarity remains a call for future action, and ultimately the literary facilitates this commitment to solidarity as an imaginative possibility. In this chapter, I illustrate how temporality, as inextricably connected to territoriality, is important for understanding how literary production engages with solidarity in place-based terms. In order to present imaginings of decolonial or place-conscious solidarity, texts suggest that solidarity widens notions of time, especially in terms of how temporality is manipulated by presenting place as historically void to maintain the mythology of empty lands. Where texts encode solidarity as a relation not quite 'here' and not quite 'now,' they simultaneously present it as a continuity that materializes different histories and moments of entanglement that challenge the liberal trajectory of progress. Evoking solidarity as a relation at a

state of arrival paradoxically suggests that it is a continuity that links temporal frames of past, present, and future, and at the same time, solidarity demands sharper critical attention as an emplaced and temporalized concept.

In this chapter, I read across the two versions of Hill's graphic work on Indigenous resistance to connect literary imaginations of solidarity with closer attention to temporality. The updated *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book*, as its title suggests, revises and expands this continuous history of Indigenous resistance in the Americas by going back in time and performing narrative and artistic revisions to create a spatially expanded format where the art often takes up the whole page by adding more "meta-panels" or "super-panels" as part of the storytelling and reading process (Eisner 65). Reading the exchanges between the two comics shows how Hill revised his temporal aesthetics in the loosening of temporal units and the formal choices in the most recent version where he expands his depiction of resistance across a broader temporal and geographic scope at the same time as he expands the page as a narrative *topos.* This is also a rhetorical counter-expansion that confronts the reality of a place still subject to colonial development. For Hill, this expansion happens through Indigenous agency and the opening of space to include allied potential in both versions. These artistic changes and additions to previous resistance movements disrupt the interpretation of developmentalist linear progress, even though the second version continues by including more movements after 2006. In this sense, Hill's expansive work is neither vertical nor is it linear; rather, it adds, "reframes," and often "deframes" resistances to echo a wider temporality in a place that is still attacked by expropriation, myths of vacancy, and lack of Indigenous agency (McCall, "Framing" 338).

Considering Hill's work as evolving has difficult implications for critically approaching this work in terms of solidarity. The challenge arises from confronting an assumed linearity that

often dominates the reading of both Hill's comics and broader narratives of Indigenous resistance. Even within the more temporally structured first version, the linear expectations make it difficult to fully grasp the evolving nature of Hill's work. The fact that the first version is more widely read and discussed in criticism, for instance, might reveal an ingrained tendency to read linearly, chronologically tracing Indigenous resistances from the moment of contact, as in the first version. Scholars like Sarah Henzi, Sophie McCall, and Heather Smyth anchor their analyses in the first edition, which privileges a chronological reading. Smyth, for example, acknowledges that the two works can be "taken together" in sharing an activist "trajectory" while also acknowledging the aesthetic changes in the revised and expanded version ("Visual Rhetoric" 157). However, her analysis largely follows previous critics in focusing unevenly on the 2010 version. Although insightful in their observations about Indigenous comics and their anticolonial rhetoric, these readings present challenges to approaching Hill's work because they rely on chronology. Temporal linearity constitutes another difficult condition for solidarity because it hinders a complete understanding of Hill's anticolonial art and aesthetics, and arguably contains solidarity in linear time, in historical moments that calcify examples of successful allyship. By reading the two works in tandem, we can reframe these resistances as expressions of Indigenous agency that challenge the rigidity of linear frameworks. This reframing is crucial for examining how solidarity responds to a necessary examination of colonial notions of time. The difficulty here lies in navigating a more holistic understanding of solidarity that is not confined by linear ideas of time that locate it in a distinct past, present, or future temporality, but as a continuity that links different temporal and historical events.

In this context, continuity is a formal aspect of comics and graphic novels. Critical attention to continuity, as a textual and semantic aspect shaping the rhetoric of comics, has been

addressed by critical work on the genre. In *Regarding Frames: Thinking with Comics in the Twenty-First Century*, Shiamin Kwa writes that "comics provide a model for reading practices based on continuity, a continuity that is native to the form of comics themselves" (xxii). Cartoonist Will Eisner's popular study, *Comics and Sequential Art,* also considers continuity as a formal trait. Eisner famously analyzed the "distinct language" of comics, that is, the relationship between frame and panel, language and image, but also the effect these formal aspects have for the reader. For Eisner, these effects constitute the "'grammar' of sequential art" that is deeply connected to notions of time and event (2). Examining the role of panels, their shape and the incorporation of writing or the sole dependence on image, Eisner notes that "critical to the success of a visual narrative is the ability to convey time" (24). Continuity and the organization of sequences relate to Scott McCloud's idea of "closure," which describes the reading experience of "observing the parts but perceiving the whole" (63). This idea of closure is challenged by Hill's Indigenous anticolonial interventions in the "grammar" of his comics. Hill's rhetoric and aesthetics of continuity can be understood as a visual and textual reclamation of time.

These generic particularities acquire a distinct meaning within Indigenous graphic and narrative arts, where the visual elements intervene in settler colonial representations of history. Scholars in Indigenous and Canadian literary studies have commented widely on the presence of Indigenous graphic novels and comics and their creative interventions in notions of history. McCall in "Framing, Reframing, and Deframing," for example, writes that "over the past two decades, Indigenous graphic novels have exploded onto the literary scene" (339). Sylvain Rheault similarly affirms the "'sudden' emergence of Indigenous graphic novels" since the early 2000s, noting that in the last two decades there have been more Indigenous anthologies of graphic novels and comics and more Indigenous presses (501). Rheault also argues that since the

Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Indigenous graphic novels and comics have adopted a pedagogical function, especially in terms of taking up public education calls to raise awareness about the Residential Schools (504). In terms of reclaiming representation through the visual aesthetic and rhetoric of graphic novels, scholars such as Brenna Clarke Gray and Sarah Henzi discuss the ways Indigenous comics and graphic novels challenge representations of Indigenous people in Euro-American and Euro-Canadian comics. Grey in "Canadian Comics: A Brief History," notes that during the 1940s, when there was a surge of Canadian-authored comics, there was also a proliferation of racist stereotypes of Indigenous characters in works that developed during this period called Canadian Whites.[17] She discusses how significant contributions in the field of Indigenous comics in Canada, such as *Red: A Haida Manga*, "[address] themes of anger and retribution without being restrained by the colonizer's own tool" (68). Henzi, in her reading of Hill's work alongside other Indigenous graphic novels, such as David Alexander Robertson's *The Life of Helen Betty Osborne* and Richard Van Camp's *Kiss Me Deadly*, argues that these texts reclaim representational creativity and agency through visual forms of sovereignty and self-determination. Thinking along the lines of Michael Shayahshe's ideas of how Indigenous visual storytelling critiques these dominant misrepresentations, Henzi considers Indigenous graphic practices as "a necessary antidote to the conventional history of the Americas" (Hill qtd. in Henzi 24).

[17] In "Canadian Comics: A Brief History," Grey contextualizes the Canadian Whites. Before 1940, comics were understood as an American genre. She notes that in 1940, with the passing of the War Exchange Conservation Act, American comics were not available to a Canadian readership, prompting a period of Canada developing its own "comic industry" (63). Clarke Gray notes that the period from 1941 to 1946 was known as the Canadian Whites. However, she also notes that this prolific comic industry often reproduced dominant racial stereotypes such as the Noble Savage, something that was not limited to this period but appeared later on in Canadian 'Superhero' Comics as well (68).

McCall also draws attention to Hill's creative practices in relation to his activism and participation in Indigenous movements. She suggests that Hill's carving work affords him a careful sensibility that "pays meticulous attention to individual Indigenous Nations' traditions of graphic arts" ("Framing" 540). Moreover, McCall connects Hill's artistry to his activism by arguing that "his goal is to challenge the erroneous story that continues to be prevalent in schools and in popular entertainment" (540). Part of this challenge is "reclaiming traditions of [Indigenous] graphic arts" that include "carving, weaving, tattooing, and painting—that is, forms of storytelling through the production of material culture and graphic sign-making" (McCall, "Teaching" 94). This is also echoed by Candida Rifkind and Zachary Rondinelli, who, in their editorial on Indigenous comics and graphic novels, note that Indigenous visual and graphic arts precede Euro-American comic books. Rifkind and Rondinelli consider visual storytelling in Canada in terms of Indigenous "illustrated narratives" such as "petroglyphs, rock paintings, totem poles, button blankets, wampum belts, and other forms of visual stories" (6). Contrary to the critical assertion that Indigenous comics and graphic novels are responses to European and Euro-American traditions of the form, Rifkind and Rondinelli point out that critical attention to Indigenous comics must "situate them as a continuation of much older, culturally significant, visual storytelling traditions" (6).

Taking continuity as an artistic method and activist commitment, Hill's writing and illustrative work refuses to narrate Indigenous resistance as a disruption within the larger context of settler nation-building in the Americas, thus reducing those resistances to ethnographic elements within colonial time. In forward to the first edition, Hill writes that "the purpose of *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* is to raise the levels of awareness of historical understanding and warrior spirit among Indigenous peoples *and others*" (6; emphasis mine). It is

in Hill's emphasis on historicizing place, in an attempt to demythologize the racist idea that Indigenous people stood idle before colonization, where I locate a commentary on solidarity that engages with the ways Indigenous temporal sovereignty opens spaces for coalitional potential. The refusal of linear colonial historicity occurs in the texts through different anticolonial temporal methods of "re-framing history" (McCall, "Teaching" 95). These include non-linear insertions of Indigenous agency during European invasion, iterative referencing and discussion of various movements of resistance, and moments of slippage in the reproduction of the 2010 version in the revised and updated text. Yet another example includes occasions when Hill represents Indigenous anticolonialism as carrying "multiple" temporalities of continuity and entanglement with those of other communities (Rifkin 17).

This reframing of history is closely related to what James Donahue has identified as the "educational impulse behind much of the historical fiction produced by Indigenous authors" (80). This pedagogical context reframes temporal markers like the past, present, and future as "coterminous" (84). Hill's work presents critical and reading practices that relate solidarity to the troubling of colonial temporalities through the visual rhetoric behind the revisions and expansions. Hill's textual and artistic choices amount to a commentary on how to read Indigenous resistances in coalitional ways. His work shows that place-based commitments to solidarity are not presentist moments of engagement in a "now" and "here" that elide histories of resistance. My reading connects these texts by analyzing the spatio-temporal artistic intervention of Hill's Indigenous graphic artwork to argue that these formal choices connect solidarity with temporality in a wider anticolonial gesture.

Reading Temporal Difficulty: Colonialism, Time, and Territory

The temporal argument I am outlining in this chapter addresses two claims that connect solidarity with temporality. Part of this argument is a cultural critique of the prefigurative orientation of solidarity as a concept never quite *here*, as a relationality often in the state of arrival, especially in texts that conjure up solidarity through their imaginative, affective, and expressive registers. Linked to the prefigurative aspect of solidarity is the problematic of solidarity's *duration*, which I discuss in the following chapter that traces the cultural importance of the Idle No More movement. There is a potentially utopian investment in solidarity as a relationality or political act that is oriented toward abstract futurity. Gary Wilder, for example, analyzes solidarity as a political relationship that "is as much a temporal as a spatial concept" in *Concrete Utopianism* (120). In making the case for practices of "concrete" utopian thinking in political discussions within the left, Wilder argues against the "domestication" of solidarity as an easy relationality that culminates in performative actions that do not take into account the historical past as subtext for how solidarity is oriented as an anticipation. Solidarity, according to this theory, is a temporally capacious relation that encompasses past traditions or legacies of solidarity and "anticipates futures" neither in "cruel optimism" nor in left pessimism (120). This is useful for reading how prefigurative political imaginings in literary texts are not simply rooted in uncritical and *easy* gestures toward future entanglements.

The "zero point" beginning of history on Indigenous lands that produces this singular vision of time sustains various colonial narratives that limit solidarity in this temporal scheme (Burkhart, "Philosophical Colonizing" 22). These narratives are numerous, but for my discussion about solidarity, temporality, and Hill's work, I identify two contradictory narratives of settlement that challenge coalitions. One is a presentist narrative of innocence, characterized by viewing colonization as a past wrong committed by other settlers in another time; the other is the

narrative of colonialism's "immanence," the fact that "settler colonialism forever proclaims its passing, but it never goes away" (Veracini 9). These narratives reproduce the temporal denial I discussed earlier in this chapter and restrict formations and enactments of solidarity and other coalitions. The denial of a colonial present leads to a rejection of responsibility, and conversely, a view where solidarity is an ephemeral, presentist discourse. The denial of the colonial present undermines solidarity by fostering a narrative that absolves current settlers of their responsibility towards Indigenous peoples and their ongoing struggles, effectively erasing the complexities of colonial legacies. Consequently, this disavowal transforms solidarity into a superficial discourse, reducing it to a fleeting acknowledgment rather than a sustained commitment to addressing the realities of colonialism and its enduring impacts. Both narratives, which figure in various ways in texts that imagine difficult coalitions, pose challenges for solidarity as a practice beyond the space of the text. The need to examine how temporal frameworks limit solidarity drives this point back to Kambourelis's warning that solidarity must "be mindful of Canada as a settler nation-state" ("Introduction I" 2). The need to be cognizant of the settler state when thinking about solidarity highlights the necessity for a tighter reading between place and temporality to avoid recasting place as unaffected by colonial iterations of history and colonial disavowal.

Counter-Linearity in Hill's Indigenous Resistance Comics

The precursor to the comics and their accompanying Indigenous graphic artwork was a pamphlet called "500 Years of Indigenous Resistance" that was published in the Indigenous-led newspaper *OH-TOH-KIN* in 1992 and later as a stand-alone publication. According to Hill, the pamphlet offered "a basic history of colonization of the Americas since 1492, and the Indigenous resistance to this colonization continuing into 1992" (5). From the vantage point of 1992, only two years after the Oka crisis, the activist impulse to document Indigenous resistances

contextualizes the graphic art of the comics in terms of land defence, revitalization, and resurgence. This activist impulse, which Hill refers to as "warrior spirit," echoes in the evolution of the pamphlet into the 2010 version and eventually in the revised and expanded comic book.

Hill elaborates on the links between Indigenous histories of ongoing resistance and warrior spirit. He explains that in the preface to the 2010 comic: "When we know and understand this history of oppression, we will be better able to fight the system it has created. Without a fighting spirit, we will have no will to resist (or even survive)" (6). The presence of this fighting warrior spirit is connected to the spirit of *survivance* that activates this storytelling of resistances beyond the representation of colonial brutality and the genocide of Indigenous nations that are prevalent elements in Hill's work. It is through this spirit that the comic fosters continuity that builds contingencies from the first text to the next. In fact, the creative and activist presence of the warrior spirit cannot be contained in a defined textual space and reading time. This is clear in the final panel of the 2010 version, which centralizes the figure of the warrior. This is a rectangular panel that parallels the other three panels that precede it on the page depicting the resistances in Caledonia and Burnt Church in the early 2000s. Located at the bottom of the page, this panel's solid black background depicts the eyes of an Indigenous masked warrior. On the bottom of the panel, against a white background, Hill adds the caption "Long Live the Warrior," which ends the 2010 version, but rhetorically bleeds into the next comic (87). The panel with the warrior's gaze is the main focal frame in the last page of the first book (87). On the top part of the warrior panel, Hill adds the following description: "this is the world we live in, and the history that has made us who we are. Generation after generation, our people's resistance against European colonization has continued" (87).

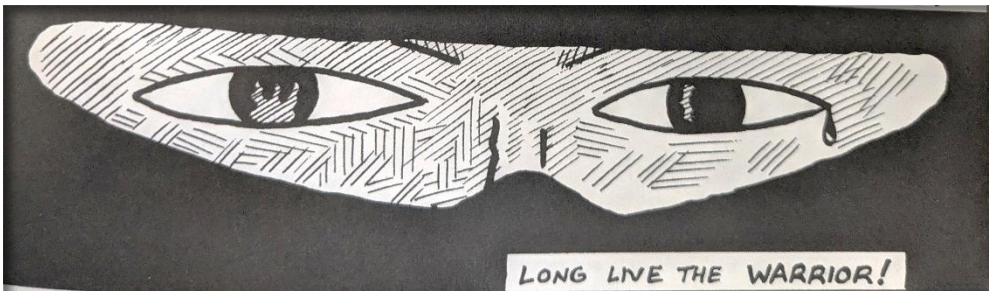


Figure 1. Scan of the panel with Warrior's gaze in Hill's *The 500 Years of Resistance* (87).

For McCall, the gaze of the warrior is a direct address to Indigenous and settler readers. McCall writes that "the direct gaze of the warrior could be compared to a shift in 'voice' to the second person," inviting the reader to consider the content of the comic as well as their own positionality in terms of the histories of resistance ("Framing" 341). This turn to the reader is potentially coalitional, as McCall explains that for an Indigenous audience, "Long live the warrior!' is a call to become a part of this living history of resistance" (341). For non-Indigenous audiences, the direct gaze of the warrior is a call "to think deeply about […] their roles as allies in decolonial, Indigenous sovereigntist, and antiracist coalitional work, while also critically reflecting on the potential limits of allyship" (341). Although this panel ends the 2010 version, the gaze reflects continuity rather than finality. As an activist, resurgent, and coalitional call, the warrior's gaze exceeds the boundaries of the text and slips into the following version where many of the segments become revised in an artistic strategy that further rejects colonial spatio-temporality as a singular frame. It is in this historical context of continuity, contingency, and interruption where the dialogic connection between the two comics speaks to an ongoing engagement with Indigenous resistance outside settler colonial frameworks of time and history. Reading Hill's evolving comics as a continuous project prompts an ongoing reflection on responsibility, thus challenging readers to think about allyship and its "potential limits" outside

temporal finality (McCall, "Framing" 341). The sustained, direct address through the warrior mirrors an anticolonial solidarity represented not as a static achievement but as an ongoing, evolving practice. I consider this another form of difficult reading that requires our critical methodologies to become accustomed to how we read time as another emplaced aspect that conditions solidarity not as a simplistic, present-focused idea, but as the continuous, ongoing demand that exceeds the text.

The 2021 version of the comic book, whose title qualifies the five-hundred years of resistance as *Indigenous* resistance, continues from 2006 to 2012 with the inclusion of Idle No More, to anti-fracking and anti-drilling protests and blockades in Elsipogtog in 2013, the inclusion of #NoDAPL in 2016, and the Unist'ot'en #Shutdown Canada, which is an ongoing movement. Hill retains some of the paneling choices in both comic versions, but the broader width in the 2021 version allows for more focalized close-ups on human figures like male and female warriors and other iconic elements.[18] In terms of the aesthetic rhetoric of his work, Hill also retains the convention of overlapping panels throughout both comics. In many installments of Indigenous resistance in the 2010 version, for example, Hill uses large frames that incorporate smaller panels that connect simultaneous actions and events. Hill often uses the page as a frame without formal borders and continues to include his characteristic "grid-like panels" that "mimic settler-colonial impositions of private property, state regulation, and dispossession, while the figures within the panels push against the rigidity of these squares in militant acts of resolute resistance," again emphasizing that the narrative and visual space of the page exists in an

[18] In "Intericonicity in Documentary Comics," Nancy Pedri discusses the term *intericonicity* in her examination of documentary graphic novels. Also known as pictorial intertextuality, this term describes the use of "evidential" materials like maps and charts in documentary graphic novels and comics that become symbolic or visualize an intertext as important to the narrative rhetoric.

analogic relation with Indigenous land as the locus for revising settler structures of history (McCall, “Framing” 41).

In this context of more-than-continuity, the 2021 version revises the previous corpus of writing and art by physically expanding the page and by figuratively revising history. In these changes, there are also shifts and differences in Hill’s organization of content. The most notable shift is the absence of organizing sections in the 2021 version. While the first comic book included four sections: “1492 Invasion,” “Part 2: Resistance!” “Part 3: Assimilation,” and the final part “Part 4” Renewed Resistance,” the 2021 version uses distinct episodes wherein panels are organized around specific movements. Moreover, the 2021 version does not begin with the historical moment of European invasion and the arrival of Columbus, but with a map titled “Cultural Regions of the Indigenous Americas” followed by a super-frame with the caption “Indigenous Americas,” which takes up the full page and is perhaps the largest and most distinct artistic representation of Indigenous life in both comics. This decision to revise the beginning of the comics reframes the textual changes in Indigenous revitalization and resurgence by prioritizing the cultural space of Indigenous Americas. While the inclusion of the word “Americas” inevitably acknowledges the pervasive presence of colonization, this change alters the text’s rhetoric by shifting the reader’s attention from colonial invasion to the cultural richness of Indigenous cultures across regions. Additionally, the 2021 version includes critical commentary on how colonialism operates by adding an explanatory segment titled “What is Colonialism” in the middle of the segments, which forces the reader to engage with this question from their different self-locations.

I want to remain with the different beginnings in Hill’s work to explore what creative, textual, and narrative changes these shifts in rhetoric have for solidarity as a continuity. Hill’s

text, through the vitality and survivance of Indigenous graphic arts (McCall, "Teaching" 94), creates a storytelling of Indigenous resistance as agency within the new coordinates of "Indigenous America," the space-time that revises and replaces the segment on "Invasion" (14). In this version, Indigenous America is a reoriented frame of reference, a spatio-temporality that precedes and exceeds 1492. In her comments to the second version, Palmater writes that America is the space and time where "Indigenous resistance *is* the story" (11). The revised version not only picks up the narrativization and illustration of Indigenous resistances from the early 2000s, but it creates a dialogical attempt to resituate this long history of resistance, further destabilizing 1492 and "Invasion" to prioritize "Indigenous Americas" as a frame of reference that centres the place-based histories of Indigenous presence (Rifkin 3).

Several of Hill's chapters in the 2021 version centre on Indigenous empowerment by deconstructing the colonial myth of cultural inadequacy. Hill affirms the cultural wealth of Indigenous societies by often using wide panels that start at the bottom of the page, as the basis of the content of the illustrations. These panels span the width of the page, re-occupying what history contests in a symbolic way. This technique foregrounds the events of the panels as the ground of Indigenous agency in the retelling of history, time, and place. For instance, before his visual narrative of the resistances of the Inca and the Maya nations, Hill uses expansive, wide panels to visualize these Indigenous empires, countering the idea of Indigenous vulnerability to modernity. In "The Siege of Tenochtitlan," for example, two wide panels foreground the Aztec empire, noting that the city of Tenochtitlan that "was the largest city in the Americas & one of the largest in the world" (43). Hill expands his content by further grounding the civilizations of Indigenous nations as healthy communities with robust cultures that "developed advanced

mathematics, agriculture, astronomy, a calendar, and writing system & sophisticated art forms in a variety of mediums" (44).

Hill's manipulation of panelling emplaces resistance at a broader scale in the second version. Hill's various experimentations with proportion, shape, and other symbolic markers of resistance amplify the connection between the text and the idea of "spatial sovereignty" (Smyth "Visual Rhetoric" 140). Smyth suggests that Hill uses the "comic's affordances of multimodality," that is, the combination of visuals, shape, text, pace, and other conventions, to assert an idea of pan-Indigenous sovereignty through various spatial techniques that guide the gaze of the reader (140). Spatial sovereignty serves as "a representational technique" that draws attention to various multimodal elements at the level of the page to assert Indigenous sovereignty and "stag[e] resistance and counter-history" (152; 141). Smyth discusses how Hill represents different geographic locations and cultural contexts to vividly depict the sustained struggle of Indigenous land defence and resistance against colonial forces (148-9). The images of physical confrontations and battles with "warriors pushing colonizers and soldiers out of representational space" capture how Hill utilizes the panel, for instance (151).

These spatial techniques are expanded in the 2021 version, where the comic widens the content by adding more detailed battles and returning to the first version to perform these acts of expanding place and endurance of the Indigenous resistant spirit against colonial encroachment. The spatial rearrangements in content also revise the symbolic possibility of time by making the reader notice these changes in terms of a renewed shift in framing. In this context, the 2021 version, beginning with the chronotope of Indigenous Americas, is a metaphorical deframing of colonial temporality, and an expanded spatial reframing of temporalities of anticolonial agency. Pertaining to coalitions, this is also a reminder for the reader to locate themselves in terms of

Indigenous America. This renewed focus mobilizes the page as a super-panel to create a broader and more capacious telling of time where the ongoing call toward movement-building is a symbolic possibility.

An example of broader notions of representational space in the 2021 version is the more prominent role of Indigenous women. The first page-long panel that asserts Indigenous Americas as the time and place for illustrating resistances echoes in several page-long panels depicting female Indigenous warriors. The chapter "Maya Warrior Women," a super-panel that includes an equally large illustration of a Mayan woman, emphasizes the role of women in Indigenous societies. The text that follows the illustration notes, "As in most Indigenous societies, women were a vital part of Maya economic, social & political life" (42). The warrior woman in the super-panel bleeds into the gutter, as her foot breaks out of the frame to show that she cannot be contained by the imposition of patriarchal violence that came with colonization (42). In another panel, Hill depicts a large illustration of a Mapuche woman. This panel is larger in proportion than the others on the same page, and like the panel with the Mayan woman, it bleeds into the gutter space. Hill writes, "Mapuche women also participated in war, usually armed with a spear, [and] some accompanied their husbands into battle and fought alongside them" (70). Bleeds are part of the spatial anticolonial aesthetic in Hill's work. Smyth also notes that Hill includes occasional bleeds into the gutter spaces of the first comic in some instances, but "otherwise does not exploit the possibilities of the gutter or interrupt the pattern with bleeds, splash pages, or double page spreads" (147). The 2021 version's depiction of female warriors as the agents of sovereignty highlights to the gutters and bleeds by asking the reader to notice these formal differences in content and rhetoric.

Considering Hill's expansions and revisions in the 2021 version in the context of ongoing resistance, I want to return to the 2010 version to suggest that although the text begins with 1492 as a historical moment that initiates the "structure" of invasion (Wolfe 390), the comic is critical of historical linearity and calls into question the colonial processes that temporalize Indigenous history and agency. To understand why Hill begins with "Invasion" in the 2010 version and how this beginning interacts with the 2021 version, it is important to note that the allocation of textual space and reading time in the first version critiques the view that colonialism is an event of the past. In the 2010 version, "1492: Invasion" takes up eleven pages, and the section titled "Assimilation" is the shortest segment in the collection. This formal choice is deliberate, as Henzi suggests (25). These formal choices problematize colonial narratives that temporalize settler presence on the lands to privilege histories of arrival. I want to suggest that in the 2010 version, Hill's beginning with the moment of colonial invasion enacts what Michelle Raheja terms "visual sovereignty," which complements the spatial aspect of sovereignty Smyth locates in Hill's work.

Raheja discusses "visual sovereignty" in the context of Inuit cinema. *Visual Sovereignty* refers to a creative form of Indigenous sovereignty that "intervenes on larger discussions of Native American sovereignty by locating and advocating for Indigenous cultural and political power both within and outside of Western legal jurisprudence" (194). Raheja focuses on film but broadens the term visual sovereignty to include different aspects of "the visual" such as "film, video, and new media" (194). Comics, as an art form that depends on the visual, evoke visual sovereignty in requiring "a reading practice for thinking about the space between resistance and compliance" (193). Hill's work performs a sovereigntist exploration of resistance by evoking sites and gestures of compliance with Euro-Western assumptions to challenge these frameworks.

For example, the commonplace view that invasion is contained in an event of the past while assimilation is the product of evolutionary inevitability constitute visual markers of "compliance" with colonial narratives and stereotypes in Hill's text. Like discourses that circulate, these notions are visualized to be undermined, as Raheja explains in her consideration of visual sovereignty's ironic interaction with moments of "compliance"[19] with settler discourses (194).

Although the temporality of 1492 connects Indigenous resistance to invasion, this part also challenges the mythology of discovery. "1492: Invasion" takes up nine pages of the comic in total and the segment includes tiers of panels, typically four to six per page, as well as large frames with overlapping panels. The start of "Invasion" foregrounds the iconic symbol of the ship, an element repeated in different parts of the 2021 version. Notably, the ships' flags include both a crucifix and a skull in black ink, signaling the moment of arrival as a moment of genocidal violence against Indigenous peoples. The illustrations offer close-ups into distinct and symbolic episodes that show the violence of invasion. In "1492: Invasion," for instance, a prominent panel illustrates the massacre inflicted on the Taino people by early Spanish colonists. The frame that contains the panel features a visual interplay between symbols of conquest, including the crucifix and European weaponry like axes and swords (29). At another instance, an

[19] In *Reservations Realism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty and Representations of Native Americans in Film*, Michelle Raheja explores the trope of "Indigenous people laughing at the camera" in films. More specifically, this trope refers to "tactics of visual sovereignty" in film as "virtual reservation" (193). She takes the example of Nanook in *Nanook of the North* (1922), an Inuit hunter who laughs when he is introduced to a gramophone. Raheja writes that Nanook's laughter at the unknown device is a point of entry for how non-Inuit audiences would see anachronism and naivete in the hunter's laughter. Raheja contextualizes this moment, and her research shows that the character's laughter reflects his amusement about Flaherty's filmmaking in the North. The author argues that "Not only is he laughing at the camera, but his laughter also performs public pedagogy for a viewing practice that reads cinematic Indigeneity as primitivism and innocence" (191).

overlapping panel obscures the image of a dying Indigenous warrior (29). The writing in the panel inserts the history of genocidal violence by noting that the Taino people "dropped from 8 million to just 28,000" (29).

The choice to begin with 1492 exposes how colonial narratives of domination fabricate notions of time to construct Indigenous colonial difference, thus enabling a contradictory ethics of modernity to take hold. Columbus's arrival and his interaction with the Taino people in this first section are narrativized and illustrated in a way that exposes central contradictions surrounding the "modern praxis" (Dussel 472). Enrique Dussel has critiqued early colonial modernity in terms of the moral sanction for violence, where colonial brutality becomes ironically embedded into a Christian ethos of "inherent sacrificial praxis" (473). In Hill's narrative, the first moment of contact carries the violence of the colonial project in an uninhibited manner that showcases these myths. We are told that "[t]he first 'Indians' [Columbus] met were Tainos who greeted the ships as guests" (27); however, for Columbus and Europeans more broadly, this was a marker of a cultural deficit: "[t]he Taino [were seen] as stupid children without a culture, fit to be conquered…enslaved, and Christianized...." (27). This attitude figures in the colonial enterprise and the ways it reiterates a structure of multiple denial that coalesces in the present. On the one hand, we have the denial of coevalness*,* the denial of 'others' inhabiting the same time as Europeans. On the other hand, there is the colonial impulse "to deny the denial of the myth of modernity from an ethics of responsibility" (473). To disrupt this mythopoetic colonial narrative of how settlement came to be, Hill accounts for genocidal violence immediately upon contact, thus destabilizing the widespread assumption that colonization is limited in the past, as an *event,* to use Patrick Wolfe's well-known formulation (390).

Hill's depiction of colonial violence recontextualizes the first interactions between Europeans and Indigenous nations by illustrating how the brutality of the colonial encounter is obscured by the narrative myths surrounding settlement. For instance, there is a parallel to be made between the historical first contact and the first interaction the reader has with Hill's text in the 2010 version, again affirming what McCall argues about the warrior's gaze as a coalitional call to responsibility ("Framing" 341). This double sense of first contact works as a corrective to settler colonial mythologies about discovery. Hill's use of arrows in the first version speaks to this effect. The inclusion of small arrows between panels connects events by entering the space of the gutter. Commenting on the various pedagogies Indigenous comics and graphic novels engage in, McCall discusses the role of gutters in detail. She argues that the gutters "can be used strategically in any number of ways, including to expose silence and denial in settler colonial societies" ("Teaching" 95). Hill's inclusion of arrows relates and often explains the extractive economics of colonialism, as it is shown in an example from "1492: Invasion" where a panel about the 1763 Royal Proclamation is contextualized by arrows that point to simultaneous events like the defeat of the French in one panel, and another panel that depicts a map with the caption "No trade or settlement could occur without the legal surrender of Indigenous lands to the British…" (33). If the gutter stands for silence and denial as McCall suggests, the presence of the arrows in the gutter in Hill's first text does not allow these moments of denial ("Teaching" 95). Rather, the reading audience, in decoding the images and reflecting on the content, is guided to make these connections between colonial acquisition and capitalist extraction, between colonial institutions and imperial expansion.

Moreover, before Hill interrupts this narrative of invasion as a linear process by punctuating this trajectory with multiple Indigenous resistances, this segment also includes a

critique of the idea of colonial inevitability. Hill uses this moment to provide critical commentary and to contextualize colonialism through the accumulation of human and resource related capital. The segment, which begins with Columbus's arrival and the mission "to map a trans-Atlantic route to Asia" (27), codes the capitalist desire of this mission in the fact that Columbus's voyage and the so-called 'discovery' of the Americas originated from Europe's economic decline. Colonial violence, at the same time, is motivated by the pursuit of profit and this genocidal impulse of colonial capitalism is echoed in the civilizing mission. In one of Hill's panels, for example, a white man is depicted eating fistfuls of food from a large platter (31). This caricature-like image dramatizes the greed of colonialism, especially because in the background of this panel Hill includes a trunk full of gold trinkets and a pile of skulls, iconic elements that visualize greed and colonial violence. The artwork also emphasizes that the transnational flow of capital was built on land theft, genocide, and enslavement and not on myths of Indigenous cooperation and fatalistic stories about how settlement came to be. The inscription below the panel with the image of the European colonist states, "The colonization of the Americas made Europe wealthy; gold, silver, wood, and food crops poured in—stolen from Indigenous lands and through enslavement" (31). This historical context not only conveys the connection between the emerging colonies and their European metropoles, but further dismantles the notion of discovery as a benign event. The panel prior to the depiction of the early colonist shows a destitute European peasant. In the background, a carriage is filled with the bodies of individuals who died from disease or famine. The accompanying text reads: "[a]t this time, Europe was suffering from poverty, famine, disease, and war" (31). Like the creative links made by the arrows in the gutters between panels, these juxtaposing images work to dismantle ideologies of settlement as a benign narrative of discovery and arrival.

In the 2021 text, similar critical commentary about colonialism is treated as its own chapter, presented on a page with no formal framing or paneling. This installment interrupts the reading sequence, prompting the reader to pause and reflect on colonialism and its mechanisms. The chapter appears between a longer chapter called “The Unconquered Mapuche,” which includes a series of illustrations about rebellions against the Spanish, and another chapter-like installment on the Powahatan Wars in Jamestown, the first English settlement in North America. The commentary on colonialism connects these different locations of Indigenous lands. Like the space of the gutter as a moment of reflection, the chapter “What is Colonialism” reuses continuous iconic images to provoke critical thought. Here we see again the Spanish ships, the content of the first panel of the 2010 version, and a juxtaposing image of Mexica warriors attacking the troops of Hernan Cortes in the chapter “The Siege of Tenochtitlan,” which narrates the Mexica and Spanish wars. Although Hill includes commentary on colonialism during the segment on invasion in the first version, the 2021 version formally interrupts the sequence. It acts as another moment of address, like in the figure of the warrior’s gaze. The writing in this chapter exists on the page as an expanded gutter space, while the visual choices that Hill reuses make the reader stall and take time and think about where they stand and with what assumptions and knowledge they come into the reading experience of the comics.

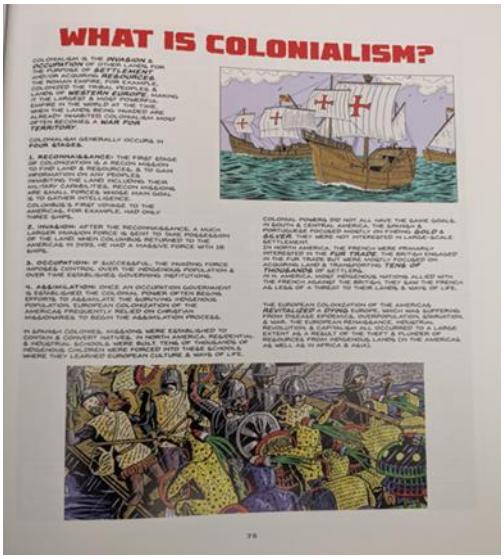


Figure 2. Scan of "What is Colonialism" in Hill's 2021 comic version (75).

Although 1492 is an important element in the 2010 version, Hill does not allow for invasion to become a totalizing narrative. This is depicted in the organization of the first segment where Hill immediately inserts resistances across a wide span of historical events, including the demolition of the first European settlement, La Navidad, "after the Taino retaliated against rapes and murders carried out by the Spaniards" (28). Hill also includes the large-scale and prolonged wars between the Europeans and the Mexica, who were also aided by allies from different Indigenous nations (30). Hill explores centuries of "military resistance to colonization" (36), including wars between colonial forces for the formation of "a global empire" (33). Hill details the American revolution, the subsequent settler revolts in South America that culminated in the creation of new states (34), as well as long "guerilla wars" fought by different tribes until the end of the 1800s (35). The segment on invasion ends with the geographic focus on Canada: the attack on Indigenous food systems by decimating buffalo populations in the prairies, something that facilitated the assumed extinguishment of Indigenous rights through treaties. Hill, again,

connects a panel that depicts the extermination of buffalo with an arrow that points to the next panel that depicts the signing of Treaty 5 (36).

The segment on invasion also presents moments of multiple temporalities in the structure of colonial invasion as the beginning of "new" history on the land. Hill includes many panels that explore different geographies of colonial development, but also shows the interconnected histories between development, land theft, Indigenous genocide, and African enslavement. For instance, two equal panels, both located at the bottom of the page, depict the connection between the acquisition of land and the trans-Atlantic slave trade (32). One panel depicts European men building on the land, a prominent trope in the literary formation of early Canadian writing. This image of settler industriousness is juxtaposed with a panel that depicts a Black man in shackles, displaced and enslaved (32). The caption for the left panel reads, "Buying and selling stolen Indigenous land became a big business for an over-populated and hungry Europe" (32). By contrast, the panel on the rights connects land acquisition and settlement with Black labour. The caption reads, "Meanwhile, the Spanish + Portuguese began importing Indigenous Africans as slaves to work in their colonies" (32). The word "meanwhile" becomes a temporal textual marker, like the arrow in the gutter, relating these histories of exploitation as synchronous events. This is another instance of confluent stories of displacement and colonial violence that gesture to the inclusion of multiple temporalities within the temporal organization of settler colonial history.

Figure 3. Scan of the parallel, bottom panels in "1492: Invasion" in the 2010 version of Hill's comic book, p. 32.

The following segment, titled "Resistance," becomes a communicative site that speaks back to 1492 by disrupting the spatio-temporal integrity of development as temporally and "geographically linear" (Burkhart 21). Burkhart, in his critique of the Western philosophical canon, describes development as containing both spatial expansion and the imposition of a new temporal order that connects the "newness" of land to the established history of Europe. Considering the Hegelian ontology of development—expansion and historical development—Burkhart analyzes the "linear direction of development and the coming to be of history" as containing spatial and temporal movements (21). That is, development moves "from east to west" through the taking of land (21). Development, however, also moves temporally by transferring European history to new and empty Indigenous lands. Burkhart writes that "time and history are organized as the completion of world history (that is Europe) that becomes so by operating on a fundamentally new America" (21). "Resistance!" returns to the moment of invasion to detail the centuries of Indigenous "military resistance" (Hill 36) that become redacted out of this linear view of history, the counteractions that challenge the idea that "Europe is the end of history" and colonial occupation actualizes this (Burkhart 21). This return to the point of

invasion and the immediate opposition to it includes detailed representations of "disease, genocidal war, and inter-tribal war" that challenged many warriors (Hill 37). This reengagement with invasion also details the continuous, sustained, and systematic efforts of Indigenous nations to defend their lands against colonial expansion and expropriation, which unsettles the narrative of 1492 enacting a total singularity of "settler emplacement" and Indigenous removal (Morgensen 56). The third part, "Assimilation," disrupts the linearity of colonization again as it chronologically should follow "the end of Indigenous military resistance" in 1890 (36). However, in the comic, "Assimilation" strategically comes after "Resistance" to convey the failure of colonization, in its total assumption of Indigenous assimilation.

As Henzi suggests, Hill deliberately limits "Assimilation" to two pages to phenomenologically disrupt the totality of assimilative policies (25). This section primarily presents the violence of Residential Schools in Canada and although it is a short section, Hill's illustrations use strong assimilatory symbols that are embedded in the national psyche of those early attempts at assimilation, such as the symbol of the crucifix and the Canadian flag, also markers of nation-building (Hill 61). Henzi suggests that despite the limited volume of writing and panels in this section, "the density and selective choice of the images boldly denounce the numerous destructive measures of assimilation, in such a way that the reader cannot avert his/her eyes from the facts" (25). This section shows how Indigenous elements of life and culture, such as dress, homes, activities for survival such as fishing and hunting, as well as traditional ways of life such as "forms of government and organization" (62)—the image of people gathering around a fire and organizing—were dramatically altered. In this section, like Henzi shows, the reader also relates these images of juxtaposition by associating the temporal signal "before" with Indigenous life and "after" with Indigenous life under colonial institutions,

dramatized by the visual symbolism of a priest reading from the Bible in one panel (61). Hill acknowledges the genocidal purpose of settler schooling through the Residential School system in Canada, or other such establishments known as "missions, industrial, or residential schools," and accounts for this traumatic legacy, but the segment is ultimately meant to show the failure of these policies (61). As Donahue suggests in his analysis of Indigenous historical graphic novels, this segment affirms stories of *survivance* over stories of colonial "victimization" (82). Donahue suggests that while "we cannot ignore the victimization of Indigenous peoples and histories, particularly by those people and institutions that have worked to craft the various manifestations of what we call the 'historical record'" (82-83), Indigenous graphic novels contest this history by becoming "narrative acts of survivance" (82).

Considering these connections between the two versions, I want to return to the particular emphasis on 1968 as a temporality of confluence in terms of the representation of historical coalitional movements. The final section, "Renewed Resistance," illustrates a global movement of political renewal by elucidating 1968 as a temporal symbol for rebellion. The interaction between Indigenous resistances and non-Indigenous movements that occur at the same time produces a coalitional framework that destabilizes the settler present as the main frame of reference. This section also suggests that these movements together establish a temporal solidaristic momentum that both carries distinct historical pasts, simultaneous political demands and actions, as well as prefigurative possibilities that stem from learning from solidarity movements. "Renewed Resistance" examines how various oppressed groups inhabit the same time coalitionally on Hill's page. Flashpoints of the Vietnamese anti-American uprising and the Black civil rights movement in the United States enter the narrative of an Indigenous frame of reference that prioritizes anticolonial agency while accounting for the distinct histories of these

movements. This cross-cultural, coalitional moment is echoed in Hill's description of the Red Power movement in the 2021 edition as Hill continues to note how the prominent American Indian Movement (AIM) "was modeled after the Black Panther Party" (108).

The way the panels are arranged in "Renewed Resistance!" is important for understanding Hill's anticolonial creative methods and his emphasis on solidarity. The solidarities that Hill describes, in this sense, decolonize coevalness outside its epistemic legacies of colonial alterity. Rifkin, in his analysis of settler time, writes about coevalness as the naturalization of a historical and global "now":

> [W]e cannot really speak of a global "coevalness"— the absolute time of Euro-American historicism—in the sense that such a concept presumes a singular timeline in which everyone moves in synchrony, rather than attending to perspectivally relevant frames of reference that provide the basis for understanding lived temporalities." (21)

Hill's reframing of solidarities in the first comic book transforms moments of resistance into cross-cultural synchronies and confluences that highlight the idea of a "perspectivally relevant frame" of assessing these moments (21). The idea of "oppressed peoples [who] organized themselves to fight the imperial system" suggests both diversity and a unified struggle, linking these figures under the banner of 1968 and their collective resistance against imperial power (Hill 63). These panels, in fact, visualize distinct cultural episodes that are tied together under anti-imperialist solidarity. Instead of the denial of coevalness as the denial of inhabiting the same time, Hill opts for synchronous solidarities whose "simultaneity" in the political moment of 1968 shows confluence as a renewed frame that troubles sameness and also troubles the colonial restrictions on place and time (Lo 40).

The segment about 1968 affirms the diachronic presence of Indigenous resistance as a pedagogical site for coalitions beyond literary solidarity. Solidarity, in this section, appears through referencing all those movements and showcases simultaneity as a renewed framework to analyze the temporal politics of solidarity and argue for duration or coalitional endurance outside the framework of the present. The framework of simultaneity, which I have paraphrased above as an alternative way to frustrate coevalness, has been used in cultural work on solidarity between Indigenous nations and diasporic peoples. In an article titled "Simultaneity and Solidarity in the Time of Permanent War," Marie Lo reads the simultaneous invocation of plenary power in 2017 by the Trump administration in two instances: the Muslim ban and in "a series of executive orders [...] resuming the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline and the Dakota Access Pipeline" (40). Lo draws from this context to argue for the connections between the American settler state's racial exclusion of Asians as a parallel to settler extractivism and Indigenous dispossession (40). Lo argues that "solidarity in terms of simultaneity is a provisional analytic that organizes the imbricated projects of white settler imperialism within a momentary synchronous temporal frame" (42). This analytic avoids the prefigurative and perhaps utopian aspirations regarding solidarity as "the condition for or the telos of organizing and critique" (42) and instead presents solidarity as a confluence of the histories of presence in simultaneous moments of resistance. This framework is more relational and more community-oriented, according to Lo, as "the history of American Indian colonization and dispossession and Asian immigration and exclusion are reframed from independent and separate historical formations to nonequivalent but overlapping, conjoined, and synchronous processes" (43). In this sense, it could be said that Indigenous resistances, and their continuous diachronic temporality, interact

with simultaneous claims made by other communities without calcifying oppression as an experience that invites cultural antagonism.

Hill's text carries a coalitional subtext that privileges Indigenous continuity—a historical and artistic continuity in the graphic novels' phenomenological choices—that can be taken as an anticolonial metaphor for shifting notions of solidarity within this framework of continuity. For Hill, this continuity is variable, as it includes coalitional and cross-cultural interactions with other movements and communities, who inhabit time solidaristically without affirming settler temporalization. This continuity, which works through the textual and visual strategies that undermine linear chronology in the first version and extends to the second version's rhetoric and expanded aesthetic, shifts solidarity outside the settler colonial present as a main frame of reference. So, the question that remains is how we can read coalitionally, in a way that frustrates the frameworks that literary pedagogies in so-called Canada have instructed, while at the same time attempting to extricate solidarity out of frameworks that ignore the temporal construction of place. The revised and expanded version reorients the content and artistry in the temporal units of the first version as ongoing, renewed resistance, thus expanding a restrictive present that fashions itself as linear continuity of developmental time, history, and progress.

In the 2021 version, a significant temporal expansion occurs with the inclusion of the Idle No More movement, which serves as a chronological continuation after 2006, the endpoint of the 2010 version. While we can view Idle No More as a continuation of Indigenous resistances post-2006, Hill's text emphasizes that we must also recognize its role in terms of resurgence, as it encompasses past, present, and future elements. As a movement, Idle No More interacts with the previous movements that Hill examines and extends in the visual exploration of continuity. More specifically, Hill's revised and expanded text cannot be understood as merely extending the

previous version's chronological narrative. Instead, the inclusion of Idle No More and subsequent developments necessitates a return to the beginning of the text, specifically to "Indigenous Americas," which serves as the "perspectivally relevant" framework for interpreting what follows after Idle No More (Rifkin 21). Kelly Aguirre discusses how resurgent movements like Idle No More trouble the wider problem of "historicizing Indigenous agency" in linear histories that privilege settlement (194). Using a Fanonian lens to read into the ways that anticolonialism often dismisses culturalist or traditional forms of direct-action, Aguirre shifts the resurgent workings of the Idle No More movement outside the historicity of the settler establishment and its spatio-temporal arrangements. Idle No More remains, then, to an extent, ambivalent because it is not legible through the framework of the settler colonial present that attempts to historicize and contain Indigenous agency rigidly. Aguirre explains that:

> 'Historicizing' Indigenous agency raises the problem of gesturing to a nonlinear concept of History used in colonial governance. The concept of History has cast Indigenous societies in lethargic backwardness and colonialism itself as a past episode of colonization rather than a persistent process replicating violent structural practices and relationships of domination. (194)

This problematic temporalization of Indigenous anticolonial agency speaks to the need to dismantle the reference tools with which Indigenous histories of resistance are measured and assessed. In his consideration of Idle No More, Hill writes that the movement mainly promoted "pacifist and non-confrontational protests" (127). At the same time, it also had the potential to become "more radical" (127). This is not a gesture to dismiss the Idle No More movement as less radical than the military resistances he narrates. Instead, due to the cumulative, anticolonial, temporal methodology evident in the dialogic slippages between both comic versions, the place

of Idle No More and movements beyond it can be read diachronically not as a "Historic Moment of 'revival' in Indigenous activism" (Aguirre 194), but as a part of this larger overarching narrative of Indigenous movements as agents of resurgent storytelling and of slippages across and against linear national time. Like the never-ending "Warrior Spirit," then, this resurgent slippage remains against colonial temporality, as "today, some groups continue to organize under the INM banner" (Hill 127).

Chapter Four

The Idle No More Movement as Diachronic Activism: Place-Based Solidarity, Allyship, and Divergent Temporalities.

IDLE NO MORE CALLS ON ALL PEOPLE
TO JOIN IN A PEACEFUL REVOLUTION

To honour Indigenous sovereignty
And to protect the land & water & sky

- idlenomore.ca - Indigenous Revolution

Sylvia McAdam, one of the founders of Idle No More, describes the movement as historically longstanding and continuous: "the Idle No More resistance began long before in different names, different locations through the generations since the arrival of Europeans" (65). Alluding to Idle No More as a diachronic movement of Indigenous resistance upsets the colonial idea of idleness and underscores the temporal complexity of Idle No More as a mobilization that exceeded the limitations of a singular event. The editors of *The Winter We Danced*, a prominent anthology on Idle No More, acknowledge the role of the movement within the history of Indigenous activism, affirming McAdam's observation. They write that Idle No More is "remembered as one of the most important movements in [Indigenous] collective history" (Kino-nda-niimi Collective 21). The editors also add that Idle No More has a place "alongside the maelstrom of treaty-making, political waves like the Red Power Movement and the 1969-1970 mobilization against the White Paper, and the resistance movements at Oka, Gutefson's Lake, Ipperwash, Burnt Church, Goose Bay, Kanostaton, and so on" (21). Idle No More's resurgent decolonial tactics challenged the wider temporal politics attached to Indigenous mobilizations by the settler state, which suppresses these movements as illegitimate and violent disturbances, or

views them as anachronistic attempts at interrupting liberal notions of historical progress. Extending McAdam's poignant statement, the Kino-nda-niimi Collective theorizes resurgence as a form of resistance by challenging colonial temporal frames. They write that Idle No More was "an emergence out of past efforts that reverberated into the future," not simply commemorating previous traditions of resistance but reenacting them (21).

Idle No More is one of the largest grassroots mobilizations since the 1969 White Paper protests (Palmater, "Why Are We" 37). Moreover, Idle No More has made valuable cultural contributions to discussions of decolonizing solidarity. Several scholars, including Harsha Walia, Eric Ritskes, Leanne Simpson, and Glen Coulthard, have addressed how the movement shifted solidarity politics by grounding solidarity to issues of land, Indigenous self-determination, and resurgence. From its grassroots origins as a series of teach-ins about Bill C-65 in Saskatchewan in the fall of 2012, Idle No More carried a language of solidarity based on mutual responsibility to land. In its overarching demands for land justice, respect of Indigenous rights, and environmental protection, "the movement represent[ed] an important moment for conversations about how to live together meaningfully and peacefully, as nations and as neighbours" (Kino-nda-niimi Collective 23). Paying heed to these expressions of "coexistence" and mutual responsibility to place, many articulations of solidarity focused on amplifying Indigenous sovereignties through embodied practices of relation (Irbacher-Fox 223). For example, in *The Winter We Danced*, Wallia calls for intersectional solidarities within social movements where allyship, especially between diasporic migrants and Indigenous communities, requires "Indigenous solidarity on its own terms" (44). According to Ritskes, in his contribution in the same anthology, understanding "Indigenous solidarity on its own terms" does not only require an

interrogation of (self)location, but a reorientation of solidarity into the contexts of land and sovereignty as "the terms of engagement with Indigenous nationhood" (258).

These discussions, although rich in nuancing what accountable solidarity can look like, do not account for the diachronic temporality of resistance McAdam and the editors of *The Winter We Danced* link Idle No More with. If the Idle No More movement enacted different historical moments of Indigenous movement-building, these enactments troubled distinct notions about past, present, and future according to specific political manifestations in Western thought where temporality figured as linear in alignment with capitalist extraction, industrial production, and progressive historiography. While these important discussions about solidarity refer to Idle No More in terms of "permanent resistance" (Pasternak 42), a connection between solidarity and time remains unexamined, especially in ways further anticolonial critique. Since Idle No More differed from previous traditions of Indigenous protest that the settler state considered reactive, illegitimate, and violent (Coulthard, "#IdleNoMore" 35), the movement generated confusion and ambiguity. This is evident in the ways the movement was received in terms of "temporal liminality" (Baker and Verelli 45) and "confusion" about its political futurity (Coates 20). The movement was not simply an event that disrupted settler sovereignty, but an enactment of resurgence as part of Indigenous "temporal orientations" (Rifkin 3). This chapter turns to *duration* as another aspect of the argument about solidarity and time that I have started to outline in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I read the cultural significance of the Idle No More movement and the discussions it generated about solidarity to extend the argument about how colonial temporality limits imaginaries of coalitions. I argue that reading duration as a coalitional marker of enduring solidarities outside Indigenous temporal understandings of resistance and resurgence affirms colonial restrictions on time and place.

While temporality is acknowledged in some of the cultural criticism on solidarity vis-à-vis Idle No More's impact, the priority is given on place as an ontology that is more tangible through territory, while time remains elusive. The question this chapter engages with is *whose time* gets accounted for when we discuss solidarity as an anticipation in the imaginative and speculative spaces of texts and beyond the text. If texts can imagine political solidarity, either by drawing from the past or deferring solidarity to the future, in *whose time* do these solidarities emerge? In the previous chapter, I focused on Hill's reclamation of time by historicizing Indigenous resistances. Hill's approach highlighted the continuity of these resistances, which was visually and aesthetically transferred to literary solidarities as integral parts of the comics' graphic storytelling. The inclusion of Idle No More in the comics' context of continuity extends the consideration of solidarity as a dynamic process that is implicated in this temporal argument. What seems to be a renewed problematic in the cultural discussions I outline is an adjacent temporal problem regarding solidarity that has not been adequately examined. This is the problem of solidarity's duration or the problem of ephemeral solidarities. This is an anxiety that casts temporal endurance as a nuance that permits one to discern consistent practices of solidarity from presentist, performative, and ultimately ephemeral gestures. This anxiety about temporary solidarities is elaborated upon by Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel in their consideration of settler colonialism and solidarities with Indigenous peoples. The authors treat time as a natural constraint for solidarity. Corntassel puts it explicitly in his assessment of Idle No More: "While the Idle No More movement ... tapped into an ongoing collective Indigenous struggle for land, culture, and community, the settler support was predominantly temporally driven and performative rather than localized and land-based" (24). In this context, what Dhamoon describes as "time-situated" solidarities, that is, solidarities that arise from a need to respond to a

particular crisis (25), are contrasted with "place-based solidarities" or "spatial-solidarities" that focus on local issues and political work that supports the resurgences of Indigenous nations (24).

Although Corntassel finds meaning and possibility in place-based or spatial solidarities that are locally attuned to specific contexts of Indigenous resurgence, his definition prioritizes place while remaining suspicious of time as an element that limits solidarity *naturally*. Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel are not wrong. An intellectual history of solidarity, after all, prioritizes space and place, attempting to theorize about local or international solidarities, in order to arrive at the most equitable democratic theory about coalitions. In terms of cultural and literary criticism, however, Corntassel's concerns about temporary solidarity gesture at a wider discussion about how cultural and literary works account for place by considering how settler colonialism spatializes time in its claim of land as new and in the colonial present as a moment beyond colonial acquisition. This chapter engages with duration as a temporal condition that legitimates coalitions. Solidarity, to put this otherwise, is also temporalized by the need for endurance, otherwise it runs the risk of becoming temporary. Although duration is crucial for solidarity because it communicates the need for it to be a sustained practice despite the difficulties of relations, this investment in time still begs the question about what temporal readings and frameworks we use when we anticipate enduring solidarities. Although Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel posit an insightful observation about crisis-oriented solidarities, in their conceptualization I locate a point of entry for problematizing time, especially when settler histories on the land evoke ideas of colonial temporality that erase Indigenous history and presence on the land. In this critique of the temporal limits of solidarity, therefore, I locate a problem with regards to the assumption that it is natural or physical time that limits solidarity as an anticolonial practice and prevents it from becoming a practice of consistent movement-

building. Although in another context this may be true, in Canada's settler culture, the idea of natural or physical time is spatialized through settler presence on the land and the framing of time through a progress-oriented liberal trajectory. This cultural understanding of time affirms the duration of settlement as a fixed and legitimate part of the historical landscape.

I wish to problematize this critique of ephemeral solidarities by looking at the temporal tensions of Idle No More as a resurgent movement and by connecting these tensions with how literary forms engage with Idle No More. I discuss the Idle No More's resurgent decolonial practices as challenges to colonial frames of temporality that seek to naturalize settler arrival and colonial duration. I then explore how the movement's coalitional orientations parallel literary concerns about the duration of the colonial enterprise in Rhodes's found poetry *X: Poems & Anti-Poems*, a text read as an example of literary allyship with Idle No More (Roberts 67). I suggest that literary interventions offer their own commentary on the temporality of coalitions by asking us to consider how an investment on duration can reissue ideas of ownership. Rhodes's work explores the multiple significance of duration by challenging how colonial duration gets attached to land through appropriated texts that endure in the historical trajectory of Canada as a settler nation.

In *X*, Rhodes considers the continuity of Indigenous movements in a book that is about "a place still settling" (8). In the poem "Soundscape as Landscape: Caledonia," for example, Rhodes describes historical mobilizations on a white page that negotiates "public silence" (68): "*Oka Strike One! Ipperwash Strike Two! / Caledonia Strike Three!*" (68). The endurance of settlement that Rhodes ironically evokes in commenting on the whiteness of the page is interrupted by various acts in *X*'s poetics of appropriation, found poetry, collage, erasure, and other experimental methods that trouble settler emplacement and duration. In their reading of the

poem "Wite Out," Sonnet L'Abbé suggests that "Rhodes 'breaks' an inherited line of institutionalized aesthetic values that have been complicit in mythologizing Canada's colonial history" (203-4). Situating *X* in terms of a "shift toward the techniques of the historical, modernist avant-garde," L'Abbé suggests that *X*'s interplay between appropriation, erasure, and found poetry offers an approach to Canadian history that politicizes poetic interventions into colonial narratives. Rhodes's creative methodology both utilizes and disrupts the symbolic duration of "documents that have produced, justified, legalized, denied, aided, and abetted the violent silencing and dehumanization of various groups of people" (200). Although the borrowing from administrative and colonial language creates certain "constraints" in terms of the poet's own words (Rhodes 82), this creative method allows Rhodes to engage with formal difficulty and extend this difficulty to the poetry's suggestions about allyship. Rhodes's book of poetry is both about place and temporality, borrowing from the spatializing effects of conceptual poetry and the poetics of appropriation to comment on coalitional possibilities through difficult reading and a metacritical and matapoetic engagement with reading place and discerning temporalities through X's various poetic methods of disruption.

The book can be read within the traditions of avant-garde and conceptual poetics, and more specifically, poetry where the compositional method depends on "self-conscious and overt use of preexisting textual materials, encompassing everything from local uses of quotation and collage to the more or less framed re-presentation of entire texts" (Dowling 98). Rhodes describes his work as "found poetry" and further explains his compositional choices by noting that "much of the poetry in *X* is built using the Government of Canada manuscripts of the Canadian Post-Confederation Treaties" (Lilburn 189). The title, *X*, refers to the ways signatures of Indigenous people were given on such documents, relinquishing their rights to land, according

to the colonial establishment. The found poetry in the collection allows Rhodes to "visualize" settler cultures and relations between non-Indigenous settlers and Indigenous nations through a "self-reflexive understanding of the dominant colonial culture in Canada" and the ways it attempts to redact Indigenous presence and agency out of conceptions of place and time ("Shane Rhodes and Visualizing Settler-Indigenous Interactions").

Rhodes's appropriation-based poetry has been discussed as a coalitional text that makes explicit mention of the Idle No More movement. *X* was published in 2013, temporally close to the Idle No More movement and its presence in public and cyber-spaces (Roberts 67). Gillian Roberts reads Rhodes's *X* as an example of "non-Indigenous responses to the diverse strands of Idle No More as they rethink the history and present of settlement in Canada" (67). Roberts relates Rhodes's work to other coalitional responses, such as Wong's *undercurrent,* Arleen Paré's *Lake of Two Mountains,* and Syd Zolf's *Janey's Arcadia.* Nisga'a poet Jordan Abel identifies Rhodes's work along with other settler and Indigenous authors like Zolf and Joshua Whitehead who work at the intersections of "avant-garde and decolonial writing" (292).

X is split in two sections: the Poems section and the Anti-Poems section. The latter is comprised of one poem, "White Noise," which requires the reader to flip the book upside down to access the poem about the Idle No More movement. The Poetry section takes sourced material from the Government of Canada transcripts of the Canadian Post-Confederation Treaties, also known as Historical or Numbered Treaties. "White Noise," however, turns to online spaces that hosted backlash and abuse against Idle No More. As Rhodes mentions in his commentary on the original materials for his found poetry, the poem was "composed of material harvested from 15,283 public comments posted in response to fifty-five online articles" from Canadian and Indigenous-led online platforms "over a forty-day period between December 20, 2012 and

January 28, 2013" (128). Moreover, Rhodes clarifies that "all news articles were in relation to the Idle No More protest movement and the beginning and end of the hunger strike of Theresa Spence" (128). The anti-poem "White Noise" is hosted in *The Winter We Danced* under the section "Friendships," which critically locates Rhodes's writing as a settler response of solidarity.

Rhodes's work comments on temporality in various ways that are amplified by the formal attention to sourced materials, specifically written documents that historicize settler presence in Canada and are symbolic of settler emplacement and endurance, which I consider semantically close to the framework of coalitional duration when it is based on temporal understandings that privilege settler futurity rather than decolonial imaginings of coexistence. This is an enduring sentiment, especially in the prolific racial insults Rhodes harvests in "White Noise," where the language of colonial disavowal is represented as an inheritance of colonial duration. Rhodes comments on duration, but like his compositional methods, he flips the meaning of temporal duration to convey how Indigenous resistances upset the colonialist desires for land through movements that counter the racial cacophony in "White Noise." I locate didactic possibilities about place-based solidarity in *X* as a text that formally disrupts the semantic importance of colonial endurance and possibly suggests that coalitional duration through literary practices is not limited to time as a physical or natural element. Rather, the concept of coalitional duration in *X* invokes unsettling feelings of discomfort and a productive difficulty that emphasizes the necessity of ongoing struggle as a generative element of coalition work. For example, in the poem "You Are Here," Rhodes urges readers to position themselves, unveiling the poetic and anti-poetic possibilities inherent in this work by reframing the engagement with settler history as neither fatalistic nor innocuous. The statement "This book I will continue to write until I get it

right, and I will/ never get it right" frames the text, but most importantly, it serves as an alternative expression of imagining solidarity over time, as the statement conditions solidarity and the search for an ethics of relation as an ongoing and indeterminate practice (9). I argue that this is a form of ethical and readerly difficulty that extends the poet's admission of literary incompleteness and imagines solidarity outside the temporality of settler frames of time or its teleological attachments. The poem's refusal to conclude reinforces the idea that solidarity cannot be fully realized in one moment or through a single action. This lack of completeness is a generative moment of non-closure that literary solidarities offer in their imagination of difficult coalitions. In doing so, *X* offers a rewriting of duration as creative incompleteness. Before I examine the specific workings of the poetry in *X*, however, it is important to explain the theoretical basis for my argument in this chapter.

The *Divergent Temporalities* of Idle No More: Indigenous Resistance as Diachronic Movement-Building

The Idle No More movement is closely connected to discussions of decolonizing solidarities through two main cultural and epistemic orientations. In one instance, Idle No More is discussed as an important mobilization within a larger cultural movement of Indigenous resurgence. Most notably, Coulthard discusses Idle No More as "a backdrop against which to explore what a resurgent decolonial politics might look like in practice" (*Red Skins* 154). Idle No More's connection to resurgence stems from the sovereign, culturalist actions of dancing and drumming as primary tactics of presence and protest, especially in public spaces like shopping malls. In this context, Coulthard discusses Idle No More as enacting a paradigm shift toward what he calls "resurgent self-recognition" based on Indigenous self-deterministic politics; Coulthard also considers Idle No More's actions as affirmative refusal encoded in various acts of

resistance that depart from earlier movements that had a greater investment in liberal recognition (153; 169). Parallel to this cultural orientation toward resurgence, Idle No More opened conversations about the terms *settler* and *ally* as sites of "coresistance" (Irbacher-Fox 223). Cultural criticism has noted this sharper attention on the identity marker of "settler" as a site for thinking about solidarity. In *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in the 21st Century*, Adam Barker and Emma Battel Lowman, for example, discuss the term as signaling a conscious departure "away from our nation, our claimed territory" and drawing attention "onto [settler] relationships with systems of power, land, and the peoples on whose territory our country exists" (1). Barker and Battel Lowman argue that this shift was amplified by Idle No More, which made visible "that something had changed" (2). Canadian literary studies have also been aware of this shift. Roberts, for example, argues that the movement "engendered a shift in the positioning of non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, some of whom began to self-identify as settlers or allies" (65). Roberts also notes that "self-positioning as 'settler' has been one way in which non-Indigenous Canadians attempt to work as allies of Indigenous peoples" (67). Such conversations remain pertinent and have evolved in a more overarching framework of scholarly attention to critical justice in the context of Canadian literary and cultural studies. These parallel orientations are points of entry for decolonial imaginaries of solidarity, especially in terms of place and land-based paradigms of engagement, which were closely related to the resurgent tactics of Idle No More. My use of the language of orientation echoes Rifkin's useful framework of "Indigenous temporal orientations," to gesture back at the idea that movement was coded as temporally ambivalent by the settler state, Canadian media, and other responses. "Indigenous temporal orientations," according to Rifkin, are about "varied experiences of duration" that are "nonincidental" with "settler temporal formations" (3), which frame themselves as ubiquitous,

uninterrupted trajectories into liberal futurity. As Ken Coates suggests, to the settler state, Idle No More appeared to be temporally ambivalent because it exceeded the fixity of a singular event (20). This criticism was due to the fact that the round dances and rallies continued after the House of Commons accepted Bill C-45 in December 2012 (20). From the vantage point of the state, and of many Canadians who did not support Idle No More, the movement's continuity past its primary political impetus caused questions about its political futurity. Coates notes that Canadians were still confronted with flash mob dances and "spontaneous, joyous, and celebratory" acts of Indigenous presence and agency well into the summer of 2013 (60). The illegibility of Indigenous resurgence as part of a continuum of Indigenous agency is the shared denominator where all these aspects of temporal ambiguity intersect and mischaracterize cultural forms of resistance as allochronic and "harmlessly folkloric" (Aguirre 189).The problem of duration as a coalitional practice and not an expression of how physical time delimits solidarity needs to account for how colonial temporal frames view Indigenous resistances, either as anachronisms or as reactive movements. Ultimately, a genuine engagement with Corntassel's conclusion that "the most powerful mobilization for change happens when the spatial and temporal intersect" demands a closer look into how the Idle No More movement challenged colonial temporality (24). To approach these issues, I discuss Idle No More's impact on coalitional thought by examining how the movement's presence and practices affirmed a diachronic praxis of Indigenous anticolonialism.

The Idle No More movement first emerged in the fall of 2012 in Saskatchewan in the form of public education events by Sylvia McAdam or Saysewahum (Nêhiyaw Nation), Jessica Gordon (Pasqua First Nation), Nina Wilson (Nakota Dakota Neheyaw), and Sheelah McLean, a white settler. These grassroots actions responded to legislation the Harper Conservative

government introduced, Bill C-45, formally known as the *Jobs and Growth Act.* The legislation stipulated the loosening of environmental controls in combination with the Bill's proposed changes to previous legislation, including the *Navigable Waters Act* and the *Indian Act.* After a teach-in about the legislation in November 2012 in Saskatoon, almost immediately "grassroots people" across the country joined the subsequent rallies and events, eventually galvanizing "a global grassroots movement in the following months" (McAdam 66). Idle No More expanded outside the space of public education and emerged as a widespread movement that employed many tactics, typically pacifist forms of Indigenous presence in commercial spaces, such as shopping malls, through '"flash mob' round dancing and drumming" (Coulthard, *Red Skins*161), public demonstrations in several Canadian cities, as well as blockades in some areas. The Idle No More movement's frontline actions in conjunction with its intensified presence online, with the hashtag #IdleNoMore, distinguished it as one of the largest Indigenous mass mobilizations.

For Coates, Idle No More was "more an outcome than a cause" (24); it was a long-term "manifestation" of Indigenous frustration (24). From the vantage point of the settler state, however, the movement was seen as politically ambivalent with disorganized actions that did not fit the public's perceptions of Indigenous protest. A significant part of this confusion was due to the movement's tactics, which differed significantly from previous traditions of anticolonial protest movements. As Coulthard notes in his contribution to *The Winter We Danced*, "#IdleNoMore [was] an explicitly non-violent movement" and it did not include sustained "economic disruption unleashed by Indigenous direct action" (36). As such, Idle No More was often compared to previous Indigenous movements that included violent confrontations (36). Because the movement mainly depended on Indigenous cultural presence in public space, and not direct examples of the disruption of capital, there was confusion regarding its political goals,

sustainability, and futurity. These central anxieties regarding Idle No More's presence in public space, moreover, affirm that settler anxieties over capital are typically the prevalent response to Indigenous movements (Aguirre 189).

For Indigenous thinkers, however, the Idle No More movement conveyed a "discrepant temporality" of diachronic resistance, shared agency, and histories on the land, thus rejecting the settler temporal arrangement that considered resurgent Indigenous agency as aimless, ambivalent, and politically irrelevant (Rifkin 3). Rifkin uses the term "discrepant temporalities" to theorize "varied experiences of duration" that "can remain nonidentical concerning the dynamics of settler temporal formations" (3). This discrepancy challenges the conflation of "settler time" with natural time, creating a "singular" temporality that is taken as an objective linear trajectory into modernity (3). Wanting to avoid a divisive reading that elides shared histories of coexistence and multiple complex encounters between Indigenous nations and non-Indigenous settlers, Rifkin argues that "discrepant temporalities [can] be understood as affecting each other, as all open to change, and yet as not equivalent or mergeable into a neutral, common frame—call it time, modernity, history, or the present" (3). Because settler histories of colonialism and self-indigenization seek to erase Indigenous notions of time and history to make land available for expropriation and settlement, solidarity for Idle No More was also seen as out of place and out of time.

It is important to critically attend to the ways the colonial impulses for territoriality seek to neutralize Indigenous temporalities and shift them into homogeneous notions of colonial and developmental time where Indigenous histories and agency on the land are taken to be either anachronistic (but assimilable) or unassimilable and therefore threatening to settler sovereignty. The inclusion of Idle No More in the Indigenous anticolonial history of "duration" McAdam

described does not frame Indigenous resistance as an anachronistic reaction to the inevitability of colonialism (Rifkin 3). Significantly, the way Idle No More evokes previous protests—albeit different in tactics—does not take settlement and the settler's "temporal formation" as the axes against which to interpret the workings of Indigenous resistance (3). Rather, the discussion of duration codes resistance and resurgence in a broader temporal structure of place-based agency. When the editors of *The Winter We Danced* state that "Idle No More is, in its most rudimentary terms, a culmination of the historical and contemporary legacies emerging from colonization and violence throughout North America and the world" (22), they are pushing for ways to relay the impact of Idle No More in terms of an Indigenous theory of continuity, as Hill's illustrations suggested.

From the standpoint of Indigenous anticolonial thought, the Idle No More movement is analyzed within the continuum of Indigenous resistances and not in a rigid, linear historicization of this continuity. Moreover, Idle No More is seen as a cumulative event and not an isolated case of Indigenous culturalist and traditional agency appearing in settler spaces (Aguirre 189). In an essay on Idle No More, Kelly Aguirre writes that in "describing the INM as a single Revolutionary Movement and Historic Moment of 'revival' in Indigenous activism with broad strokes does not address AlterNative, contested histories of settler-Indigenous relations that trace vitality and continuity in Indigenous praxis" (194). Indeed, the attachment of "newness" to the movement misreads Indigenous resurgence as an event. This misreading temporalizes Indigenous agency as an emergence out of idleness and cultural loss, which affirms the problematic temporalities Western though attaches to non-European cultures.

To reorient the discussion toward structures and systems of Indigenous place-based duration, it is important to discuss how Idle No More's resurgent character challenged the settler

state through its spatial and temporal structures. “Temporal liminality” is a framework that shows the ways Indigenous movements are interpreted against the linear axis of the development of the settler nation, which locates such movements in the colonial present, the “now,” as threats to nation and as reactive dissent that carries allochronic desires for sovereignty (Baker and Verreli 45). Approaching these questions through the lens of media analysis of Idle No More, Richard Baker and Nadia Verreli use the frameworks of “spatial” and “temporal liminality” to analyze the ways Indigenous protest is perceived by settler audiences. They consider “temporal liminality” as a result of the ways colonial imposition has approached notions of space, time, and history to justify the colonial enterprise. Accordingly:

> Temporal liminality plays out in terms of transitional process: a liminal actor is positioned elsewhere along a developmental trajectory, implying that additional time and further progress along a particular path could see the actor shed its marginality and become accepted as part of the self. The temporal liminar is freighted with the potential of threat because it represents an earlier time that somehow questions or otherwise imperils the current self-understanding of the collective. (45)

Liminality as a condition of in-betweenness or transition is more of an effect of how settler colonial governance attempts to manage and contain Indigeneity through an ambivalent recognition. As subjects within the settler state, Indigenous peoples are “granted an aspirational and conditional belonging” through practices of recognition (45), as long as their actions remain symbolic, traditional, and culturalist, and therefore evocative of the past and not prefigurative of multiple temporalities that remain. If this clearly very restrictive so-called belonging is not

attained, Indigeneity is reduced to a disruptive, oppositional, and criminal existence that is fashioned by racist mythologies.

An analysis of Indigenous movements as ruptures to the settler colonial present, however, shows the contradictory processes of recognition of Indigenous agency within the spatio-temporality of settler nation-building. The need to compare Idle No More to the demands of other Indigenous movements reflected a broader sense of temporal ambiguity in that Indigenous agency had to be recognized, to be translated in terms of the settler state's narrativization of the linearity of accumulation or its blockage by Indigenous protest. This anxiety was intensified by the temporal politics around two significant events within the early presence of Idle No More: the passing of the omnibus Bill C-45 in the House of Commons and the hunger strike of Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat in December 2012.[20] When the Conservative legislation was accepted by the House of Commons, the climate of confusion around the continuity of the so-called Round Dance Revolution was heightened according to Coates, especially since the events continued into the summer months. According to Coates, the dancers kept joining the events "because of the momentum the movement had already created, because of the other regional issues that Aboriginal people were bringing to their events, and because of *the nature* of Idle No More, none of the participants felt that the movement was dead" (57; emphasis mine). For the

[20] Chief Spence announced that she would be going on a hunger strike at Victoria Island near Ottawa as a response to governmental indifference to the housing conditions at Attawapiskat First Nation. This protest act, which lasted for a month, was simultaneous to the Idle No More movement's address of larger issues. Chief Spence's hunger strike, in its simultaneity with Idle No More actions, also "raise[d] awareness about the impacts of Bill C-45" (Coulthard 161). Although Chief Spence's hunger strike was not part of the movement, nor was Chief Spence a spokesperson or an organizer, this chain of events that created pressure on the Canadian government of the time show that the movement can be seen through a series of "flashpoint" events (Roberts 65). It is also important to note that Idle No More created an unprecedented example of global attention to a domestic movement in Canada (Coates 94). At the same time, the movement, as Coates describes, was focused on Chief Spence's hunger strike, making her protest act a focal point for the movement in a climate of "mounting concern about her health" and "simultaneously, rising cynicism about her protest among non-Aboriginal Canadians" (73-74). Although in the public perception, the hunger strike of Chief Spence was indelibly connected to the movement, her protest "was not a specific part of Idle No More."

settler government and many settler people "this growing Round Dance Revolution did not make a great deal of sense," as it ostensibly exceeded its political goals and because they could not fundamentally recognize its tactics as political protest (63). Although the movement can be seen as an event that responded to a specific legislative attack that could further "erode Aboriginal land and treaty rights (Coulthard *Red Skins* 160), the fact that Idle No More exceeded its initial impetus speaks to its character as exceeding the temporal finality of an event.

This sense of confusion evinces a broader state of dissonance that is related to the ways Indigenous resistance is seen as temporally liminal within the world-making of settler history, of the orderings of colonialism that "impress" on space and time (Bruyneel xvii). The settler arrangement of what constitutes an agential event reproduces a form of colonial exclusion.[21] Resurgent acts of resistance challenge the settler narrative of Indigenous temporal liminality because of the ways Indigenous agency, time, place and history are typically contained as categories of the past. Aguirre articulates this problem in a discussion of how anticolonialism is often dependent upon and even replicates "Euro-topian" conceptualizations of "history, agency, and world formation," thus making Indigenous resistance practices recognizable by a settler colonial state only through violent and oppositional forms of direct action (190). She argues that

[21] This is perhaps most evident in Alain Badiou's well-known exclusion of the standoff at Kanehsatake from his theory of what constitutes an event in terms of social change in *Being and Event* and later in *Logics of Worlds.* The application of event theory can have an ambivalent position in terms of Indigenous mobilizations. For example, Badiou does not recognize the standoff at Kanehsatake as an event that can "rupture" the order of an identified world, the kind of spatio-temporal organization that registers and upholds what is understood as reality, as he theorizes in *Worlds*. Badiou considers the Oka crisis to be a non-event because the confrontation, although violent, did not "rupture" the conceptual world, which he identifies as Quebec, both a nation and a province. In this order of world-making, Quebec becomes a viable, recognizable world because of the markings of European history, with the temporal event of Jacques Cartier's arrival at Gaspe and the erection of a cross as a marker of Christian dominion. He views the Oka crisis as a non-event because he takes the Kanhien'keha:ka nations as relative objects within the colonial world of Quebec and Canada, at a larger scale. Therefore, the Oka crisis only "establishes intense relations between these two objects," meaning here the Mohawks of Kanehsatake and the settler government of Oka (310). The "revolt" for Badiou is not an event because it makes visible an already-established relationship of tension between two "components," but does not effectively produce a new world. Badiou argues that the revolt does not make something *new* or different visible in colonial society.

such “criteria don’t engage Indigenous perceptions of time, place, movement and creativity” (190). It is these distinct or discrepant perceptions of time and place that sustain a continuum of Indigenous anticolonialism.

Settler Reckoning with Indigenous Dissent Movements and Writing Place in *X*

X’s decolonial exploration of place positions the interplay between sourced material and poetic expression within the temporal struggles of Idle No More and specifically, the idea of opposing temporal understandings. This approach ultimately highlights coalitional endurance as a contested concept, much like the enduring conflicts over land. The beginning of the Poetry section documents a history of settlement through the official language of nation-building and quotidian encounters in spaces where knowledge circulates, such as museums and libraries, as well as archives of familial histories of migration as in the poem “Preoccupied Space.” The Poetry section’s organization and thematic material trouble ideas of colonial time, empty lands, and “zero point” temporality by using sources that engender these conditions (Burkhart “Philosophical Colonizing” 22). At the same time, *X* departs from traditional poetic conceptions of the lyrical subject or even an autoethnographic *I* that is critical of settlement by making “self-imposed” constraints into a central creative methodology (82). Rhodes’s reliance on the administrative language of the eleven Numbered Treaties, for example, generates a difficult poetic practice of limiting his own words while working closely with this language and its description of Indigenous peoples. These “constraints” in terms of language are reflected in various poems (82), including “translation, for Jerry Potts,” where the poet translates two passages from the English interpretation of the signing of Treaty 7 into Blackfoot (46-47). The translation, as Rhodes mentions in the “Notes” section, speaks back to the “terrible quality of the

translations [that] is still remarked on today by Blackfoot elders" (82). Such moments of "self-imposed constraints," as Rhodes calls them (82), are facilitated by the formal connection between the original textual material and the found poem. At the same time, however, this formal attention to these constraints can be read as an ethical way to access the original material from the identity location of the settler Canadian poet. To extend this further, pushing through these constraints can also advocate for an ethical reading practice that relocates coalitional endurance in difficult reading and moments of formal frustration in *X*. Instances of frustration include the troubling of "Poetry" as a space that also carries institutionalized romantic and nationalist notions of settler-indigenization and explicit expressions of settler rage and racism in the Anti-Poetry section.

The Poetry and the Anti-Poetry sections comment on a history of settler Canada through the written word in official records and online spaces during the Idle No More movement. "You Are Here," is an introduction to *X*'s method, "Preoccupied Space" replicates cartographic elements and includes a river-like structure with quotations taken from *Progress and Pioneers*, "Found Land" includes a series of poems that focus primarily on material from the treaties, and "Acts" involves language taken from settler legislation, such as the Indian Act, but also juxtaposes this language to Indigenous protest as anticolonial acts. As mentioned, the language in which the Numbered Treaties were written becomes the main ground Rhodes works with to show how an administrative official language displaced Indigenous people by denying them personhood, which is the central signpost in *X*'s title.

In the "Notes" that follow the Poetry section, Rhodes describes the Numbered Treaties as the "largest systematic, colonial land appropriation in the world" (80). Several poems in the Poetry section, and specifically in "Found Land," retain the titles of eleven treaties, but the

language is often visualized through Rhodes's experimental forms. For example, "the promises herein contained," which uses words from "treaty one," is a visual poem that uses a Lissajous figure reproducing the sound of the word "said" through an audio oscilloscope (32). Formal and simultaneously impersonal, the word "said" replaces peoplehood in the poem, noting two parties in a transactive manner (32). The replication of this transactive impersonal language of legal discourse uses "said" as a visual signal of entities that have been replaced by official language. Another poem that engages with the language of the Numbered Treaties is the visual poem "mining, lumbe ring, trading," which takes language from the transcript of "treaty eight" (48-49). Rhodes describes this poem as "a word-bond structure" (82) that emulates how carbon atoms form "bonds"—that is, either in rings, chains, or other structures. In the poem, Rhodes reproduces the shape of the way Caronene, one of the hydrocarbons found in tar sand mines on Treaty 8 land, forms a structure comprised of six rings. The words taken from the transcript of Treaty 8 replicate these atomic bonds, with words such as "regina," "rights," "person," "education," and other topographic and legal language appearing prominently on this structure (48-49). Other representational choices, such as cartographic elements that reproduce the image of mapped and bordered territory, registration forms, letters, and other sources of colonial authority appear in poems about the treaties. The poetry in "Found Land" also demonstrates how language, especially this detached and impersonal language, renders land as property in the settler imagination, which is dramatized explicitly in the anti-poem "White Noise," which is the "flip side" of both the official language of treaties and colonial legislation, but also the "flip side" of Canadian politeness and civility (Roberts 82).

In contrast to the Poetry section, the Anti-Poetry as white noise disrupts a linear reading of the poetry collection by demanding a conscious "embodied reading praxis" where the reader

must flip over the book to access another side of Canadian history that is typically downplayed by Canada's contemporary identity as multicultural peacemaker (Miller). In her analysis of *X,* Roberts also highlights the anti-poetry being a "flip side" of Idle No More in the sense that resurgence is met with white supremacy and violence, especially against Theresa Spence who was a prominent figure who attracted online misogynistic and racist abuse (82). Roberts reads the representational choice of having the anti-poem printed upside down as an emphatic assertation of "the flip side of the Internet's role in facilitating the growth of Idle No More, offering a platform not only for Indigenous resurgence but also for the attempted retrenchment of the settler-colonial state and the white supremacist foundations on which it was built and to which the trolls explicitly appeal" (82). This flipping over, as an act of confronting racial violence and colonial disavowal in "White Noise," also requires a specific critical act on behalf of the reader. White noise, which is understood as a blanket sound that includes all frequencies into a broadband sound, could be read as a metaphor for settler, uninterrupted time that spatializes the historical presence of settlement in notions of land. White noise, then, also implies that it is hard to discern different frequencies in this broadband sound. If we take Rhodes's play with sound in *X* to be a metaphor for different or discrepant forms of duration, then, on behalf of the reader, it would require a conscious act of discerning those different sounds that are merged into one static "soundscape" to use Rhodes's language from a poem about the blockade in Caledonia (68). This adds to the coalitional reception of this poem, as "White Noise" is often referenced when discussing literary responses to Idle No More. As Roberts notes, the anti-poem includes "a litany of racist jokes and highlights mainstream stereotypes about Indigenous peoples" (80). Apart from the intense racist insults, however, the poem complements the disruption of the linear historical trajectory of Canada. While the Poems section emphasizes land

through the official language of settler administrations, the anti-poetry shows how the violent and explicit trolling comments in cyberspace also claim land. I want to read the interaction between the poetic and anti-poetic sections to examine how Rhodes's appropriation techniques present the found poem as a form that houses the tension between narratives of colonial endurance and an affect of unsettlement. As such, this form becomes a meaningful site for solidarity.

The first poem in the Poetry section, "You Are Here," presents *X*'s poetic methodology. "You Are Here" introduces writing and reading as practices semantically close to place-making. If we take the Poetry section as the beginning, Rhodes starts from a location of multiple irony in presenting his poetics through a series of "warnings" to the reader that the reading process will be "harmful," "terrible," and ultimately unsettling (8;9). This is an effective warning given that the anti-poem "grapples with non-Indigenous Canadians' unease, even rage" in the explicit rejection of colonial history and settler identities (Roberts 81). The focus in "You Are Here" on the poetry itself highlights the specific material that Rhodes uses to explore the history of place, which L'Abbé regards as the text's "methodology" (204). "You Are Here" is one of few poems in *X* that do not use visual material, such as images and writing from other sources. However, Rhodes introduces his method by using the administrative language of settler colonial legal discourses that appropriated land through the same register. Dowling locates the poetic task of producing found poetry in a tension between the appropriated text and the found poem, but also in terms of metaphors of property-making and "the settler colonial ethos" that contextualizes appropriation as the formal grounding of Canada as a settler nation (110). In the context of this ironic positioning of the poem as a product that draws from the language of law and policy, Rhodes begins by evoking the practice of land acknowledgements. The acknowledgement at the

beginning presents its limitations, as the poet situates the writing on the lands of the Secwepemc, the Cree, and the Algonquin nations, yet admits to not having asked for permission, another fraught process that presents itself as innocuous in discussions of solidarity (8). Rhodes's is not a typical acknowledgement because the speaker attempts to challenge the borrowed register of contemporary territorial affirmations that ultimately parallel the administrative language of treaty-making settler practices. Rhodes's speaker, for example, highlights that the poetry was "not endorsed by the treaty commissioner" (8). "You Are Here," begins with the language of land acknowledgments to make a point about how these statements can echo the nation's language. Ultimately, the poem's location practice is through uncertainty, discomfort, and other difficult but generative affects of reckoning with settler history. For example, instead of an acknowledgement, the reader is offered a confession of this difficulty to engage in territorial affirmations: "I would like to acknowledge that I did not ask for permission, that I felt too uncomfortable to ask, and I didn't know how to, that I don't know if asking is the answer because I barely know the questions" (8).

X contemplates "the questions" through the dynamic of appropriating and unsettling both the sourced material Rhodes uses and the expectations of the reading audience. The admission of uncertainty brings forward a register of troubling attitudes invested in the enduring language of the discourses Rhodes presents. Like Wah and Wong's emphasis on the poem as a response to material difficulties, the generative space of the poem in *X* turns to difficult processes of disorientation, frustration, and uncertainty that are critical acts of discerning a literary practice of solidarity between the contradictory elements that claim land in the poem. These oppositional formal sites for the found poetry of *X* are "the smooth cadence of policy platforms and parliamentary committees" and "the shouts of protests and riot police" (8). The reading process

in *X* moves between these oppositional elements, that is, the official logos of nation-building and the sound of protest, to construct a broader reading ethic based on contesting colonial endurance. Rhodes's speaker admits that:

> This book I will continue to write until I get it right, and I will
> never get it right
> About a land held by therefores, herebys and hereinafters, this
> Book. (9)

This uncertainty is a different commitment to coalitional endurance that departs from physical time. Instead, it accepts conceptual difficulty as a creative methodology of engaging with the appropriated material while generating a poem that is, by Rhodes's admission, never going "to get it right" (9). This difficulty in reckoning with a poetics that draws from the archival locations of nation-building to denaturalize settlement extends this reading ethic to the reader, who will confront realities they might not want to acknowledge. "You Are Here," then, is also a navigational poem that plays with the certainty of "here" by ostensibly allowing the reader to situate themselves linearly in the Poetry section only to offer a disorienting experience that prevents the reader from "the desire to look elsewhere" (8). The idea of "here" will be troubled, questioned, and ultimately flipped around when the reader gets to the anti-poem "White Noise."

"You Are Here," therefore, is also an apostrophe; it communicates to the reading audience what the poetic method would be in terms of accounting for place, for "here," where the reader is situated. Rhodes's speaker defines subject matter against the "desire to look elsewhere," which is a desire toward settler innocence. The speaker in "You Are Here," offers another warning:

> This book is about desire

the desire to look elsewhere

This book is about where I live, a place still settling, still making

the land—law by law, arrest by arrest, jail by jail—its own

snow blown. (8)

The ironic territorial acknowledgement in "You Are Here," which also places the poetic act as materially connected to contested land, presents a poetic subject that admits their uncertainty but communicates a collective "desire" for displacement, for deferring a sense of responsibility to another land or time. The temporal recognition that here is "a place still settling" contrasts with the "discrepant" temporalities of Indigenous refusal, resistance, and contestation, where *X* builds solidarity. In "You Are Here," Rhodes informs that "While this book was written, contested territory was tested" (8). In the same section, Rhodes elaborates on how "contested territory" is "tested" by including Indigenous protest movements in the Poetry section. The inclusion of movements disrupts settlement's duration as these protest movements, violent in the confrontations between civilians and law enforcement, contest the material conditions of property-making. The statement that "while this book was written, contested territory was tested" seeks to uproot the settler ethos that Rhodes locates in the durability of the written record and ironically the act of writing (8). The discrepant potential between Rhodes's writing of the poetry and the testing of contested territory presents different experiences of duration on the page as a metaphor for land. As in Hill's text, where the creative energy of the "warrior spirit" disrupts the totalizing narrative of settlement both through place-based and temporal counter-practices, Rhodes's poetry and anti-poetry can be read as a reckoning with the discrepancies that upset settler temporality. Indigenous protest movements, such as the Mohawk resistance at Kanehsatake, the blockade and confrontation in Caledonia, and Idle No More, appear in

Rhodes's poetry to counter the narrative of settler legitimacy and become for the non-Indigenous reader, not mere disruptions of linear time, but ways to re-read place in anticolonial ways.

The task of writing, which is explored in "You Are Here" as a preamble to the work in Poetry, is also related to the critical task of reading in the following poem, "Preoccupied Space," which takes up reading in order to access the past in the ways it is portrayed in archival and literary histories of settlement. "Preoccupied Space," which takes quotes from the book *Progress and Pioneers,* adds the found material in the form of quotations on a river-like structure around which Rhodes's poetry arranges itself in thirteen pages. The appropriated material includes ethnographic and historical testimonies of migrant arrival and settlement, and the quotations flow in the form of the body of water that Rhodes uses to relate these lines. A great-grandmother's journal tracing familial histories of migration becomes an important aspect that adds relational meaning to the found poetry. The topographies mentioned in this poem expand and replicate during this exploration. For example, the beginning line, "from Reading / She came" (11), eventually extends the locations of origin: "from factory jobs" to "from a boat crossing" to "from London" (11). The sketch of the river splits the page with this information, with the quoted excerpts, a collage of phrases from the text. At the same time, this ancestor's origins are also given with the typographical detail of the open parenthesis that never closes, fragmenting one's place of origin but also connoting its eventual loss through colonial settlement via the symbols of the boat and the train, which become modes of transport that "pushed into the present by burning the past" (12).

The poem, moreover, attends to various images of property, of claims on the land as part of a historicization of personal histories of settlement that stand for the quotidian, familial stories that are cited from the appropriated text as a form of ethnographic duration through property,

mobility, and labour in the poem. For instance, the lines, “my other grandmother / her story / arriving sometime (no one/ knows when” (16) obscure the temporality of settlement and instead focus on the temporality of settled land: “she moved/ to cheap land” (16). These testimonial lines, which focus on female family members, are contrasted with the lives of men who:

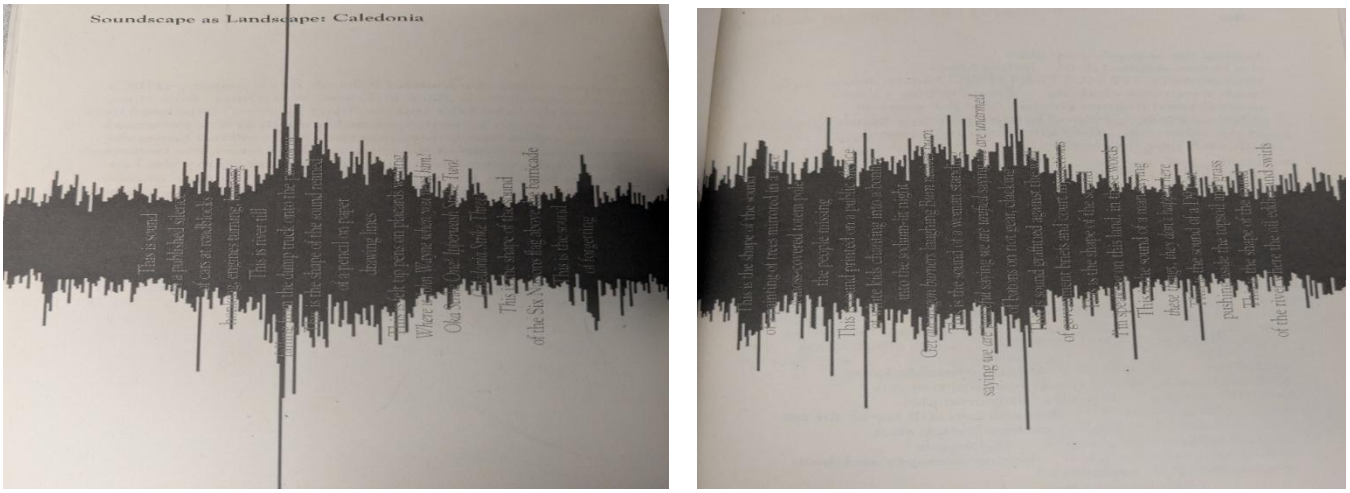
played
cowboys and Indians
with themselves

signed treaties
With themselves

For land surveyed
By themselves
Recorded
On their one paper
With their own words
In their own ink. (20)

These lines prefigure the appropriation-based work in “Found Land,” which focuses on documents describing the terms of treaties and how treaty language describes Indigenous peoples. The dismissive fragment from a transcript in “circle the wagons: in ink,” describes this language of erasure: “the people at this point/ were all half-breeds/ and were dealt as such” (53). “Preoccupied Space,” at the same time, is an ironic title in terms of the content of the poems this part contains as it titles place as “preoccupied” but contemplates fragments of arrival on “stolen land” as a challenge to settler histories of the *terra nullius.* This is an interesting gesture given the semantic differences between land that is preoccupied and land that is “found” by the written words in the next segment of poems that use language from the transcripts of the treaties.

This is especially visible in the last segment of the Poetry section, titled “Acts.” In “Acts,” two important poems, “Soundscape as Landscape: Caledonia” and “Oka” become the noise that frustrates a settler history of place. The noise of resistance distances the reader from an investment in “Acts” as settler legislation and enacts an orientation toward learning about Indigenous agency. “Soundscapes as Landscape: Caledonia” is written on a background image of a waveform, given on the blank page with dark ink, thus creating a difficulty to discern the verse, which again visualizes the difficult task to approach the collection’s thematic concerns in a coalitional gaze and readerly practice. Rhodes explains in the Notes section that “the background image was formed from a recording of the April 20, 2006, Six Nations blockade in Caledonia, Ontario” (83). Moreover, he adds that “the waveform was obtained by graphing the sound of gravel being dumped across Argyle Street” (83). The sound of gravel refers to the use of gravel by Six Nations land defenders when they erected a barricade in 2006, refusing to leave the area where Douglas Creek Estates had started a housing project. The visual aspect of the poem and the deliberate “graphing” of the sound allows Rhodes to create a multiple “soundscape,” as he calls it. As in the previous sections of the Poetry, Rhodes undermines the referential metaphors and idiom he uses, as we are told that the sound of the gravel, which constructed the blockade, “is sound / on a published silence,” thus making the page discursively close to the broader settler discourse of “forgetting” (68).



Figures 4 and 5. Scans of the poem "Soundscape as Landscape: Caledonia" as it appears in Rhodes's *X*.

"Soundscape as Landscape: Caledonia" tries to capture the sound of the gravel, the sound of Indigenous agency that obstructs expropriation, but only manages to produce a "shape of the sound refined of a pencil on paper" (68). This implication is significant for the solidarity politics of the poetry in this book. Like in the ironic acknowledgement of the limitation of settler territorial acknowledgements in the opening section of *X*, "Soundscape as Landscape: Caledonia" includes this sense of complicity—settler complicity, but also poetic, artistic, and readerly complicity—into this multiple soundscape. We are told, for instance, that ultimately, poetry cannot reproduce the "soundscape" as it cannot reproduce the "landscape" either. It can only make a gesture of reckoning that is a conscious and continuous, incomplete task:

> This is sound graffitied against the wall
> of government briefs and court injunctions
> This is the shape of the sound
> I'm speaking on this land, in these words
> This is the sound of a man saying
> *These things, they don't happen here.* (69)

Like the "self-imposed constraints" of the Blackfoot translation in the poem about Treaty 7 (82), the found poem that depends on the sound graph also represents an act of difficult reading. A version of this poem was published in 2009 in *Canadian Literature* and was titled "Soundscape as Landscape#1: Peaceful, Unified, and Unarmed." The poem,[22]which is described as a "mediation," did not include any verse but only presented the waveform (Rhodes, "Soundscape"). The addition of verse in the updated version of the poem in *X* not only takes the sound of protest as reading material, but as the poetry suggests in the updated version, Rhodes also supplies an attempted reading of the sound of the blockade through the verse added. The difference between "the sound" and its "shape" is given to differentiate the poetic attempt from the official language that claims to have a totalizing representation of the sound of protest, which is also registered in the poem as the sound of the land itself. The speaker, in this case, admits of speaking words that want to expunge this silence, the institutional and social forgetting. At the same time, the poet's words carry the echoes of colonial denial, the white noise of denial of responsibility in the anonymous voice that exclaims "*These things, they don't happen here*" (69). This generalized statement about denial evokes the assumption that Indigenous mobilizations are events, something that appears in the tensions of temporalities in Idle No More. The presence of the white mob in the poem is another extreme example of how denial delegitimizes protest in the poem. The mob refers to the clashes between residents of Caledonia and Six Nations land defenders: "this is the sound printed on public silence / of white kids chanting into a bonfire/ into the sodium-lit night/ *Get out wagon burners* laughing *Burn natives burn"* (69). The same violence is echoed in the trolls' comments harvested as a collage in "White Noise."

[22] An earlier version of "Soundscape as Landscape" can be found in *Canadian Literature* 203 (2009): 10.

At the same time, the poem conveys "sound" as the diachronic presence of Indigenous resistance. While the poem begins with the awareness that the page can be "a published silence," like the official discourse that seeks to delink Indigenous movements from the land, the sound of the gravel on the page is also "the shape of the sound / of the Six Nations flag above the barricade" which undercuts the broader frequency that attempts to elide Six Nations nationhood in the case of Caledonia and beyond, that is, the broader "sound of forgetting" (68). The sound, while difficult to capture on the page, is also a sound that recounts the ongoing deep-seated colonial forms of extraction: the sound of the barricade being erected is simultaneously the sound of "the people missing" and the sound "of the river where the oil eddies and swirls" (69), referring to colonial genocidal violence and the violent extraction of resources from Indigenous lands. The solidarity politics of this poem, in this sense, is based on the fraught attempt to capture the difficulty of coalitions, as Rhodes constructs a multiple soundscape that cannot escape the complicity of long histories of official forgetting which undermine the formation of solidarity. At the same time, within this difficulty the poem emerges as a problematic site and a site that interacts with those multiple frequencies. The page houses these contradictory elements as it is a form of "published silence" that is nevertheless constructed "of cars at roadblocks, engines turning, burning" (68).

The poem that follows, "Oka," extends this role of poetry as challenging "published silence" (68) by evoking the image of the Warriors of Kanehsatake as another reminder of "Acts." "Oka" extends this critical act of discerning those discrepant frequencies, the silence of the colonial culture and discourse and the noise of protest. The poem is another example of visual poetry, written on the background of an image of "a 2011 scorecard from the Club de Golf Oka" where Rhodes admits he visited (83). The poem remembers, against the continuity of

silence, the standoff at Kanehsatake, as the poet speaker sees a miniature doll representing an Indigenous person wearing a headdress at an airport store (70). The poem contrasts this image with the image of the Mohawk Warriors of Kanehsatake:

> The brown-skinned dolls in headdress
> (Marvel MTC117 MULTI-ETHNIC Native America "with removable clothing for extra pay value")
> Aren't dressed in army greens like the warriors
> Of Kanehsatake behind barricade lines behind masks. (70)

This poem contemplates cultural appropriation as another aspect of colonial duration. The use of the image as found text here comments directly on Rhodes's appropriation poetics as a form that makes visible what Dowling calls the "gap" that divorces "land as alienable property and land as lived relation" (123). In this poem, Rhodes is aware of the "gap" produced by cultural appropriation, "a gap in which we are all endlessly implicated; it is the gap that we are living in, though some of us may choose to forget or ignore it" (Dowling 123). We are told, for example, that the image of the army-green clad Warrior is also what is "on the other side" while "the radio announcer squeals" (Rhodes 70). Similarly, the standoff at Kanehsatake, represented as an illegitimate form of domestic terrorism, is "dumped on the television screen / between commercials" (70). The ironic official responses on behalf of the Québécois and Canadian settler administrations in this poem are represented as another form of white noise, this time of distancing the Mohawk claims and the Mohawk nation, more broadly, into an abstracted group with illegitimate and allochronic (out of time) demands: "the Indians they are at it again / taking our land taking our golf course/ they are the real immigrants" (70). Rhodes's method, in this context of displacing and disavowing the actual colonial act, affirms that "appropriation has the potential to show us this gap" (Dowling 123).

"Soundscapes" and "Oka" are poems that prepare the reader for critically discerning what white noise is made of in the anti-poem, that is, a denial of the history of settlement as a colonial act that persists and endures, in discourses that delegitimize the Idle No More movement. The sole anti-poem in *X*, which is also registered as the background static noise in the Poetry section, is meant to visualize the critical struggle that solidarity entails in terms of discerning the history of settlement outside the colonial mythology of innocence or migration. In "White Noise," the racist language of the commentators can be read as expressing competing claims of duration in a way that challenges solidarity. The reading practice that Rhodes's anti-poem requires shows the embodied conscious practice of solidarity in terms of coexistence, a relational site in the cultural conversations of Idle No More. This difficult critical reading task is obstructed by the array of online commentaries of trolls that reflects a refusal to acknowledge colonial history as well as a racial distancing of Indigenous people. Beyond the "racist invective" (Roberts 81), however, the anti-poetry inserts fragments of historical reckoning that are printed upside down and in italics and typically include facts that speak to colonial and genocidal violence that the racial discourse of the trolls is eliding. Those inserted words, phrases, and images, include statistics about the disappearance of indigenous animal life like the buffalo, bison, beavers, whales, seals, etc., commentaries of politicians like Tom Siddon during the Oka crisis, the names of ships transporting European immigrants to Canada, the Mercury Contamination Settlement Agreement Act, pictures from Residential Schools like the one in Kamloops, statistics of Indigenous children's deaths, and excerpts from treaties, specifically Treaty 7. Such historical insertions of cognizance become the anti-poetry's sites for solidarity that require difficult reading across the barrage of racist comments.

In the numerous commentaries of refusal, white supremacy, and Indigenous allochronism, there is a political call to discern the history of settlement that sustains this abusive psychology. Irony is again a prevalent writing practice for Rhodes, as "White Noise" begins with the sound of drumming, an embodied place-based action of resurgence within the Idle No More movement, albeit in this anti-poem the drumming is covered by the sound of a white mob-like group that interpellates itself as "the people," and specifically, a people that is besieged by Idle No More. In this ironic sense of besiegement, Idle No More is mocked for its rally cry, which aids its language of resurgence, but in the linguistic register of the trolls, idleness figures as a state of cultural deficit. We are told, for example, that the trolling mob in this poem demands that their comments are read to solidify how "real Canadians feel about this protest" (95). The feelings of "real Canadians" that the trolls invoke imply that Idle No More is a fraudulent movement, a waste of time, but also a provocation against taxpayers, who are repeatedly referenced in this "litany of racist jokes that highlights mainstream stereotypes about Indigenous peoples" (Roberts 80). The question, "Honestly, do they want to be 'Idle No More" or "Idle ForEver" encapsulates this racial use of idleness to delegitimize Indigenous resurgence.

The comments mostly demonstrate a racist delirium as a response to the Idle No More movement, something that is raising questions considering the prevalence of solidarity and allyship, as well as an espousal of the interpellation of *settler* in cultural contexts of the movement. The poem suggests that the acceptance of "settler" as a site of solidarity became a pertinent topic in cultural criticism about Idle No More because many responses, like the responses of the trolls in "White Noise," adamantly protested this term. In "White Noise," this refusal of the term settler also shows the investment in presentism, in the "now" that is removed from a colonial past. The comments refuse the colonial history behind settlement as well as the

identity of settlers and seek to further racialize and distance Indigenous nations through the commentary. For instance, comments such as, “Time to go home and leave Canada to the Canadians!” followed by the immediate “go back to India” (91), or “The papers will not print what Canadian TAXPAYERS think about the latest Indian crap” (92) are meant to delegitimize the Idle No More movement as an attack against the integrity of the modern liberal Canadian nation, which constructs Indigenous protest as out of place and out of time. The staunch rejection of the term settler also speaks to the difficulty of finding sites of solidarity that account for the historical displacement these responses are advocating for, primarily because colonization is distanced from the present as an event of the past. Some of the commentaries Rhodes compiles read as: “we are all SETTLERS, now!” and “to state that you own all of the land and the rest of us are just settlers is meaningless” (98). Rhodes, in this sense, is perhaps implying that because of the static white noise, of the constant refusal of settler society to acknowledge its violence against Indigenous nations, that solidarity is an important aspect of the conversations that followed Idle No More. This ongoing background of the abusive mockery of the movement is one aspect of the difficulty of coalitional practices.

At the same time, the background insertions made by Rhodes undercut those narratives of Idle No More’s temporal displacement and settler presentism as well as the spatialization of time through settler history as its sole axis. When Chief Spence, for example, is mocked by the trolls, Rhodes also includes a comment that asks, “Remember Caledonia?” (104). This is yet another reminder of diachronic Indigenous resistance that undercuts the narrative of settlement. At the beginning of the anti-poem, we also get a quote by Tom Siddon, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development displacing the Mohawk claims and branding the Mohawk warriors as terrorists during the Oka crisis. The fact that the quote is printed upside down in “White Noise,”

includes the embodied act of flipping around the physical text as a method to access historical facts that undermine the trolls' comments. At this reference on Siddon, for example, Rhodes inserts the phrase "immigrants" to show this cognitive displacement and temporal distance the settler mob-like trolls use to make a claim of their own legitimacy (93). Moreover, when colonial histories of genocide are dismissed in the racial discourse of the trolls, such as in the statement, "Oh and your little school thing. Who cares?" (91), the parallel textual insertions on the flip side of the page undermine these statements. Another upside-down inscription reads: "*I've never seen a land/so full of history/ and so empty of memory,*" which calls out the lack of historical memory in the responses of the trolls (91).

As Roberts points out in her reading of "White Noise," this dual act of flipping the text and accessing those phrases and sources that resist the narrative of the mob-like white noise constitutes a "palimpsestic doubling" that is meant to "undermin[e] the claims of non-Indigenous Canadians who see their entitlement to Canada through an ahistorical lens and refuse to acknowledge their positions as settlers in the midst of ongoing colonization" (83). In making the reader, especially the non-Indigenous settler reader, confront both the imagery and the experience of noise, both the cacophony of ahistoricism but also the dissenting noise of protest, Rhodes asks the reader to contemplate their own position. If solidarity runs the risk of becoming temporary, as Corntassel warned, if there is an inherent limitation to solidarity as limited or bound by time, a critical exploration of colonial notions of temporality allows us to shift those critiques about solidarity in methods of reading and critical thought that are invested in undermining totalizing representations of history, as Rhodes's formal methods suggest. For Hill, understanding Indigenous movements of resistance and resurgence within a continuity of Indigenous agency despite violence is a site of resurgent storytelling, which can include

coalitional possibilities. For Rhodes, confronting the violent history of settlement through self-reflexive and place-conscious poetics imagines how solidarity necessitates a difficult reckoning with multiple cacophonous ahistorical perspectives. This is a critical practice in the sense that the critical act reflects the ability to frustrate colonial constants for an arrival to understanding, as a continuous and not a finite process.

Although the collection is split between the two sections and requires a conscious flipping over the book to access "White Noise," this is a dialogic practice that embodies the difficulty and the conscious decision to engage with what solidarity can be on occupied Indigenous lands for settler peoples. Like Hill's deliberate anticolonial temporal methods of unsettling settler history, Rhodes's settler response shows the conscious act of inhabiting the difficulty of coalitions by fraught practices of reading, writing, and being in Indigenous place as a settler/ invader while complicating the aspirational desires for the duration of solidarity beyond moments of crisis. By way of conclusion, I want to suggest that the difficult task of the writer in this context, a writer who wants to produce work that is potentially coalitional but also admits that their book is in a state of continuity, is to create solidarity in fluid temporal terms rather than in a condition of fixity. If we read this statement as a disclaimer, as destabilizing a claim of duration, then Rhodes's admission that he "will never get it right" professes an accountable move toward the continuity of solidarity (9).

Conclusion
Between Anticipation and Arrival: Solidarity in Neoliberal Times in Wayde Compton's "The Boom"

Throughout this thesis, I have discussed how solidarity as a concern in Canadian and Indigenous literary studies has taken a place-based trajectory. I have considered how literary solidarity poses and responds to varied forms of difficulty. My literary reading of solidarity began with a return to the 1990s as a critical decade of cultural developments in terms of how liberal notions of reconciliation remove struggle and dissent from imaginaries of solidarity. My reading of *Sundogs* and the Oka crisis locates an early call toward place-based solidarities in this text that presents how the settler claims for expropriation and an emergent politics of reconciliation extract solidarity from place. This removal of solidarity from land parallels the colonial acts of extraction that led to the standoff. The place-based actions Maracle described, in the case of solidarity run and in the didactic failures of relations, encourage thinking in emplaced ways. Maracle's novel represented many "obstacles" for her character—and reader—as part of a process of "study" (55). Through this intricate storytelling, Maracle posits an ethics of reading that remains open and inclusive, allowing non-Indigenous readers to consider solidarity without diminishing the lived realities of Indigenous peoples. This method of representing solidarity as a difficult anticolonial relationality that is neither idealized nor foreclosed underscores how solidarity is an imaginative relation (Diabo 254).

In expanding on the concept of solidarity within the context of Wong and Wah's collaborative or "allied" poetics, I wanted to emphasize that solidarity is not merely a thematic or representational concern, but a literary practice that anticipates ethical interactions through language and interpretation. Hill's evolving comic book project and Rhodes's poetry of appropriating texts that engender colonial endurance connected my thinking about solidarity to

how literary and cultural production registers this ambivalent term as something not always defined by specific acts, but as a continuity. The imperfect and evolving nature of solidarity mirrors the complexities of social life in contemporary and ongoing forms of settler colonialism. While I do not consider texts utopian or idealistic interventions, I consider texts as spaces where solidarity can materialize through difficulty but also as a carefully critical anticipation. My last two chapters that focused on temporality alluded to solidarity as continuous and didactically retrievable in moments of "simultaneity" that trouble neat linear frames of time (Lo 41). At the same time, texts carry an extra-textual or extra-diegetic commitment to solidarity as prefigurative, as an anticipation or an arrival that necessarily engages with time and place in ways that challenge totalizing colonial claims.

Contemplating literary solidarity as a kind of arrival or an anticipation underscores it as a speculative relation. This discussion brings me back to Wong's insights in "Decolonizasian," where the "speculative spaces" of texts become crucial to understanding how literature engages with solidarity (339). Wong illustrates that texts reflect historical dynamics and open up imaginative spaces that allow readers to explore the interplay between "affective" and "political" forms of solidarity (339). As I conclude this dissertation project, I want to delve deeper into how speculative responses to solidarity can serve as valuable didactic tools for shaping a literary exploration that connects these affective and political contours of solidarity. Here, I return to some textual moments from Compton's Afro-futurist and "retro-speculative" stories from *The Outer Harbour* to comment on how solidarity as an anticipation in literary texts can be best understood by the affordances of speculative genres (McCall, "Living" 297). Compton's story, "The Lost Island," as I discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, contains a textual moment that critics have used to theorize more concretely about place-based solidarity in the context of

Canadian literatures. The pivotal question Jean asks, as Kamboureli, Leow and Vernon suggest, locates both solidarity and anticolonial place-based consciousness in a lack of response that challenges identity as the sole condition of participation in solidarity. Jean's question, "should I be here?" registers solidarity as an "aporia" (Kamboureli "Introduction I" 11), which produces both frustration and uncertainty but also the generative didacticism that texts locate in moments of failure, difficulty, and lack of closure in a teleological sense.

The dystopian environment around claiming the island as Indigenous land in "The Lost Island," involves solidarity as a precarious anticipation, as the confrontation between protestors and the police asserts a narrative of suppressed dissent and violence. At the same time, the narrative does not offer an answer to Jean's question, as to whether she should be there, to maintain the speculative possibilities of this text but to also register solidarity as an ongoing question. The lack of response is a moment of prolonged "aporia" (11). For Kamboureli, the ongoing question regarding solidarity is that it needs to move beyond recognition of the circumstances of another (11). Solidarity, for Kamboureli, "requires that we consider the structural differences and limits of others to whom vulnerability remains unrecognizable or who might recognize it but do so as a condition that does not concern them directly (11).

This uncertainty, for Kamboureli, describes solidarity as a relation that reflects different forms of "aporia," which Compton's narrative extends by its speculative mode (11). That is, although Jean participates in anti-colonial actions as an ally, Fletcher's death by the police shows the material risk of these solidarities and enacts rupture through colonial violence. At the same time, the presence of their unborn mixed-race child, whose existence Fletcher does not get to know, represents both the complexity of solidarity and the potential for unity (4). The story then deliberately leaves the meaning of place-based solidarity at a state of arrival, whether that is the

arrival of Jean and Fletcher's daughter, Suhaima, as "an intimation of a politics to come that may help realign the differences between Indigenous and Black people" (4), or the dystopian arrival of new conditions of difficulty for solidarity.

The speculative mode of this story contemplates the ideas of difficulty, anticipation, and arrival by extending the aporia regarding place-based anticolonial solidarity in another story of the same collection, "The Boom." "The Boom" is set in the future and addresses what happens after the events of "The Lost Island." "The Boom" takes place thirty years later and is a visual or "graphic story," comprised of a number of posters that convey a gradual loss of anticolonial solidarity (McCall, "Living" 299). I want to explore the idea of solidarity as difficult aporia by considering how the formal choices of the visual sequences in "The Boom," and the connection with "The Lost Island," continue the speculative thread of solidarity as a relation that figures between anticipation and arrival. "The Boom" does not continue the events of "The Lost Island" in terms of narrative or characterization but extends the questions about solidarity and difficulty by turning to a future temporal point where the place-based solidarity in "The Lost Island" gradually disintegrates. This disintegration of solidarity is visualized in a series of posters that trace the continuity of solidarity from allied anticolonial action to eventually becoming completely extracted from place in the final poster that advertises a development project titled "ARRIVAL."

"The Boom" locates solidarity at the temporality of "arrival" in ironic ways. The first poster, titled "JUSTICE FOR FLETCHER SYLVESTER!" asserts anti-colonial solidarity and recognizes the island as unceded land. The following poster, titled "THE PAULINE JOHNSON ISLAND OCCUPATION: FIVE YEARS LATER: A RETROSPECTIVE EVENT," is rooted in nostalgia, commemoration, and respect, but does not assert the island as Indigenous land, and it

does not condemn police violence, as McCall points out in her reading of the story ("Living" 303). This poster is an example of what Dean analyzes as affective or "affectional" solidarities—that is, solidarities that are produced by empathy, intimate feelings, and even reverence (17), but lack politicized consciousness. The following poster focuses on protesting the "RE-ZONING OF THE PAULINE JOHNSON ISLAND," and presents an event organized by a group of environmental activists. The shift of anticolonial solidarity toward environmental activism with no mention, again, of the attempts to reclaim the island in this future poster sequence is a form of Indigenous erasure because "an environmental concern for the island has effaced and written over the Indigenous land rights that Fletcher and the other activists were committed to defending" (McCall, "Living" 303).

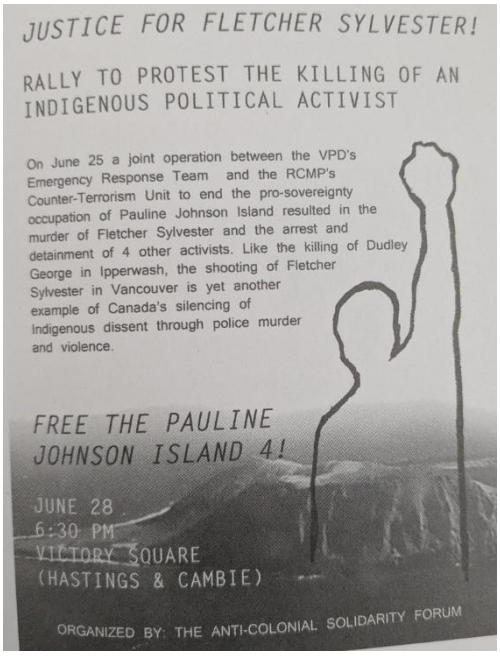


Figure 6. Scan from Compton's "The Boom," p.103.

In the final posters, solidarity, which continues to evolve in the visual sequence, is contained in the spatio-temporality of "arrival" as the island is expropriated for developing condominiums under a development group called ARRIVAL. ARRIVAL is "a 10-storey tower

built on Vancouver's newest waterfront" (Compton 109). In this poster, the Pauline Johnson Island is described as a "99% safe and dormant volcanic site" (109), followed by another statement that contextualizes the development project: "ARRIVAL boldly blends the pioneer spirit of Canada's heritage with 21st Century bravado" (109). Compton's speculative gestures about solidarity between Indigenous and diasporic subjects in "The Lost Island" follows the paradigm of anticipation and prefigurative politics regarding solidarity, arriving at the dystopian spatio-temporality that is reminiscent of colonial arrival. McCall, in her reading of the story, calls this lapse "a renewal of settler ideologies" in the broader context of neoliberal commodification of land, gentrification, and condo culture, as well as the erasure of anticolonial struggle from the visual topography of the poster sequence (303).

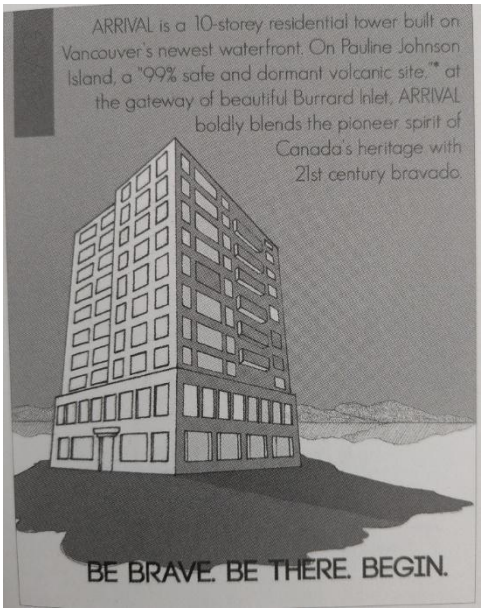


Figure 7 Scan from Compton's "The Boom," p.109.

There are multiple ways to read this story in connection to solidarity, but I wanted to emphasize how the speculative and dystopian affordances of this text shift solidarity from prefigurative anticipation to an ironic and troubling arrival by underscoring the progressive precarity of neoliberal organization and arrangement of relations. In this context, McCall reads

the story as a warning, cautioning that "demands for justice about one set of issues, Indigenous land rights, can become redirected to other issues, environmental rights, and then become entirely forgotten through a process of gentrification and a reassertion of state authority" ("Living" 303). The most concerning aspect about this continuity in Compton's story, however, is the gradual erasure of struggle out of solidarity, the quieting of dissent in a story where solidarity is extracted from the land like the fictional Pauline Johnson Island. The exhortation in the ARRIVAL poster is written as a neoliberal rally cry: "BE BRAVE AND BE THERE. BEGIN" (Compton 109).

Although solidarity in this story is located and relocated in specific visual symbols, I want to suggest that the moment of arrival in "The Boom" is about an ironic stasis that reflects the stagnant collective elements that compromise solidarity. Despite the static solidarity from one visual sequence to the next, I read allegorical potential in this text in terms of how to think of the literary as a prefigurative site for theorizing solidarity relations across these difficulties. The dystopian narrative challenges solidarity insofar as it intensifies the difficulties surrounding collective struggle in this futuristic narrative but keeps the speculation open through reading solidarity as a fragmented trajectory in Compton's stories. The context of arrival in "The Boom" does not seal solidarity in the past, as a nostalgic remembrance of collective action at the time of market values that obscure the history of place-based solidarity. The moment of arrival can also be read as an incentive to engage in a recuperative reading that assembles moments of solidarity through the sequences Compton depicts. In other words, arrival also suggest that an anticipatory reading practice is one that engages in recuperative readings that present a reminder of the "agonistic" nature of solidarity (Kamboureli "Introduction I" 11).

In this thesis, my reading of literary solidarity sought to challenge a pejorative attachment of easiness, presentism, and moral idealization to solidarity. Texts problematize solidarity by necessitating difficult conversations about identity and the politics of location. However, through their expressive and discursive methodologies, texts directly implicate solidarity in the need for anticolonial accountability. Against the ease of performativity and uncritical idealization, literary texts heighten the "agonistic" character of solidarity even in dystopian cautionary narratives like "The Boom" (11). Moreover, the literary works I examined show that solidarity appears in public discourse as a suspicious signifier rather than a normative moral value of cohesion. This also presents a reminder to read literary imaginaries, anticipations, and arrivals in ways that reflect how these terms can reissue a commodification of solidarity.

If we are to consider Kamboureli's exhortation, that is, to necessarily engage with the "uneasiness" and "unsettled" concern of solidarity in Canadian literary works (2), then both difficulty and suspicion are useful hermeneutical analytics for the ways literary and textual arts imagine solidarity as an embodied, trans-historical, and place-conscious relationality of shared-agency. Placing solidarity as a literary imaginary and critically receiving it as a literary matter localizes and temporalizes solidarity in a literary field with a colonial genealogy, not unlike the genealogy of solidarity. A critical reckoning with Canada's settler culture invites readers and scholars interested in place-based solidarity to interrogate how place, and specifically how *land*, is configured as both a site of colonial violence and a site of transformation in literary production. This critical reckoning also invites us to consider how the arrival of solidarity is not an idealized or fixed resolution. Like Compton's gradual sequence of disintegrating solidarities, the coalitional meanings registered by texts challenge utopian attachments that reproduce the metaphor of discovery and obscure the difficult relations of solidarity.

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